



Annual Flowers

Prairie Star

A collection of annual flowers tested by K-State for the prairie climate

Prairie Star annual flowers are varieties best adapted to the challenging prairie climate. Planting varieties in the Prairie Star collection is the best way to assure the eye-catching appearance gardeners hope for. The list contains annual flower varieties that have exhibited superior performances for two years or more in Kansas bedding-plant research trials. Prairie Star flowers are the best of the best — flowers that grow and bloom abundantly with minimal care.

Flowering plant research is headquartered at the Horticulture Research and Extension Center in Olathe with other flower trial sites in Wichita, Hays, and Colby. Research trial sites encompass two USDA cold hardiness zones (5, 6) and two American Horticulture Society heat tolerance zones (7, 8). All varieties on the list grow well across the state, east to west and north to south.

Plants are rated for vigor, defined as how fast and how strong they grow and how much substance they have. They are also rated on floriferousness, or total overall visual impact of the flower display. The number of flowers, size of flowers and how they are borne on the plant are important. Flowers that hang down with backs showing are not as pretty as those presented in profile. Ideally, flowers should tilt up to greet onlookers. Floriferousness ratings are a combination of the number and size of flowers and how they are borne on the plant.

On plants where the foliar display is paramount, the floriferousness rating is adapted to take into account the color and visual impact of the leaves, not flowers. There is a trend in the horticulture industry towards plants with colorful foliage, and therefore the Prairie Star list is now divided into two sections to accommodate the influx of new additions with excellent “foliagiferousness.”

Both vigor and floriferousness are rated on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being almost dead or no flowers, 4 being acceptable, and 7 excellent. All plants on the Prairie Star list have scored a 6 or higher for vigor and floriferousness combined, at all trial sites. Plant height and width are measured from a mature plant in mid-August.

Flowering plant varieties in research trials are submitted by or collected from plant breeders and distributors from around the world. All varieties on the list are available from retail garden centers or mail-order plant companies. The list contains many varieties. No greenhouse, garden center, or nursery is likely to carry them all. The Prairie Star list is not a commercial brand or product line. Gardeners should look for the specific variety on the list, i.e. not generic geraniums but Rocky Mountain Dark Red Geranium. Not all geraniums grow well on the prairie. Varieties on the list are truly superior. Plants at garden centers may or may not be labeled Prairie Star, so take the list to shop for specific varieties.

The current list and color pictures of each flower can be found at www.prairstarflowers.com. The Web site also includes a link to reports containing research data and the Prairie Bloom list of K-State-tested perennial flowers.

Plants for Flower Display

Flower	Cultivar/Color	Planting Location Preference	Height (inches)	Width (inches)
Angelonia	Serena (White)	sun	14	15
Ageratum	High Tide Blue	sun	18	18
Begonia	Ambassador Pink	sun or shade	9	11
Begonia	Brandy (Pink/Dark leaves)	sun or shade	11	11
Begonia	Doublet Series (All Colors)	sun or shade	11	12
Begonia	Olympia Rose	sun or shade	10	12
Begonia	Olympia White	sun or shade	10	12
Begonia	Party Pink (Bronze Leaf)	sun or shade	14	10
Begonia	Vodka (Red/Dark Leaves)	sun or shade	10	11
Begonia	Whisky (White/Dark Leaves)	sun or shade	11	10
Celosia	Cramer's Amazon (Red)	sun	49	26
Celosia	Flamingo Feather Purple	sun	47	27
Celosia	Fresh Look Red	sun	18	13
Celosia	Hi-Z (Purple)	sun	46	25
Celosia	New Look Red	sun	19	13
Celosia	WATCH (Hot Pink)	sun	13	15
Cleome	Senorita Rosalita	sun	32	20
Cosmos	Cosmic Orange	sun	15	13
Cosmos	Cosmic Mix	sun	19	18
Dianthus	Amazon Neon Cherry	sun	20	15
Dianthus	Amazon Neon Purple	sun	23	13
Euphorbia	Diamond Frost (White)	sun	14	18

Plants for Flower Display

Flower	Cultivar/Color	Planting Location Preference	Height (inches)	Width (inches)
Gaillardia	Plume Series (All Colors)	sun	16	15
Gaillardia	Torch Series (All Colors)	sun	17	15
Geranium	Americana Series (All Colors)	sun	12	16
Geranium	Charmant (Salmon)	sun	12	15
Geranium	Colorcade Coral Pink	sun	10	14
Geranium	Eclipse Rose Splash	sun	12	13
Geranium	Fireworks Cherry	sun	11	16
Geranium	Galleria Frost Fire (Pale Pink Bi-color)	sun	14	16
Geranium	Grand Prix (Red)	sun	14	18
Geranium	Illusion Series (All Colors)	sun	16	25
Geranium	Maverick Star	sun	15	18
Geranium	Nobelesse '99 (Bright Salmon/Orange)	sun	11	16
Geranium	Patriot White	sun	12	15
Geranium	Patriot Bright Red	sun	12	16
Geranium	Patriot Watermelon	sun	14	16
Geranium	Rocky Mountain Series (All Colors)	sun	13	17
Geranium	Schoene Helena (Salmon)	sun	14	17
Geranium	Showcase Light Lavender	sun	12	15
Geranium	Showcase Salmon	sun	13	14
Geranium	Twist 2001 (Salmon/Rose)	sun	12	12
Geranium	Vulcan 2001 (Red-Orange)	sun	13	17
Geranium (seed)	Pinto Series (All Colors)	sun	14	17
Geranium (seed)	Ringo 2000 (Lavender)	sun	12	13
Geranium Cascade / Ivy	Barock '99 (Red)	sun	11	17
Geranium Cascade / Ivy	Compact Acapulco (Bright Pink/White)	sun	8	21
Geranium Cascade / Ivy	Compact Lila (Lavender/Pink)	sun	10	22
Geranium Cascade / Ivy	Compact Salmon	sun	9	21
Geranium Cascade / Ivy	Galleria Sunrise Improved (Orange/Red)	sun	12	17
Geranium Cascade / Ivy	Reggae Red	sun	11	16
Geranium Cascade / Ivy	Sophie Cascade (Salmon/Pink)	sun	12	21
Geranium (Exotic)	Crystal Palace Gem (Yellow Leaves, Red Flower)	sun	14	20
Geranium (Exotic)	Graffiti Double Red	sun	10	12
Geranium (Exotic)	Graffiti Double Salmon	sun	14	12
Geranium (Exotic)	Caliente Coral Pink	sun	17	16
Geranium (Exotic)	Caliente Rose	sun	16	16
Helenium	Dakota (Gold)	sun	12	16
Impatiens	Accent Coral	partial shade	17	13
Impatiens	Accent Lavender Blue	partial shade	18	13
Impatiens	Metallic Deep Salmon	partial shade	15	12
Impatiens	Showstopper Cherry	partial shade	18	16
Impatiens	Showstopper Tropical Flair Mix	partial shade	12	13
Impatiens	Stardust Rose Improved	partial shade	12	14
Impatiens	Super Elfin Blue Pearl	partial shade	12	15
Impatiens (Double Flowered)	Fiesta Series (All Colors)	partial shade	22	21
Impatiens (New Guinea)	Infinity Series (All Colors)	partial shade	14	17
Impatiens (New Guinea)	Java White Improved	partial shade	17	21
Impatiens (New Guinea)	Super Sonic Cherry Cream	shade	14	12
Lantana	Bandana Series (All Colors)	sun	16	28
Lantana	Landmark Series (All Colors)	sun	32	43
Lantana	Luscious Lemonade	sun	23	32
Lantana	New Gold	sun	19	56
Lantana	Patriot Hot Country (Bright Pink/Orange)	sun	18	25
Lantana	The Desert Sunset (Pink/Orange/Yellow)	sun	28	55
Lantana	Trailing Lavender	sun	21	44
Marigold	Antigua Primrose (Yellow)	sun	16	14
Marigold	Inca II Primrose (Yellow)	sun	22	16
Marigold	Inca II Yellow	sun	20	16
Marigold	Perfection Mix	sun	29	19
Marigold	Perfection Yellow	sun	30	17

Plants for Flower Display

Flower	Cultivar/Color	Planting Location Preference	Height (inches)	Width (inches)
Melampodium	Derby (Orange)	sun	20	17
Melampodium	Million Gold	sun	17	20
Melampodium	Showstar Yellow	sun	22	27
Nierembergia	Mont Blanc (White)	sun	5	16
Ornamental Grass	Melinis 'Savannah' Ruby Grass	sun	32	32
Pentas	Northern Lights Lavender	sun	18	15
Petunia	Baby Duck Yellow	sun	16	45
Petunia	Dream Series (All Colors)	sun	10	28
Petunia	Jamboree (White)	sun	9	32
Petunia	Blushing Princess (White/Lavender)	sun	18	35
Petunia	Carpet Lilac	sun	16	23
Petunia	Cascadia Series (All Colors)	sun	6	39
Petunia	Easy Wave Series (All Colors)	sun	7	45
Petunia	Fantasy Crystal Red	sun	12	15
Petunia	Fantasy Mix	sun	10	18
Petunia	Hurrah Series (All Colors)	sun	17	22
Petunia	Kahuna, both colors, Violet and White	sun	27	51
Petunia	Littletonia Pink	sun	12	30
Petunia	Littletonia Rose	sun	12	30
Petunia	Madness Series (All Colors)	sun	12	32
Petunia	Marco Polo Odyssey (Lavender)	sun	11	28
Petunia	Misty Lilac Wave	sun	12	36
Petunia	Plush Purple	sun	8	36
Petunia	Plush Salmon	sun	10	36
Petunia	Primetime Lavender	sun	19	24
Petunia	Primetime Rose	sun	16	24
Petunia	Sun Ray	sun	10	36
Petunia	Shockwave Series (All Colors)	sun	14	36
Petunia	Storm Series (All Colors)	sun	17	35
Petunia	Suncatcher Pink Vein	sun	11	25
Petunia	Suncatcher White	sun	12	22
Petunia	Supertunia Cotton Candy	sun	10	48
Petunia	Supertunia Bordeaux (Lavender/Deep Purple)	sun	7	46
Petunia	Supertunia Giant Pink	sun	6	45
Petunia	Supertunia Lavender Pink	sun	7	48
Petunia	Supertunia Mini Series (All Colors)	sun	7	48
Petunia	Supertunia Royal Magenta	sun	6	40
Petunia	Supertunia Royal Velvet (Purple)	sun	6	33
Petunia	Supertunia White	sun	5	39
Petunia	Supertunia Vista Bubble Gum (Pink)	sun	18	45
Petunia	Supertunia Vista Fuchsia	sun	14	48
Petunia	Tidal Wave Hot Pink	sun	22	37
Petunia	Tidal Wave Silver	sun	22	28
Portulaca	Fairytales Series (All Colors)	sun	11	23
Rudbeckia	Prairie Sun (Yellow)	sun	24	16
Salvia farinacea	Reference Blue and White	sun	25	20
Salvia farinacea	Silver	sun	23	19
Salvia farinacea	Victoria (Blue)	sun	27	23
Scaevola	Blue Shamrock	sun	15	26
Scaevola	Blue Velvet	sun	13	24
Scaevola	New Wonder (Purple)	sun	10	22
Scaevola	Outback Fan Dancer	sun	8	23
Scaevola	Outback Purple Fan Flower	sun	15	28
Scaevola	Whirlwind Blue	sun	10	18
Snapdragon (Antirrhinum)	Rocket Cherry	sun	28	10
Verbena	Escapade Pink	sun	14	24
Verbena	Lanai Bright Pink	sun	15	24
Verbena	Lanai Lavender Star	sun	15	24
Verbena	Superbena Burgundy	sun	18	24

Plants for Flower Display

Flower	Cultivar/Color	Planting Location Preference	Height (inches)	Width (inches)
Verbena	Superbena Large Lilac Blue	sun	16	24
Vinca (Catharanthus)	Cooler Series (All Colors)	sun	18	15
Vinca (Catharanthus)	First Kiss Blueberry	sun	8	10
Vinca (Catharanthus)	Mediterranean Series (All Colors)	sun	7	16
Vinca (Catharanthus)	Nirvana Series (All Colors)	sun	8	18
Vinca (Catharanthus)	Pacifica Series (All Colors)	sun	13	18
Vinca (Catharanthus)	Sunshower White with Eye	sun	10	16
Vinca (Catharanthus)	Sunstorm Orchid	sun	16	17
Vinca (Catharanthus)	Sunstorm White with Eye	sun	14	18
Vinca (Catharanthus)	Titan Series (All Colors)	sun	15	23
Zinnia	Crystal White	sun	15	24
Zinnia	Oklahoma Series (All Colors)	sun	26	25
Zinnia	Profusion Orange	sun	16	22
Zinnia	Profusion Red	sun	16	22
Zinnia	Profusion White	sun	16	22
Zinnia	Short Stuff Orange	sun	11	20

Plants for Foliage Display

Basil (Ocimum)	Pesto Perpetuo	sun or shade	32	18
Canna	Tropicana (Variegated Leaves Orange Bloom)	sun	70	18
Coleus	Aurora Black Cherry	sun or shade	19	17
Coleus	Kaleidoscope Mix	shade	11	16
Coleus	Stained Glassworks Kiwi Fern (Purple Green Red)	shade	19	21
Coleus	Stained Glassworks Rose Explosion	shade	27	23
Coleus	Rainbow Mix	shade	30	27
Coleus	Sedona	part sun/shade	30	22
Coleus	Wizard Scarlet	shade	25	20
Cyperus Papyrus	King Tut	sun	50	24
Dahlia	Mystic Illusion	sun	30	18
Ornamental Millet	Purple Majesty	sun	48	28
Ornamental Pepper	Black Pearl	sun	28	16
Ornamental Pepper	Calico	sun	19	15
Ornamental Pepper	Chilly Chili (Red/Yellow)	sun	14	17
Ornamental Pepper	Explosive Ember	sun	15	16
Ornamental Pepper	Medusa	sun	7	6
Ornamental Pepper	Purple Flash	sun	24	18
Perilla	Magilla (Purple/Pink)	sun	30	20
Plectranthus	Silver Shield	sun	20	19
Sedum	Lemon Coral	sun	5	20
Sweet Potato (Ipomoea)	Ace of Spades	sun	10	48
Sweet Potato (Ipomoea)	Blackie	sun	10	54
Sweet Potato (Ipomoea)	Lady Fingers	sun	10	40
Sweet Potato (Ipomoea)	Marguerite	sun	8	54
Sweet Potato (Ipomoea)	Sweet Caroline Bewitched	sun	8	40
Sweet Potato (Ipomoea)	Sweet Caroline Black Heart	sun	10	48
Sweet Potato (Ipomoea)	Sweet Caroline Purple Heart	sun	10	48
Sweet Potato (Ipomoea)	Sweet Caroline Red	sun	8	40
Sweet Potato (Ipomoea)	Sweet Caroline Bronze	sun	8	40
Sweet Potato (Ipomoea)	Sweet Caroline Yellow Green	sun	6	30
Sweet Potato (Ipomoea)	Tri Color	sun	6	36

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