

Gaillardia pulchella Blanket Flower, Gaillardia, Firewheel¹

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Introduction

This sturdy North American native form, attractive, 12 to 24 inch tall, rounded clumps of soft, hairy, divided leaves and single, semi-double, or double flowers held on long stems above the foliage. Appearing throughout the summer, the two to three inch wide flowers are available in yellow, orange, red, or bicolor, and make excellent, long-lasting cut flowers. The brilliant blossoms are quite attractive to butterflies, and these annual flowers will normally reseed themselves quite readily.



Figure 1. Full Form - *Gaillardia pulchella*: Blanket Flower, Gaillardia, Firewheel

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Figure 2. Flower - *Gaillardia pulchella*: Blanket Flower, Gaillardia, Firewheel

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General Information

Scientific name: *Gaillardia pulchella*

Pronunciation: gay-LAR-dee-uh pul-KEL-luh

Common name(s): gaillardia, blanket flower, firewheel

Family: *Asteraceae*

Plant type: annual; perennial; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 3 through 11 (Figure 3)

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Planting month for zone 7: May; Jun

Planting month for zone 8: Apr; May

Planting month for zone 9: Mar

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: Mar

Origin: native to Florida

Invasive potential: native plant that often reproduces into nearby landscapes

Uses: container or above-ground planter; cut flowers; accent; mass planting; ground cover; attracts butterflies; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size)

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 3. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 1 to 2 feet

Spread: 2 to 3 feet

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: open

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: lobed; serrate

Leaf shape: oblanceolate; spatulate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: semi-evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: not applicable

Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: yellow; orange; red; bicolor

Flower characteristic: summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown

Fruit length: unknown

Fruit cover: unknown

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: acidic; alkaline; sand; loam

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: good

Plant spacing: 12 to 18 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Suitable for growing along the beaches right on the dunes, gaillardia does best in light, very well-drained soils in full sun locations, enduring heat, sandy soil, and drought extremely well.

Gaillardia shows well in a mass planting spaced two to three feet apart, as an edging plant along a walk or driveway, or as an accent in a perennial garden or in front of a shrubbery border. Do not over-water since this could induce root rot.

Cultivars include 'Yellow Sun', bright yellow blooms, and 'Red Plume', vibrant, dark red blossoms.

Propagation is by seed or root divisions planted in early spring.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.