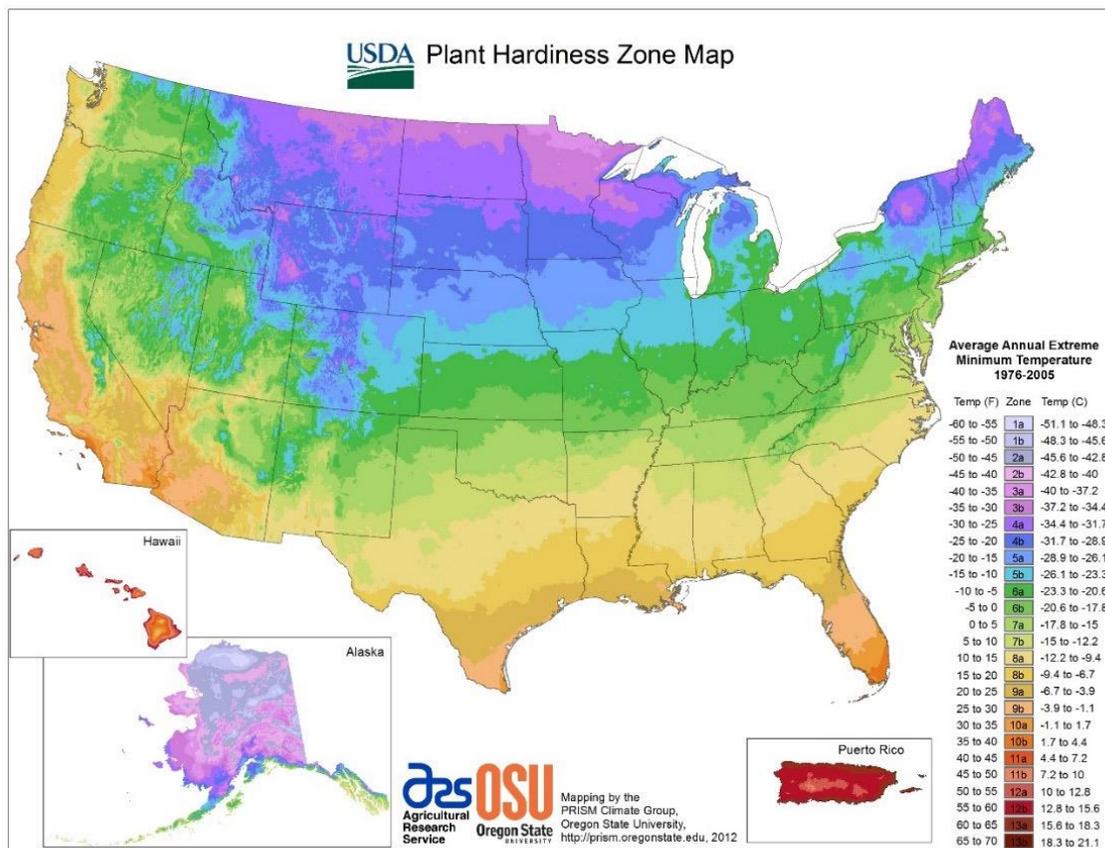


USDA HARDINESS ZONES

If you're wondering if that beautiful shrub you saw on vacation will grow in your garden, the USDA Hardiness Zone map is a great tool to help you decide. It 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. The map indicates the average low winter temperatures for all fifty states and Puerto Rico.

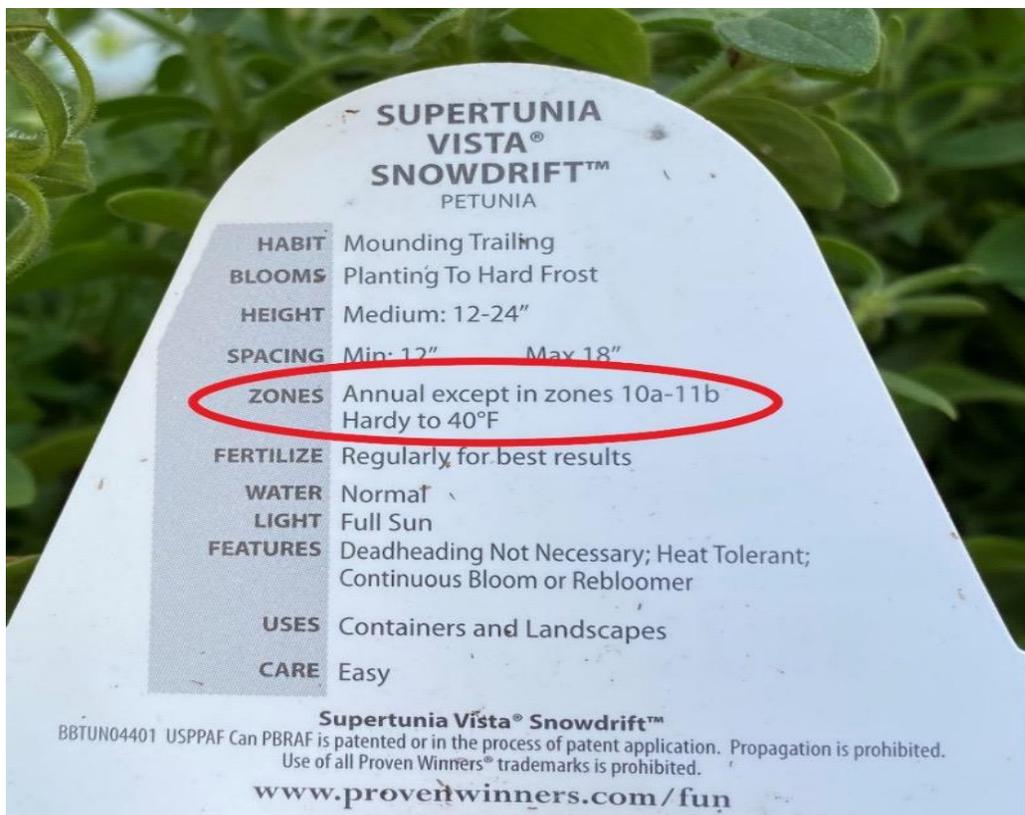


The map is divided into thirteen numbered hardiness zones with a ten-degree F difference between each zone. Each of these is divided into subzones of five-degree differences, a and b. The map shows average temperatures for an area but does not show microclimates (i.e., very localized areas that differ 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.

Oklahoma is in hardiness zones 6, 7 and 8. The northwestern corner of the state is in zone 6a and the zones get warmer as you go to the most southeastern corner, which is in zone 8a. Hardiness zones are based on the average low temperature from 1976 to 2005, not on the lowest low temperatures ever recorded. For instance, the record cold that we experienced in February was colder in much of our area than zone 6a's average lowest low of -5-degree F, thus many of us lost plants that have thrived here for a long time.

This is a good thing to keep in mind if you are planning to grow a plant that is not rated for your zone. Also be careful if you are growing plants at the extreme northern edge of the zone.

As shown below, hardiness zones are usually noted in the planting and growing instructions on plant labels.



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 in Tulsa at 4116 East 15th Street or by emailing us at mg@tulsamastergardeners.org,

Sources:

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

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

USDA Agricultural Research Service Prism Climate Group at Oregon State University