

Amazing Annuals for Impact

InVigorate U – 2026

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1. Amazing Annuals for Impact, Wellness Garden, Rotary Botanical Gardens (RBG), Janesville, WI
2. sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*)
3. Annual – Modified Definition
 - a. Plant that completes its lifecycle in one growing season
 - b. Non-hardy perennials
 - c. Tropicals that are not winter hardy in our climate but are used during the growing season
 - d. Any plant that we use for one growing season that is destined for another “destination”
 - e. Rhythm and Blues petunia (*Petunia* ‘Balperblues’, 12”)
4. A Bit of Perspective
 - a. “A valuable annual should not be neglected because it is so common and easy to grow and because it was so much overdone in monotonous lines in the old bedding days. Many good plants have of late suffered from a kind of mistaken prejudice on this account (but) it should be remembered that if the plant was misused it was not the fault of the plant but that of the general acceptance of a poor sort of gardening.” Gertrude Jekyll (1916)
 - b. ‘Mango Tango’ French marigold (*Tagetes patula*, 10”)
5. marigolds at Six Flags Great America (Gurnee, IL)
6. Big Duck® Orange African marigold (*Tagetes erecta*, 16”)
7. Zenith™ Red hybrid marigold (*Tagetes hybrida*, 14”)
8. Alumia™ Red French marigold (*Tagetes patula*, 12”)
9. Why Bother with Annuals?
 - a. Not inexpensive
 - b. Availability challenges
 - c. Post planting maintenance and care
 - d. Needy
 - e. Limited growing season
 - f. *Petunia* Evening Scentsation™
10. Bedding
11. Accent
12. Massing
13. examples at RBG
14. Statement, popcorn cassia (*Cassia didymobotrya*, 48”+)
15. ‘Elephant Head’ amaranth (*Amaranthus gangeticus*, 60”)
16. Annuals in the Landscape
 - a. Limitless applications in the landscape although the “inputs” involved for success need to be understood
 - b. The sheer volume of available varieties and selections is mind-boggling (and daunting!)
 - c. Breeding and trialing continues in earnest

- d. In 2023, 50% of purchased plants were annuals (\$2.5 billion)
- e. Raker Trial Garden (MI)
- 17. Container Potential, RBG, 'Thailand Giant' elephant ear (*Leucocasia gigantea*, 72"++), 'Canary Wings' begonia (*Begonia hybrida*, 18"), golden 'Goldilocks' creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*, trailing)
- 18. Container Opportunities
 - a. Expanded growing opportunity (literally and figuratively!)
 - b. Seasonal transitions (\$)
 - c. "Bookend" the slam dunk summer displays with early spring and fall
 - d. Consider winter arrangements
 - e. Commitment for care
 - f. Examples
- 19. Edgerton Hospital (WI) example (2025)
- 20. cardinal climber (*Ipomoea x multifida*, climber)
- 21. Initial Considerations
 - a. Available space / usage
 - b. Budget (\$)
 - c. Comprehensive watering plan
 - d. Critters?
 - e. Maintenance plan
 - f. Seasonal focus?
 - g. Sourcing challenges
 - h. *Convolvulus* 'Royal Ensign Blue'
- 22. 'Royal Blue Ensign' dwarf morning glory (*Convolvulus tricolor*, 12", trailing)
- 23. Caretaking Commitment
 - a. Availability is not the primary challenge
 - b. The commitment to proper care for the duration of their contribution is the most important factor
 - c. New plants aren't necessarily good and good plants aren't necessarily new!
 - d. *Celosia plumosa* Kelos® Fire Lime
- 24. precipitation
- 25. Caretaking Commitment
 - a. "Plunk and run" won't cut it!
 - b. Understand the soil, solar exposure, watering requirements, etc. and plan accordingly
 - c. Fertilizer
 - d. Tweaking and tending
 - e. Extended show
 - f. Transitions
- 26. examples
- 27. Sourcing and Availability
 - a. Who is carrying what!?
 - b. Retail vs. wholesale
 - c. Pot size (\$ - \$\$\$)
 - d. Custom growing
 - e. Seed options
 - f. Substitutions

- g. *Mirabilis* 'Limelight'
- 28. Availability Concerns
 - a. Befriend your local growers! (donut diplomacy)
 - b. Pre-ordering (with substitutions)
 - c. Consider "format"
 - d. Budget concerns
 - e. Research, scour and source early!
- 29. Coleus as an Example
- 30. Annuals – Features of Note
 - a. Flowers (color, shape, size, etc.)
 - b. Foliage (color and texture)
 - c. Fruiting structures
 - d. Fragrance
 - e. Pollinator value
 - f. Size considerations
 - g. *Gomphrena* 'Cosmic Flare'
- 31. example
- 32. Flower Architecture
 - a. Consideration of annuals for flower color, while valid, should also consider the shape of the flower
 - b. Daisies, buttons, trumpets, spires, etc.
 - c. Variability of flower architecture is impactful in all compositions
 - d. *Celosia* Intenz™ Dark Purple Imp.
- 33. example
- 34. 'Merlin Blue Morn' petunia (*Petunia*, 12")
- 35. Farina® Blue mealycup sage (*Salvia farinacea*, 18")
- 36. Beautiful *Bidens*
- 37. Blazing™ Embers beggar tickseed (*Bidens ferulifolia*, 14")
- 38. Namid™ Compact Red + Yellow Eye beggar tickseed (*Bidens ferulifolia* 'KLEBF21468', 10")
- 39. Taka Tuka® Red Glow beggar tickseed (*Bidens ferulifolia*, 12")
- 40. Taka Tuka® White and Yellow beggar tickseed (*Bidens ferulifolia*, 12")
- 41. 'Prairie Sun' gloriosa daisy (*Rudbeckia hirta*, 30")
- 42. Solar Sisters™ double gloriosa daisy (*Rudbeckia hirta* 'Holtsoosis851', 24")
- 43. Summerina® Yellow echibeckia (*xEchibeckia*™, 24")
- 44. Awesome *Angelonia*
- 45. Serenita® Sky Blue summer snapdragon (*Angelonia angustifolia* 'PAS1342273', 14")
- 46. Guardian Angel™ Berry Sparkler summer snapdragon (*Angelonia angustifolia* 'Balguaraberk', 18")
- 47. AngelDance™ Violet Bicolor summer snapdragon (*Angelonia angustifolia* 'Baladaniob', 18")
- 48. AngelDance™ Fuchsia Bicolor summer snapdragon (*Angelonia angustifolia* 'Baladanucb', 18")
- 49. AngelFlare™ Black summer snapdragon (*Angelonia angustifolia* 'Balangflac', 12")
- 50. Vermillionaire® cigar flower (*Cuphea hybrida*, 24")
- 51. 'Baby Peace' compact lion's ear (*Leonotis leonurus*, 36")
- 52. Gorgeous *Gomphrena*

53. 'Strawberry Fields' globe amaranth (*Gomphrena haageana*, 18")
54. 'All Around Purple' globe amaranth (*Gomphrena globosa*, 18")
55. 'Fireball Pink' globe amaranth (*Gomphrena pulchella*, 30")
56. 'Fireworks' and Truffula™ Pink ('PAST0517E') at 48" and 30" tall respectively
57. 'Dracula' cockscomb (*Celosia cristata*, 16")
58. Onyx™ Orange ornamental hot pepper (*Capsicum annuum*, 12")
59. 'Uchu' and 'Hot Pops Purple ornamental hot peppers (*Capsicum annuum*)
60. Fantastic Foliage
 - a. Foliage can be the primary ornamental attribute of the plant
 - b. Foliage can be supplemental to the flowers
 - c. Wide range of textures from very fine to dramatically bold
 - d. All compositions benefit from robust foliage contributions
 - e. *Abutilon* 'Savitzii'
61. examples
62. The Nuances of Foliage
 - a. Coloration
 - b. Size of the foliage
 - c. Foliage shape
 - d. Glossiness vs. matte
 - e. Fragrance
 - f. Richness and depth
 - g. Bold prominence
63. 'Charity' scented geranium (*Pelargonium* sp., 18"), rose-lemon scent
64. Dragon's Breath® plume celosia (*Celosia plumosa*, 24")
65. Classy Coleus
66. Under the Sea™ 'Copper Coral' coleus (*Coleus scutellarioides*, 20")
67. FlameThrower™ Adobo Pink coleus (*Coleus scutellarioides* 'Balflamobin', 18")
68. Down Town® Greenville coleus (*Coleus scutellarioides*, 28")
69. 'Skeletal' coleus (*Coleus scutellarioides*, 12")
70. Under the Sea™ 'Fishnet Gold' coleus (*Coleus scutellarioides*, 18")
71. Under the Sea™ 'Seaweed' coleus (*Coleus scutellarioides*, 18")
72. Spitfire coleus (*Coleus scutellarioides* 'UF17-109-09', 18")
73. 'Golden Delicious' pineapple sage (*Salvia elegans*, 36")
74. 'Black Varnish' ebony plant (*Pseuderanthemum carruthersii* var. *atropurpureum*, 24"+)
75. 'Plum Crazy' ornamental shamrock (*Oxalis spiralis* ssp. *vulcanicola*, 8")
76. 'New Zealand Purple' castor bean (*Ricinus communis*, 8'+)
77. cutleaf castor bean (*Ricinus communis*, 8'+)
78. *Colocasia* and *Alocasia*
 - a. Unbelievable assortment of options
 - b. Myriad uses
 - c. They are an investment \$ for a brief window of only four months
 - d. Size matters!
 - e. Winter/storage treatments
 - f. *Colocasia* 'Hawaiian Punch'
79. Royal Hawaiian® 'Tropical Storm' elephant ear (*Colocasia esculenta*, 36")
80. Royal Hawaiian® 'Aloha' elephant ear (*Colocasia esculenta*, 48")
81. 'Maurelii' Abyssinian banana (*Ensete ventricosum*, 60"++)

82. tropical storage
83. SolarPower™ Red Heart sweet potato vine (*Ipomoea batatas*, 12", compact spreader to 36") with *Carex buchananii* 'Red Rooster' (24")
84. Sweet Caroline Medusa™ Black sweet potato vine (*Ipomoea batatas* 'NCORNSP-033SCMP', 12", trailing 30")
85. Sweet Caroline Medusa™ Green sweet potato vine (*Ipomoea batatas* 'NCORNSP-027SCMG', 12", trailing 30")
86. SolarTower™ Lime and Black sweet potato vine (*Ipomoea batatas* 'Balsotowlim' and 'Balsotowac', 84" climbing)
87. *Mandevilla* and *Dipladenia*
 - a. So many exciting varieties available with more coming soon!
 - b. *Mandevilla* vs. *Dipladenia*
 - c. Don't forget your "vertical opportunities"
 - d. The tropical contribution and intense colors are significant contributors
 - e. *Dipladenia* Tropica™ Grande Citrine
88. Silver Yarns licorice plant (*Helichrysum italicum* 'HYBHS23157', 14")
89. 'Colchester White' dusty Miller (*Centaurea cineraria*, 24-30")
90. 'Silver Falls' trailing aluminum plant (*Dichondra argentea*, 2" trailing)
91. Silver Threads licorice plant (*Helichrysum italicum* 'HYBHS18538')
92. silver feather (*Tanacetum ptarmiciflorum*, 18")
93. Silver Swirl snowflake dusty Miller (*Centaurea ragusina* 'Balcentsirl', 12")
94. Angel Wings® sea cabbage (*Senecio candicans* 'Senaw', 18")
95. Pegasus® begonia (*Begonia hybrida* 'Gryphon', 18")
96. Shadow King® 'Black Cherry' rex begonia (*Begonia rex-cultorum*, 12")
97. Jurassic Dino™ 'Greenie' rex begonia (*Begonia rex-cultorum*, 12")
98. example
99. Annuals for Fragrance
 - a. Wide assortment available
 - b. Emission vs. tactile engagement
 - c. Lengthy "scent windows"
 - d. Amazing contributions in close proximity to active spaces
 - e. Container potential
 - f. Fragrant stocks (*Matthiola*)
100. Aromagica® Purple fragrant heliotrope (*Heliotropium arborescens* 'INHELAROPU', 24")
101. pineapples (*Cephalophora aromatica*, 18")
102. chocolate cosmos (*Cosmos atrosanguineus*, 24")
103. Event Scentsation™ petunia (*Petunia hybrida*, 8" trailing)
104. 'The Bride' sweet sultan (*Centaurea moschata*, 30")
105. 'Jasmine' flowering tobacco (*Nicotiana alata*, 48")
106. peppermint-scented geranium (*Pelargonium tomentosum*, 15"+)
107. 'Mosquitaway Lizzy' angel geranium (*Pelargonium hybrida*, 15")
108. 'Amethyst Improved' sweet basil (*Ocimum basilicum*, 18")
109. 'Bonsai' compact basil (*Ocimum basilicum*, 12")
110. Raker Trials (MI)
111. Trilogy™ Red Gen 2 petunia (*Petunia hybrida*, 12")
112. INFERNO™ The Orange! petunia (*Petunia hybrida*, 12")

113. Supertunia Vista® Jazzberry® petunia (*Petunia hybrida* 'WNPESVJAZ', 24")
114. POTUNIA™+ Starfish petunia (*Petunia hybrida*, 16")
115. Surprise® Sparkle Blue Vein petunia (*Petunia hybrida*, 12")
116. 'Firefly' petunia (*Petunia hybrida*, 10")
117. Superbells® Cardinal Star™ million bells (*Calibrachoa hybrida* 'USCAL69404', 12")
118. LIA™ 'Abstract Lemon Cherry' million bells (*Calibrachoa hybrida*, 14")
119. Bumble Bee™ Hot Pink million bells (*Calibrachoa hybrida*, 12")
120. Superbells® Morning Star™ million bells (*Calibrachoa hybrida*, 12")
121. MiniFamous® Uno Double PinkTastic double million bells (*Calibrachoa hybrida* 'KLECA18085', 10")
122. SuperCal® Premium Sunset Orange petchoa (x*Petchoa* 'SAKPXC032', 24")
123. SuperCal® Lavender Star petchoa (x*Petchoa* 'SAKPXC026', 28")
124. EnViva™ Pink petchoa (x*Petchoa* 'KLECA22835', 16"), AAS
125. Firehouse™ 'White Improved' verbena (*Verbena peruviana*, 9")
126. RioGrande™ Orange ornamental purslane (*Portulaca oleracea* 'NUFPO25095', 4", trailing)
127. RioGrande™ Citrus crush ornamental purslane (*Portulaca oleracea* 'NUFPO22054', 8", trailing)
128. ColorBlast® 'Double Guava' ornamental purslane (*Portulaca hybrida*, 8", trailing)
129. Cool *Catharanthus*
130. Mediterranean XP 'Burgundy Halo' annual vinca (*Catharanthus roseus*, 6")
131. Nirvana® XDR 'Blackberry' annual vinca (*Catharanthus roseus*, 18")
132. Soiree® Series
133. Soiree Kawaii® White Peppermint annual vinca (*Catharanthus hybrida*, 10")
134. Soiree Kawaii® Hot Pink annual vinca (*Catharanthus hybrida*, 10")
135. Soiree® Flamenco Electric Salmon Eye annual vinca (*Catharanthus hybrida*, 12")
136. Soiree® Flamenco Plum Velvet annual vinca (*Catharanthus hybrida*, 12")
137. Include Impatiens!
138. Beacon® Series impatiens (*Impatiens walleriana*)
139. New Guinea Impatiens
140. examples
141. 'Roller Coaster Tangy Taffy' New Guinea impatiens (*Impatiens hawkeri*, 18")
142. 'Roller Coaster Hot Pink' New Guinea impatiens (*Impatiens hawkeri*, 18")
143. *Begonia* Hybrids
144. These are ALL Excellent!
 - a. Whopper® Series (34", 7 varieties)
 - b. BIG® Series (20", 10 varieties)
 - c. Megawatt™ Series (28", 7 varieties)
 - d. Viking® Series (24", 9 varieties)
 - e. Stonehedge™ Series (48", 5 varieties)
145. examples
146. 'Canary Wings' begonia (*Begonia hybrida*, 18")
147. Design Tips with Annuals
 - a. Consider proximity to viewer (distance and angle)
 - b. Lean heavily into foliage contributions (color and/or texture)
 - c. Consider a 50/50 ratio of "flower power" to "fantastic foliage"

- 148. d. Don't neglect those "bookend seasons" of early spring and very late summer
Design Tips with Annuals
 - a. Make sourcing connections the fall previous to acquisition
 - b. Be fluid with substitutions...everything has a suitable replacement in a design scheme
 - c. Don't neglect container opportunities
 - d. Make TLC arrangements for your absences
- 149. examples
- 150. Shop Locally
- 151. Family Gardening
- 152. In Summary
 - a. Examine opportunities!
 - b. Determine scope of the plantings
 - c. Confirm they will thrive beyond installation
 - d. Come up with a rough scheme
 - e. Be fluid with all designs from layout through maintenance
 - f. Maximize impact and longevity
- 153. Edgerton (WI) Hospital and Healing Garden
- 154. Thank You!

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