Achillea spp. Yarrow

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Introduction

Achillea species are 18- to 36-inch-tall perennials that bear masses of flowers throughout the summer (Figure 1). The 60 to 100 species of yarrow are ancient, spreading, semi-evergreen herbs that are long lived. The aromatic, finely divided leaves are alternate or in basal rosettes. The leaf margins range from simple and toothed to pinnately dissected. However, most of these species have attractive feathery or fern-like foliage. The flowers may be single or double and come in shades of pink, yellow and white; flower heads are mostly in fine-textured corymbs.

General Information

Scientific name: Achillea spp.
Pronunciation: ack-ill-LEE-uh species
Common name(s): yarrow
Family: Composite
Plant type: perennial; herbaceous
USDA hardiness zones: 3 through 9 (Figure 2)
Planting month for zone 7: year round
Planting month for zone 8: year round
Planting month for zone 9: year round
Origin: native to Florida
Uses: border; edging; ground cover; mass planting
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Figure 1. Yarrow.

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
**Description**

- **Height**: 1 to 3 feet
- **Spread**: 2 to 3 feet
- **Plant habit**: spreading; upright
- **Plant density**: open
- **Growth rate**: moderate
- **Texture**: fine

**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement**: basal rosette
- **Leaf type**: simple
- **Leaf margin**: parted
- **Leaf shape**: variable
- **Leaf venation**: none, or difficult to see
- **Leaf type and persistence**: deciduous
- **Leaf blade length**: less than 2 inches
- **Leaf color**: green
- **Fall color**: no fall color change
- **Fall characteristic**: not showy

**Flower**

- **Flower color**: red; white; yellow
- **Flower characteristic**: spring flowering; summer flowering; fall flowering

**Fruit**

- **Fruit shape**: no fruit
- **Fruit length**: no fruit
- **Fruit cover**: no fruit
- **Fruit color**: not applicable
- **Fruit characteristic**: inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

- **Trunk/bark/branches**: not applicable
- **Current year stem/twig color**: gray/silver
- **Current year stem/twig thickness**: thin

**Culture**

- **Light requirement**: plant grows in full sun
- **Soil tolerances**: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay
- **Drought tolerance**: high
- **Soil salt tolerance**: moderate
- **Plant spacing**: 18 to 24 inches

**Other**

- **Roots**: not applicable
- **Winter interest**: no special winter interest
- **Outstanding plant**: not particularly outstanding

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**Invasive potential**: not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance**: long-term health usually not affected by pests

**Use and Management**

These lovely flowers are good in fresh or dried arrangements. *Achillea* species may be used in the landscape as an edging or ground cover and are stunning when massed. They flop over as they grow taller, becoming a spreading mass of fine-textured foliage.

*Achillea* species should be placed in an area of the landscape that receives full sun. They require well-drained soils and are quite drought tolerant. However, these perennials will sometimes not tolerate hot, humid weather. They will endure light foot traffic and seashore environments. Some species are rather weak and may require staking to hold them erect. Popular species include *Achillea taygetea*.

Propagate these species by seed or division.

**Pests and Diseases**

None of major concern.