

# Five Heat-Loving Plants for Oklahoma Summers

When it comes to gardening in Oklahoma's hot and dry climate, selecting the right plant is crucial for success. Fortunately, the Oklahoma State University Extension office offers a wealth of resources to help gardeners choose plants that can withstand and even flourish in the intense heat. In this article, we will profile five popular heat-loving garden plants recommended by the extension office, covering a range of categories: an annual, a perennial, a shrub, a vegetable, and a tree.

## **Annual:** Portulaca (*Portulaca grandiflora*):

Portulaca, commonly known as rose moss, is an excellent choice for Oklahoma gardeners seeking vibrant color and heat tolerance in an annual plant. With its succulent-like foliage and brightly hued flowers in shades of pink, orange, yellow, and white, portulaca thrives in the hot summer months. This low-growing plant requires full sun and well-drained soil, making it an ideal addition to rock gardens, containers, or as ground cover. While it is not cold hardy, it may reseed.



## **Perennial:** Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*):

The black-eyed Susan is a popular perennial plant that can not only withstand the intense Oklahoma heat, but will also attract butterflies. This showstopper features an upright habit, with dramatic golden-yellow petals surrounding a dark brown contrasting center. Black-eyed Susans are known for their long blooming period, adding beauty to the garden from mid-summer through fall.

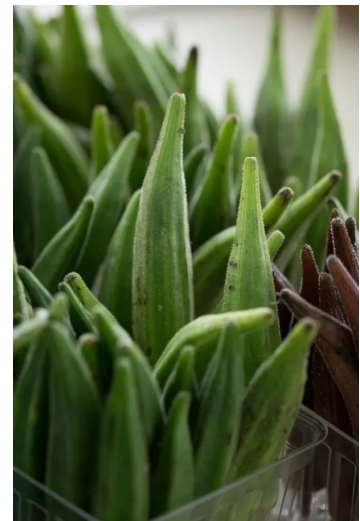
These hardy plants prefer full sun to light shade and well-drained soil, making them a reliable choice for Oklahoma gardens.

## **Shrub:** Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*):

Ninebark is not only planted for its prolific flower clusters, but also for its cascading habit, exfoliating bark and striking foliage options of reddish, yellow or green. This easy care shrub requires full sun and well-drained soil, making it an excellent option for xeriscapes, rock gardens, or as a focal point in the landscape.

**Vegetable:** Okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*):

Okra is a heat-loving vegetable that not only survives but thrives in Oklahoma's hot and dry summers. This member of the hibiscus family produces tall stalks with large green leaves and striking yellow flowers. Okra pods, when harvested at the right size, are a staple of Southern cooking. They thrive in full sun and well-drained soil, making them an excellent addition to vegetable gardens or container plantings.



**Tree:** Desert Willow (*Chilopsis linearis*):



The desert willow is a small deciduous tree that adapts well to Oklahoma's challenging growing conditions. With its slender, arching branches and long, narrow leaves, this tree offers a graceful and unique appearance. In the summer, it produces showy, trumpet-shaped flowers in shades of pink, lavender, or white, attracting pollinators to the garden. The desert willow prefers full sun and well-drained soil and can be an excellent choice for smaller landscapes or as an accent tree.

Gardening in Oklahoma's hot and dry climate can be challenging, but by choosing plants that are heat-loving and well-adapted to these conditions, gardeners can create thriving and beautiful landscapes. The Oklahoma State University Extension office provides valuable resources to guide gardeners in selecting suitable plants. From the vibrant annual portulaca to the drought-tolerant shrub ninebark, and the delicious heat-loving vegetable okra, these plants offer an array of options to enhance gardens in Oklahoma. Additionally, the elegant desert willow tree and the enduring black-eyed Susan perennial add charm and beauty to any landscape. With these heat-loving plant choices, Oklahoma gardeners can cultivate flourishing gardens that can withstand the state's harsh summers and bring joy throughout the growing season.

**Resources:**

[OSU Fact Sheet HLA-6004: Oklahoma Garden Planning Guide](#)

[OSU Fact Sheet HLA-6444: Drought-Tolerant Plant Selections for Oklahoma](#)