

# SUMMER COLOR WITH STRUCTURES



**(2) A combination of annuals and perennials** looks good in the garden, and you can cut a few blooms for bouquets, too.

**S**tructures play an important role in any garden setting, big or small. And they can be colorful or subtle. Let me show you what I mean.

**ORNAMENTAL SUPPORTS** When annuals are at their peak, they take the stage, but when they go down, there's often nothing left. And a bed without longer-lasting backbone plants or structures will look stark. Here, purple clematis are growing on steel obelisks that have been painted bright blue. Even in winter, these structures will contribute some much-needed color.

Did you notice the sturdy ropes between the obelisks? Not only are they decorative, but they also help visually tie the structures together. And if you've ever tried to stake a bunch of sunflowers, you know how difficult it can be to make them stand straight. This is a simple and effective way to keep them and the Gloriosa daisies from flopping over on windy days or after a rain.

## Summer sunshine

Sunflowers are the classic summer flower. But keeping them standing straight is a chore. This iron and rope structure gives them something to lean into for subtle support.

- A** **Clematis** *Clematis 'Jackmanii'* Perennial vine; deep purple flowers in summer; full sun to part shade; 7 to 10 ft. tall, spreading; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 9, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 9 to 1
- B** **Annual sunflower** *Helianthus annuus 'Lemon Queen'* Annual; 6 to 10-in. golden blooms in summer; full sun; 5 to 6 ft. tall and 2 to 3 ft. wide; heat-tolerant in AHS zones 12 to 1
- C** **Gloriosa daisy** *Rudbeckia hirta 'Indian Summer'* Perennial; gold flowers; reseeds; full sun; 2 to 3 ft. tall, 1 to 2 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 8, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 8 to 1
- D** **Daylily** *Hemerocallis 'Stella d'Oro'* Perennial; golden yellow flowers repeat all summer; full sun; 9 to 12 in. tall and wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 10, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 10 to 1
- E** **Annual sunflower** *Helianthus annuus 'Baby Bear'* Annual; 8-in. golden blooms in summer; full sun; 48 to 66 in. tall, 24 to 36 in. wide; heat-tolerant in AHS zones 12 to 1

All the color from the structures and flowers is also great at distracting your eye from parts of the garden that are not at their peak. I bet you didn't even notice the 'Stella d'Oro' daylilies down front need to be deadhead. These repeat-blooming daylilies will be blooming again in a few weeks.

**KEEP A FEW CONTAINED** Containers are often an afterthought in a garden. You see a hole and think a container filled with flowers would be a good solution. Or you have a bare corner on your deck or patio that could use something colorful. Plan for long-lasting color in a shade garden by including a spot for container annuals. The iron structure in photo 3 raises some baskets up to eye level and helps add height and its dark color recedes, so it doesn't compete with the plants for your attention.

Going with color in containers lets you adjust the soil or moisture requirements for the plants. For example, this *ligularia* needs lots of moisture to keep its leaves standing erect. That might be too wet for some annuals. Or perhaps you live in an arid region where water is at a premium. Annuals are thirsty plants, but a few in containers won't require as much watering as an entire bed of them in the ground. And when you grow annuals in containers

you won't have to worry about whether they can compete with aggressive tree roots for moisture.

There's still more to see, so let's keep moving. You'll find tips from two more interesting beds on the next pages.

### Contained color

It can be tough to get lots of long-lasting color in shady spots — not because of the shade, but because of competition from tree roots. Planting a few shade-loving annuals in containers gets you around this problem.

- A** **Wishbone flower** *Torenia White Moon*™ Tender perennial; white flowers all summer; part shade; 8 to 10 in. tall, trailing; cold-hardy in USDA zones 10 to 11, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 12 to 1
- B** **New Guinea impatiens** *Impatiens Celebration Raspberry Rose* Tender perennial; flowers all summer; part shade; 10 to 12 in. tall and wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 9 to 11, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 12 to 1
- C** **Ligularia** *Ligularia 'The Rocket'* Perennial; yellow spikes of flowers in summer; full sun to part shade; 3 to 5 ft. tall, 2 to 4 ft. wide; cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 9, heat-tolerant in AHS zones 9 to 1



**(3) In a shaded situation** bright colors and white will attract the most attention. They look especially crisp against a dark backdrop. And the dark color of the iron structure keeps it from stealing the show.