

2018- The Year of Coreopsis

The final plant being featured this year by the National Garden Bureau is Coreopsis.

In the language of flowers, Coreopsis means “always cheerful,” and these delightful natives of the Americas live up to this designation in glorious fashion. Equally, at home in naturalized prairie settings or manicured landscapes, Coreopsis provide a lovely sunny presence wherever they make their home.



Although typically seen in colors of yellow and gold, many species also contain red, bronze and burgundy colors and have been commonly used as dyes in native fabrics. The flowers were also boiled into teas by the natives of North America before the introduction of coffee. In recognition of the lineage of the genus, Florida and Mississippi have named Coreopsis as their state’s wildflower.

Some History of Coreopsis

As many as 80 Coreopsis species can be found naturalized in the Americas with 38 listed in the lower forty-eight states. A member of the Asteraceae family, Coreopsis have daisy-like flowers typically with a bronze or brown center. Its common name – Tickseed - points to the appearance of its seed rather than the beauty of its flowers, which derives from the Greek ‘korus’ meaning bed-bug and ‘opsis’ meaning appearance.



Regardless of the less-than-endearing common name, Coreopsis carries on with its “always cheerful” show of abundant, colorful flowers in the spring and summer garden!

Key Species and Cultivars

Coreopsis commonly grown in Nebraska gardens include the following species.

Perennials

- Large flowered tickseed, *C. grandiflora*. The variety ‘Early Sunrise’ was an All-America Selection 1989 and remains among the best-selling Coreopsis for garden use. Plants self-seed and spread by rhizomes. Hardy to Zone 4.
- Lobed tickseed, *C. auriculata*. ‘Nana’ is a shorter, more compact cultivar reaching only 6-9 inches in height, compared to the species at 12-18 inches. Plants spread by stolons. Hardy to Zone 4.
- Threadleaf tickseed, *C. verticillata*. ‘Moonbeam’ and ‘Zagreb’ are commonly used cultivars. Spreads by rhizomes and self-seeding. Hardy to Zone 3.

Annuals

- Plains coreopsis, *C. tinctoria* - self-seeding. Height 2-4 feet.

Coreopsis species have been heavily hybridized for decades to improve plant flowering, flower size, and disease tolerance. 'Sunkiss' (*C. grandiflora*); the Big Bang™, HARDY JEWEL™ and UpTick™ series (*C. x hybrida*) are among the most significant new introductions and represent dedication and years of effort by plant breeders.

There are dozens of commercially available cultivars varying in height from 6" to 3' and covering a broad color range from the traditional yellow to caramel, bronze, red, gold, rose and cream-white. They can be incorporated into nearly any area of the garden where the height and color are needed.

Care and Cultivation

Gardeners have been growing Coreopsis for centuries. This is due in large part to their care-free nature. The J.T. Lovett Company of Little Silver NJ listed *C. lanceolata* as "one of the finest hardy plants grown" in their catalog of 1891 adding "a bed of it in full bloom is a sight indeed!"

Today, Coreopsis is in the top ten genera of cultivated perennial plants. Coreopsis commercially available in today's retail outlets prefer sunny locations with well-drained soils. Coreopsis in the garden does benefit from fertilizing in the spring to encourage new growth.

Most cultivars will re-bloom when old flowers are removed. This can be accomplished by removing individual spent flowers or by shearing the plant to 50% of its original flowering height. Re-blooming will occur within a few weeks.

Due to their abundance of flowers, Coreopsis is a pollinator magnet attracting bees and butterflies to their blossoms and birds to their seeds. They are also resistant to deer feeding and considered drought tolerant.

Although we believe Coreopsis to be a garden plant, they are equally at home in containers and will provide all the show and interest as a container plant. Consider varieties in the *C. grandiflora* and *C. x hybrida* group for container use.

Given the beauty, resilience, and popularity of Coreopsis, it is entirely fitting that the National Garden Bureau has designated 2018 as the Year of the Coreopsis.

For more information on this year's featured plants, visit the National Garden Bureau. www.ngb.org.
Source - National Garden Bureau.

Your Suggestions are Welcome!

Is there a lawn and gardening topic you would like to learn more about? Sarah Browning is an Extension Educator with Nebraska Extension and can be contacted by phone 402 441-7180, by mail at 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE 68528: or by e-mail sarah.browning@unl.edu.

Images from the National Garden Bureau.



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