



PLANT PANSIES FOR FALL COLOR

By: Jacki Hein, CCNP

One of the prettiest things to see in the fall is the splash of color put on by pansies - right in the face of our oncoming freezing temperatures!

Garden centers stock a good supply of pansies at this time of year, and for good reason - pansies do their best during the cooler months and struggle their way through the heat of summer. It's our hot sun and higher temperatures that kills them rather than the cold of fall and winter. They'll continue blooming well into the fall and early winter until buried by snow, and then are quick to return when temperatures warm. You might even see them pop up and bloom during a warm spell in January or February!

There are no actual "spring pansies", or "fall pansies". Pansies are pansies! They are short-lived perennials which we treat as annuals. Growing to a height of about 8", they come in just about any color imaginable with flowers up to 3" across.

This time of year you can plant pansies in a location that receives either full sun or partial shade. If you intend to keep them growing through the summer, avoid western or southern exposures that would be too hot for them during mid-summer. For fall, however, those locations are fine. Pansies prefer a moist soil with good organic matter worked in. Our winters can be quite dry, so mulch the ground well after planting with shredded bark or some other loose organic material to help retain soil moisture. Pull the hose out, too, during the winter months and give them a monthly soaking if weather is dry.

So, add a few to your gardens. Squeeze them into drab container plantings, and even include a few flowers (they're edible!) in your next salad. Pansies add a bright spot of color wherever they go.