



Daily home & garden tip: Plant annuals to attract beneficial insects

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By **The Oregonian**



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All-America Selections

Zinnia 'Zowie! Yellow Flame'

Early June is a good time to plant annuals such as zinnias, sunflowers, marigolds, daisies, cosmos, alyssum and dill to attract beneficial insects.

An Oregon State University study showed an increase of beneficial predators of aphids when they interplanted a broccoli field with alyssum. The alyssum attracted hover flies and parasitic wasps, which helped reduce aphid damage.

Find some ideas and information at the following:

Cool new annuals burst out of plant trials, such as 'Black Velvet,' the first-ever black petunia, along with the yellow- and pink-striped versions 'Phantom' and 'Pinstripe.' Also getting a lot of buzz is a new series of dahlias called Hypnotica. "Pretty Much Picasso," the pink-and-lime-green petunia that was the hottest annual of 2010, promises to continue to draw gardeners' attention.

Waterwise annuals and perennials, such as lavender, black-eyed Susan, purple coneflower and sunflower.

Easy, quick annuals to grow from seed, such as dill, larkspur, bachelor's button and California

poppy for cool-weather planting; zinnia, nasturtium and hyacinth bean for warm weather.

Annuals rescue the bare summer garden: Their ability to fill holes is not to be discounted.

Let your annuals seed themselves. Willing self-sowers include sweet peas, sunflowers, calendula, nasturtiums,

lettuce, dill and cilantro.

Beneficial insects: Here are portraits of the good guys: western damsel bug, ladybug, green lacewing, minute pirate bug.

Common-sense pest control: This outlines basic techniques for dealing with various specific pests, such as aphids (keep plants healthy; blast aphids off with a spray of water from the hose) and leaf miners (hand-pick them off leaves early; use floating row covers to keep them from laying eggs).

-- Homes & Gardens staff

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