

# Zinnia spp. Zinnia<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

There are many varieties of zinnia with widely varying heights and flower colors (Fig. 1). They may be as short as six inches or as tall as three feet. The plants are spaced eight to twelve inches apart and flowers can be any color except for blue. They are tolerant of all but wet soils and need exposure to full sun. Plants producing flowers with high centers surrounded by only one or two rows of petals should be discarded. Tall varieties may be pinched when young to encourage branching. Old flowers are removed to encourage continued flowering.



Figure 1. Zinnia

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Zinnia* spp.

**Pronunciation:** ZIN-nee-uh species

**Common name(s):** zinnia

**Family:** *Compositae*

**Plant type:** annual

**USDA hardiness zones:** all zones (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 7:** Mar; Apr; Sep

**Planting month for zone 8:** May; Jun

**Planting month for zone 9:** Apr; Sep; Oct

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** Mar; Sep; Oct

**Origin:** native to North America

**Uses:** mass planting; container or above-ground planter; cut flowers; edging

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

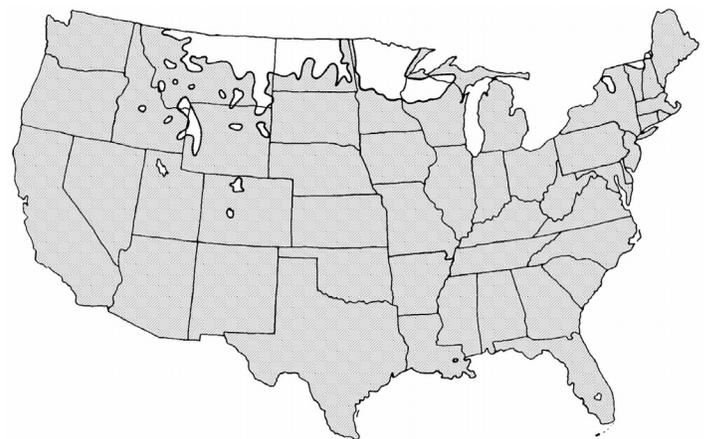


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 1 to 3 feet

**Spread:** 1 to 2 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

1. This document is FPS-623, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date October 1999. Reviewed February 2014. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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**Plant density:** open

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** medium

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** ovate

**Leaf venation:** parallel

**Leaf type and persistence:** not applicable

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** not applicable

**Fall characteristic:** not applicable

## Flower

**Flower color:** yellow; white; pink; salmon; purple; lavender; orange

**Flower characteristic:** showy

## 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:** green

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; acidic; loam

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown

**Plant spacing:** 12 to 18 inches

## Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** not applicable

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

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

**Pest resistance:** very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

## Use and Management

The seeds are usually planted directly into the garden. If planted indoors, the seedlings become spindly, especially if started too early. The seed germinates in one to two weeks at temperatures between 70 and 80°F. In addition to spring, zinnia can be planted from August to September in southern Florida. Dwarf zinnias less than 10 inches tall include the 'Dasher', Dreamland', 'Lollipop', 'Peter Pan' and 'Small World' series, 'Fantastic', 'Short Stuff' and 'Thumbelina'. Intermediate-sized selections grow no more than about 15 inches tall and include the 'Pulcino' series, and the cultivars 'Pumila', 'Rose Pinwheel', and 'Starlight'. The tallest zinnias are in the 'Ruffles' and 'Splendor' series, and the cultivar 'State Fair'.

## Pests and Diseases

Aphids suck plant juices and coat the leaves with sticky honeydew.

Four-lined plant bug causes small, round, brown sunken spots on the leaves.

Mites cause the foliage to lose its green color and become bronzed or stippled.

Blight starts as reddish brown spots with graying centers. Dark brown cankers form on the stems and flowers are spotted or completely blighted. The disease is also called alternaria leaf spot.

Powdery mildew is found on zinnia, particularly late in the season. The disease causes a white to grayish powdery growth on the leaves.

Bacterial leaf spot causes reddish brown, angular spots on the leaves and can cause plants to die out by mid-August.