

Planting Pansies

How to plant and care for a tough beauty in a tough climate



Pansies are one of the best annual plants for Colorado in the fall and spring. They can handle our cool nights, and established plants tolerate light freezes and some snow. However, if covered by snow for too long they may not survive.

Where to Plant

Pansies planted in the ground will thrive longer than in pots or hanging baskets. In the fall, plant pansies in a sunny location. Spring planted pansies should be placed in the cooler, shadier areas of the garden to extend blooming through the spring and into the warmer summer season.

When to Plant

Be sure to acclimate nursery-grown pansies by gradually exposing them to outside conditions over a period of 3 to 5 days. Plant fall pansies when our temperatures start to cool, usually around late August to early September. This will provide time for the plants to get fully established before the cold temperatures set in. In the spring, pansies can be planted beginning in March, weather permitting.

How to Grow

Whether grown in the ground or pots, pansies prefer rich, moisture retentive but well-drained soil. In garden beds, work compost into the top 6-9 inches of soil before planting. In pots, any good quality potting soil will suffice. Fertilize regularly with either a water soluble or granular fertilizer. Pansies do not like hot weather and often stop blooming during the heat of the summer. Keep pansies moderately moist, but not wet. Allow soil to dry slightly before watering.

Varieties

Pansies, violas, and panola pansies are all popular, cold tolerant annuals that enjoy identical growing conditions. Panolas are a cross between violas and pansies, with a medium sized flower and a profuse blooming habit. Delicate looking violas have smaller flowers but the same rugged disposition. Pansies have the largest blossoms of the three, and are available in a huge variety of dazzling colors.

At a Glance

When to Plant :

Spring - beginning in March, weather permitting

Fall - late August to early September

Size: 6-9 inches tall and wide

Sun: Part sun to shade

Soil:

In Ground - well-drained soil amended with compost.

In Pots - good quality potting mix.

Fertilizer: Balanced. Apply according to manufacturer's directions.