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HORTICULTURE EDUCATION

Annette Meyer Heisdorffer, PhD
Daviess County Extension Office

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Yellow Flowers Brighten the Landscape
Annette Meyer Heisdorffer, Ph.D.
Extension Agent for Horticulture – Daviess County

Even when the sky is overcast and gloomy, yellow flowers brighten the landscape and make us smile. Currently, the flowers of daffodils and forsythia wake up the landscape. A variety of flowering annuals and perennials included in the garden carry the cheery yellow color throughout the growing season.

Sunflowers (*Helianthus*) always make me happy. There are many yellow to lemon-yellow cultivars available. The height of this annual ranges from 2 feet tall to over 15 feet tall, therefore, one is available to fit your garden. The shorter ones are even suited for containers. It is best to plant them over serval weeks to have a continuous supply of blooms. The flower size ranges from small about 4 inches across to gigantic at over 1 foot across. A single flower is produced on one stem or there are multiple flowers produced per stem depending on the cultivar. Sunflowers are popular to use in floral arrangements. If you don't like the pollen falling on the table, select the pollenless cultivars. Sunflowers grow in full sun and well-drained soil. Check the seed packet for the recommended spacing between the plants.

Rudbeckia hirta 'Indian Summer' is a previous All American Selection Winner. This cultivar has bright yellow flowers 5 to 7 inches across. It is daisy-like with a brown center with single and semi-

double petals. The plant reaches 2 to 3 feet tall and spreads 1 to 2 feet. 'Indian Summer' is grown as an annual. Even though it is an annual, it self-seeds for the next year unless the flower heads are removed once finished blooming. This plant blooms from June through frost. It grows in full sun and tolerates hot dry conditions. It is a great addition to the garden that can be used as a cut flower to add to a bouquet on your table.

Calibrochoa, also known by the common name of million bells, includes cultivars with yellow flowers 0.5 inch across that is great for containers and hanging baskets. These plants would add a splash of eye-catching color. The plant habit ranges from upright reaching 6 to 12 inches tall to spreading 12 to 24 inches or more. This annual prefers well-drained soil, but not dry. They grow in full sun to part shade.

Mercardonia (*Mercardonia* spp.) forms a mass of little yellow flowers. It mixes well with other plants in a container. The plant forms a mound up to 5 inches tall and 1 to 2 feet wide. The little bell-shaped flowers cover the plant through the fall. With its sprawling habit, it hangs over the edge of containers and hanging baskets. The leaves are small, elliptical in shape, and green. It prefers well-drained soil and tolerates light shade.

Marigolds (*Tagetes erecta*) are annuals easily started from seed in the garden. There are several cultivars with yellow flowers. The flower size ranges from 2 to 3.5 inches across. The petal arrangement for most is fully double. Plant type ranges from short and compact at 6 to 12 inches tall or taller and more open at 14 to 18 inches tall. They prefer full sun and well-drained soil.

Another easy annual to grow from seed with yellow flowers is zinnia. There are two different popular species used in the garden. Both species prefer to grow in full sun and well-drained soil. The first one is *Zinnia angustifolia*, which is covered with small flowers and leaves, usually powdery mildew

resistant, and great to use as a border plant. Plant height ranges from 12 to 18 inches and a little wider spread.

The second species is *Zinnia elegans,* which has larger flowers and is good for floral arrangements. Short, compact cultivars that grow about 10 -12 inches tall are available for the edge of the border. Look for cultivars with some disease resistance to powdery mildew if possible. Otherwise, plan on making another planting a few weeks later to have a source of prettier flowers and remove the first planting. Depending on the cultivar, plant height ranges from 3 to 4 feet tall.

'Stella d' Oro' daylily (*Hemerocallis*) is a rebloomer with yellow flowers. This perennial plant is about 18 inches in height. The flowers are 2.75 inches across and begin to bloom heavily in May and continue throughout the summer. 'Happy Returns' has 3.5-inch diameter lemon-yellow flowers with the same plant habit as 'Stella d' Oro'. Daylilies are easy to grow, prefer full sun, but will grow in partial shade with fewer flowers. The soil should be well drained.

Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolate*) has daisy-like yellow flowers 1 to 2 inches across. The overall height is 2 to 3 feet tall with a 1 to 1.5 foot spread. This perennial can become weedy because it will self-seed. Don't be afraid to remove excess plants from the garden and relocate or share them, if you don't want them to naturalize and form large groups. This flower makes a great addition to floral arrangements. This coreopsis prefers to grow in well-drained soil and full sun. It tolerates drought and heat. There are many cultivars available of coreopsis with yellow flowers.

For more information on plants with yellow flowers, contact the Daviess County Cooperative Extension Service at 270-685-8480 or annette.heisdorffer@uky.edu.

Annette's Tip:

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Most of the big leaf hydrangeas bloom on old wood. It would be best to wait to prune them until you see new growth starting on the old stems to determine if the buds have been killed by cold temperatures.