

Pansies, Pansies, and More Pansies



In spite of the name, Pansies really are the tough guys of the flower world. Through bitter cold, snow, and ice their bright colors and smiling faces help us get through the short, dark days of winter.

Pansies are fragrant, particularly early in the morning and at dusk . . . and they are edible, too (if you so choose). With a little help from us they will bloom from now until hot weather returns next year at which time they fade away.



In our area, Pansies are grown as three-season annuals for fall through winter and into spring. While they look good in the fall, they generally look even better come the following spring. They are generally readily available this time of year at your local nursery, garden center, or home improvement center and come in a wide variety of sizes, colors and faces. Choose stocky plants with deep green leaves. Plants with many buds and fewer blooms are harder for transplanting.

Pansies, and their cousins Violas and Panolas (the hybrid of Pansies and Violas), grow best in moist, well-drained soil. If the soil begins to dry out, water them even in cold weather. They do not need to be saturated - just keep them moist. Remember that flowers growing in pots and containers will dry out faster than those planted in the garden. Watering before a hard freeze will help them survive freezing temperatures (both air and soil) better and return to blooming faster. Because they grow during the cooler part of the year, pests are not usually a problem for pansies, so you probably will not need to use pesticide.



To help promote continuous blooming, remove the spent blossoms and any damaged leaves. If your pansies get thin, “leggy”, or spindly, cut them back to a height of 3-4” and they will grow back fuller and bloom again stronger. A bit of fertilizer is necessary for flowering all through their growing cycle. Add organic material or fertilizer when you plant them. Then, to keep you Pansies blooming, fertilize again during warm spells in the winter with a water-soluble fertilizer. Blood meal works well, too, Pansies really benefit from fertilizing when they start revving up their growth in the spring.



The word pansy comes from the French word *pensee* meaning “a thought” and “heart’s ease.” In the language of flowers a gift of pansies means “you are in my thoughts.” Give your Pansies a little TLC and you will be rewarded with beautiful, fragrant flowers from fall through spring.

Sources

University of Arkansas Extension Service

University of Georgia Extension Service

Tulsa Master Gardener’s Pod Cast “Pansies I” & “Pansies II”

Texas A&M Extension Service