

Glossary of Some Gardening Terms

Annual – A plant that completes its life cycle in one year. Annuals are usually planted in the spring and will die after first frost in the fall. They are ideal for container gardens. Some annuals will continue to bloom if their blooms are deadheaded (snipped off) before they go to seed.

Companion Plant – Plants that when grown together enhance each other: either flavor (basil and tomatoes), insect protection (tomatoes and marigolds) or just because they look especially good together.

Deadheading – Removing spent flowers before they go to seed. In some plants this will cause the plant to continue blooming for a longer period of time. Letting the flowers go to seed at the end of the season would provide plants for the next year for those which self-seed and/or provide seed for the birds in the winter.

Deer Resistant – There are some plants that the deer are less likely to eat. However be aware that a hungry deer will eat most anything.

Evergreen – Some perennials die back in the winter. Evergreen perennials remain green all year, although they drop their leaves individually rather than all at once (e.g. pines drop needles every 2nd or 3rd year).

Invasive – Some plants are very aggressive growers and will spread and choke out other plants. Invasive plants are best grown in contained areas or containers.

Native – Plants which naturally occur in our area. They are easier to grow as they are accustomed to our local conditions (climate, soils, etc.). They also provide food for our native insects which provide food for our native birds.

Naturalize – Planting in such a way as to bring about the appearance of natural wild growth.

Perennial – A plant that comes back year after year. Some die back and reemerge in the spring. Others may stay green all winter and usually bloom in the spring.

Pesticide Use – Many pesticides kill all insects both the bad and the beneficial. One bee that carries back insecticide can kill an entire hive. Whenever possible tolerate a few leaves with holes, rather than expecting a perfect plant. If an insecticide must be used choose carefully and follow the directions exactly. For suggestions of organics controls contact our Master Gardener office at 804-752-4310.

Propagate – Plants have various means of reproduction. Some are started from seeds, others from root division or stem rooting.

Self-Seed – Some plants do not come back from year to year from the original plant but do produce seeds that will sprout and grow the next spring.

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Weed Killers – Certain weed killers are very non-specific and will kill everything they come into contact with (e.g. glyphosate, the active ingredient of RoundUp). Even wind born particles can damage plants in the area. If a weed killer must be used select carefully and follow the label directions exactly. When possible use organic methods such as mulching or hand removal of weeds.

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