

The Perennial Farm

Tel: 410-592-6106 Fax: 410-592-8338
www.perennialfarm.com www.growingforyou.com

Pansies



Why Pansies

These old-fashioned favorites are gaining new popularity. Improved varieties and greater hardiness are why more gardeners are buying and planting these cheerful fall/spring bloomers.

Pansy Basics

Did you know that pansies can be planted in fall and continue to grow and bloom all winter and into spring? ***Pansies can over winter as far north as Zone 4.*** If planted in fall, pansies can last up to eight months, from September to April or May, providing fall and spring color. Pansies aren't attractive in the middle of the coldest winters. In fact, they can look downright pitiful (when they're not buried under snow). But they're just biding their time until spring, when they hit their stride. The bonus for keeping them around is that the spring bloom is usually more robust when the plants have been in the ground since fall and have developed a good root system.

Buying Pansies

Pansies don't have a long shelf life in packs. They stretch out quickly, and once they do, they'll never do as well when planted. Some places often sell old, stretched out plants at a discount, but resist the temptation to buy them. Healthy pansies are compact, exhibit minimal leaf yellowing, and probably show fewer blooms while in the packs because they are younger plants. Despite the lack of color at the time of purchase, these are the plants you want. Pop a few plants out and look at the roots. They should be white, not brown, and should be well developed throughout the soil.

How to Grow Pansies

Pansies are not difficult to grow. Good soil, steady moisture, and at least partial sun will provide good results. They do not tolerate heat and humidity, which is why they thrive in fall and spring. Plant pansies 6 to 8 inches apart. They can be used as borders, or in larger masses, but don't count on a solid ground cover because pansies are more clump forming than spreading. Pansies respond well to regular ***deadheading***. As often as possible, every couple of days if you can, pinch off faded blooms. This will spur plants to continue blooming. Fertilizing will aid in vigorous blooming. If you apply a mild fertilizer at fall planting and every four to five weeks in spring, it will ensure good nutrition for the pansies. A light mulch will help keep weeds to a minimum. ***Pests*** are not a major issue with pansies, but slugs and snails do count pansies among their favorites. Aphids and White Fly can also crop up occasionally. Leaf diseases, particularly mildews, are fairly common, and the occasional plant will die from root or crown rot, so take care not to bury the stems or crowns. Healthy plants and good growing conditions keep pest problems to a minimum.

Overwintering Pansies

Plant as early as possible. The more established the plants are, the better they'll be able to withstand cold, desiccating winter conditions. Choose healthy plants. Healthy plants establish more quickly by rapidly developing the root system that is so critical to winter hardiness. Choose hardy varieties in northern areas such as Zones 4 - 6. Varieties that over wintered well include ***Accord, Bingo, Crown, Delta, Matrix*** and Icicle series. Pansies are also susceptible to saturated soil. They have been known to over winter successfully, only to succumb to excessive moisture as the winter's snow and ice begin to melt. Be sure they are grown or planted in a well-drained location.