

Besides their beauty in flower beds, borders, or bouquets, annuals provide quick, inexpensive, and simple answers to many a landscaping question or need--all inside a few packets of seed.

Borders of mixed annuals around the house will dress it up, while expressing your personality. Highly traveled areas, such as the spot around the garage corner or a route to the patio, merit special attention and should be spotted with annuals, even if only a few. Your friends will do a double take and share in the luxury as they pass by.

If your land slopes away too quickly for easy planting, modify the angle with intermediate terraces and a graceful flow of steps. Use railroad ties, timbers, or rocks to reshape and retain the earth, and fill in the pockets with low-growing shrubs and enhancing annuals. An alternative is planting a strong ground cover that will prevent erosion and then bring life and beauty to the slope by adding colorful blooms.

Often there's a block of land between the driveway and the entry to the house that suffers from a case of the blahs. Bring it to life with a few shrubs, a few rocks, and a mix of your favorite annuals. A narrow strip between the driveway and the property line can be made a wall of vibrant color with a pattern of annual flowers.

Take attention from eyesores, such as sheds and trash storage areas, by hiding them behind flowers. And perk up a delicious but unattractive vegetable garden by edging it with annuals or mixing flowers among the rows.