



COLD TOLERANT ANNUALS Care

There isn't any other type of plant that gives more for less investment to the gardener than annuals. After a long local winter, most of us can hardly wait for those spring blooms and early vegetables. Along with all the bulbs you put in last fall, you can add some early color and interest to your landscape with cold-tolerant blooming annuals. All annuals fall into one of three groups. They are hardy, half-hardy or tender. Early in the spring, while there is still a good chance of frost, we are limited to those that are hardy. But, as you will see, there are many from which to choose.

An annual is any plant that would naturally survive only one season, going from germination to death in less than a year. Annuals are grown for the huge number of blooms/fruits they produce during their short lives.

Some annuals have a built in ability to take much colder temperatures than others. The key to making use of a plant's cold tolerance is to acclimate them before planting.

Cool weather annuals thrive only when the weather is cool. Once it gets hot, they are done for the season. Cold tolerance is simply based on the ability to withstand low temperatures. Some cold-tolerant annuals are also cool weather plants, giving out by early to midsummer. Examples of cold-tolerant/cool weather plants are spinach, lettuce, radishes, peas, pansies, and calendula.

In our area, most gardeners have good luck with snapdragons and sweet alyssum. Petunias are actually rather cold tolerant when acclimated too, and they will bloom on and on.

This will vary according to the specific variety of annual. Acclimated pansies can tolerate several degrees below freezing, so they are usually the first to be planted. Most other bloomers tolerate light frosts, but not freezing. Acclimated cold-tolerant vegetables can go in the ground as soon as it is workable.

All these annuals will do fine in containers, but keep in mind that they will not have the benefit of the warmth in the ground to help them on cold nights. You might want to wait an extra week or two before planting your containers, or choose the hardiest of the plants available.

If fertilizing, avoid fertilizer with ammonium nitrate. Ammonium nitrate can only be available to plants if the ground temperatures remain above 62 degrees

Covering the plants with something lightweight will give you a few degrees insurance. Be sure to remove the cover before the sun hits the plants. Never use plastic covers or metal containers as a covering.

Keep them as healthy as possible. Make sure they aren't water stressed and fertilize very lightly while it is still cold to avoid lots of tender new growth.

Cold-Tolerant Annual Flowers	Cold-Tolerant Vegetables
Pansy Viola Sweet Alyssum Stock Snapdragon Dianthus Sweet Peas Forget Me Not Calendula Lobelia	Lettuce Radish Peas Spinach Cabbage Cauliflower Broccoli Brussel Sprouts Kale Kohlrabi

