

USDA HARDINESS ZONES

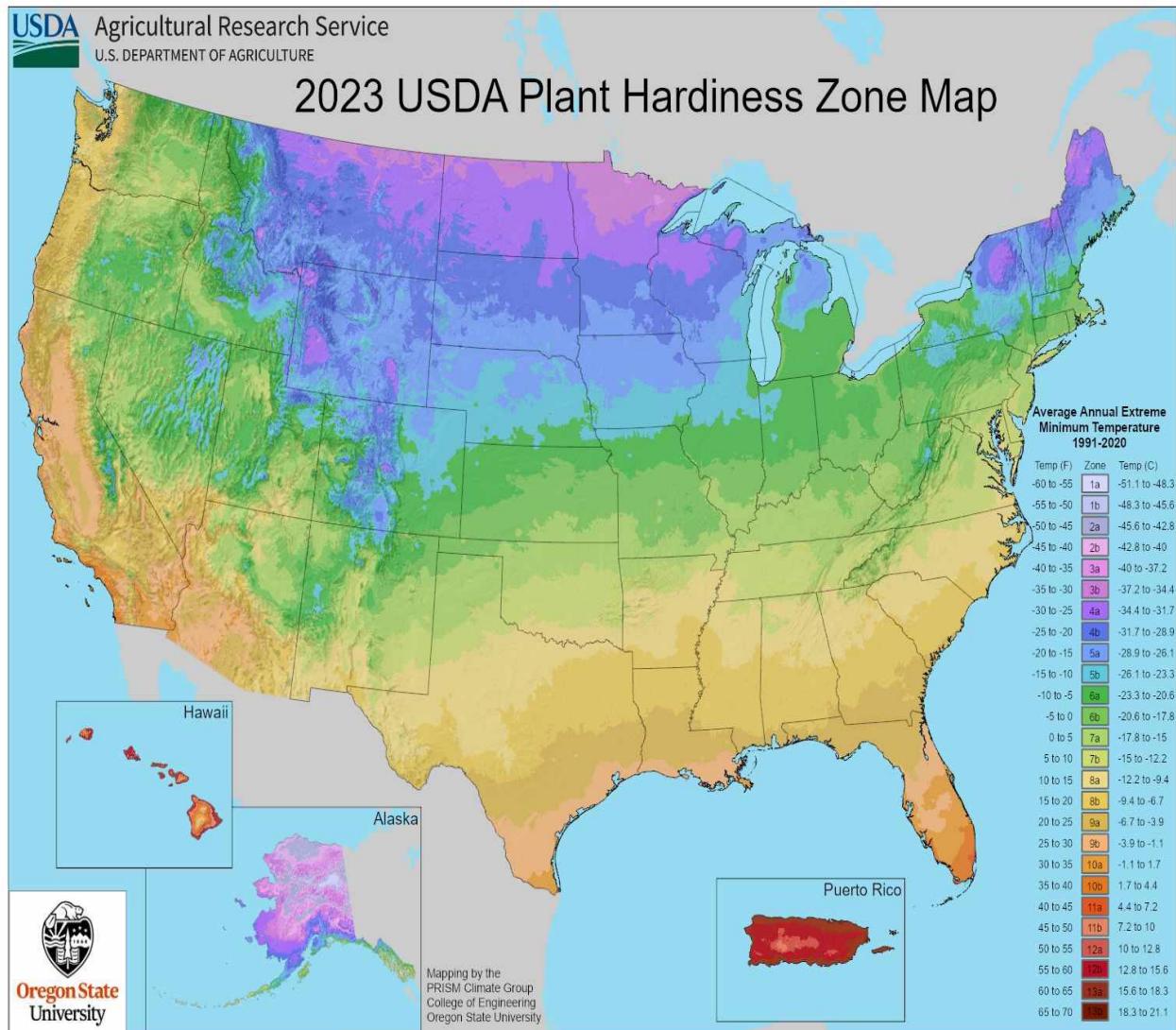
The USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map was created as a guide for gardeners and farmers to know what plants are most likely to survive and thrive in their particular growing area.

On November 15, 2023, the USDA (US Department of Agriculture) released the first updated version of the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map since 2012. The map is available for download free of charge. The website, <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov>, also has a “Tips for Growers” section about USDA research programs related to gardening.

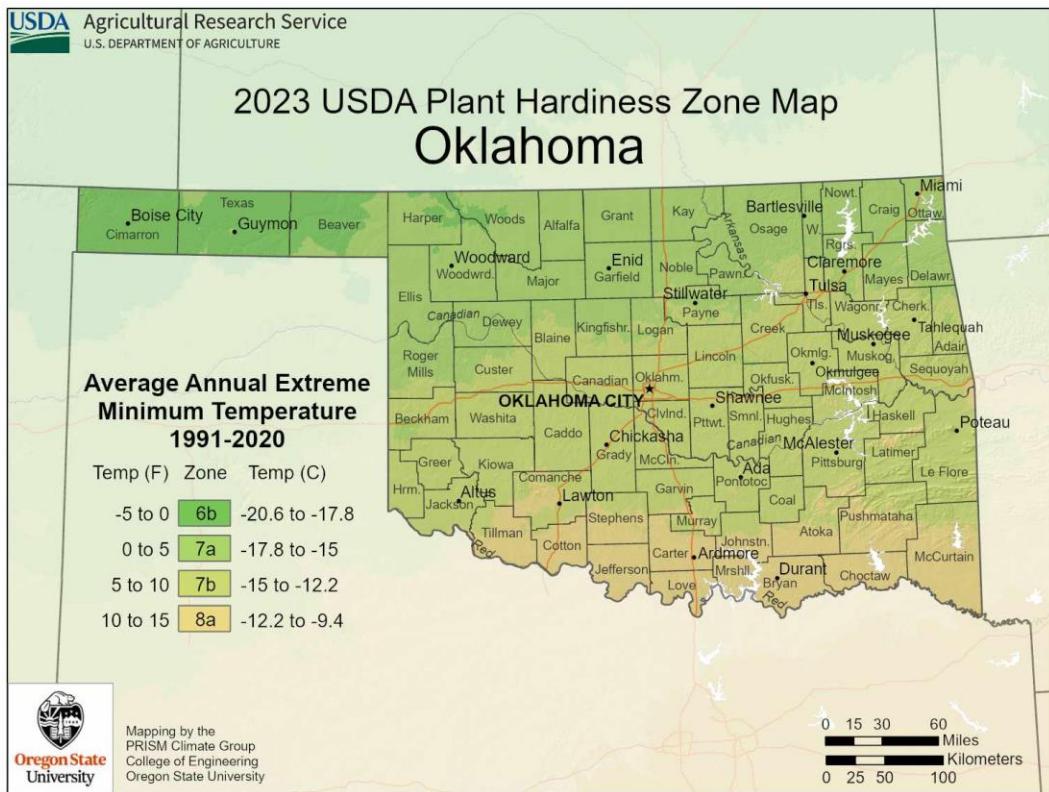
The USDA and Oregon State University PRISM Climate group jointly developed the new map. The 2023 version is based on 30-year averages of the lowest winter temperatures for all 50 states and Puerto Rico. This latest version incorporates data from 13,412 weather stations compared to the 7,893 reporting stations used by the 2012 map, thus allowing for better local accuracy. The map, drawn to a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile scale, shows average temperatures for each area but does not show microclimates. Microclimates are very localized areas that differ from the average of the surrounding climate. Cities may be heat islands, warmer than the surrounding area, while valleys and hills may be cooler. Microclimates may provide an advantage for plants not normally well suited for your area.

Like the 2012 version, the 2023 map is divided into 13 zones representing 10-degree Fahrenheit zones across the US and its territories. These zones are divided into 5-degree half zones, a and b. About half the country shifted to the next warmer half zone in the 2023 version, which means a

temperature change of 1-5 degrees. Most of this change is due to using more recent data collected between 1991 and 2020.

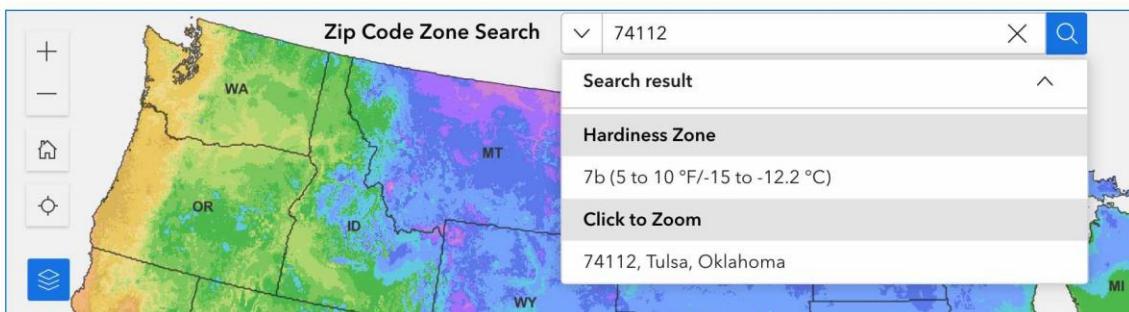


Oklahoma has four zones to its credit: 6b, 7a, 7b, and 8a. The panhandle (the coldest) is in zone 6b. The zones then get warmer as you go to the most southeastern corner, which is zone 8a. All but the extreme northern part of Tulsa County is in zone 7b.

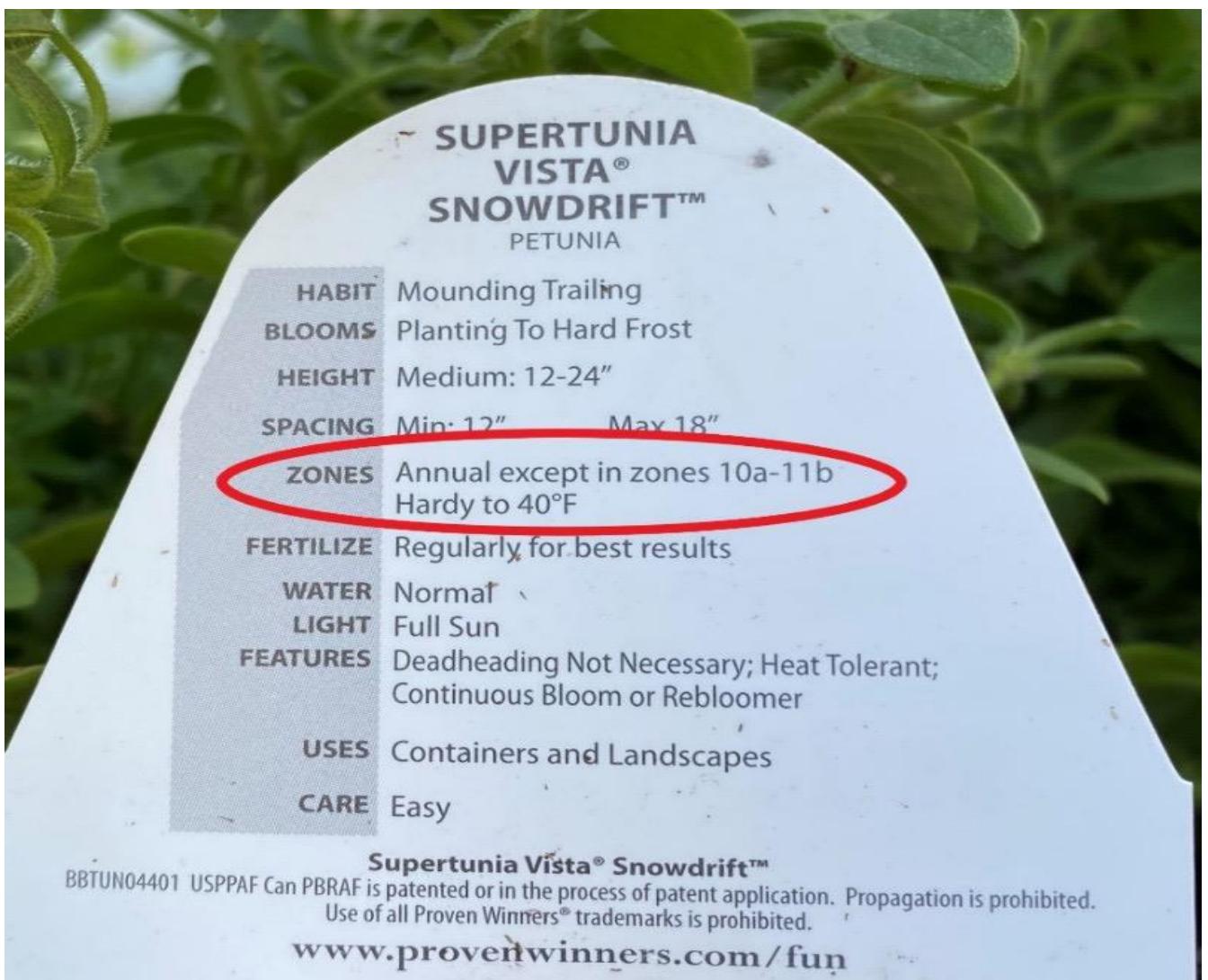


The updated map is interactive. Go to <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov>. Enter your ZIP code in the search box to find your location in the Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Click on the map at your location of interest to see the Plant Hardiness Zone classification there. The Tulsa Master Gardener's office is in zip code 74112 and it is in zone 7b, as shown below.

2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map



Hardiness zones are based on the **average** low temperature over many years, not on the *lowest* low temperatures ever recorded. This is a good thing to keep in mind if you are planning to grow a plant that is not rated for your zone. For instance, in 2021 we had record setting cold weather in February and many of us lost plants that had thrived here for many years. Be careful if you are planning to grow plants at the extreme northern edge of their recommended zone. Many plants can tolerate a little colder temperature but only for a very short period of time. Hardiness zones are usually noted in the planting and growing instructions on plant labels, as shown below.



Use the USDA Hardiness Zone map to help you make the best choices for your garden.

You can get answers to all your gardening questions by calling the Tulsa Master Gardeners Help Line at 918-746-3701, dropping by our Diagnostic Center at 4116 East 15th Street in Tulsa or by emailing us at mg@tulsamastergardeners.org,

Sources:

OSU Extension Service Fact Sheet: [HLA-6461 Basic Plant Care: Understanding Your Plant's Needs](#)

OSU Extension Service Fact Sheet: [HLA-6404 Winter Protection for Landscape Plants](#)

USDA Agricultural Research Service Prism Climate Group at Oregon State University

2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map