

EXPERIMENTAL ORNAMENTAL GARDEN



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Having completed one or more years of the Flower Garden Project, you have become familiar with many of the basic cultural practices needed in gardening, and some of the common flowers. Up to now you have been growing flowers in the way your project leader and other gardeners have suggested. Now you are ready for a new gardening experience, that of comparing different ways of doing things to see which is best for your particular location and situation.

The emphasis in the Experimental Ornamental Garden Project is to find out for yourself what works best for you. You can try different gardening practices and different varieties or kinds of plants and make your own value judgments about which combinations of varieties and cultural practices will produce the best results for you.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Plant or care for a number of different kinds of plants and select four of these for replicate (duplicate) plantings for your experiments. In this project you may need more space than you did in the Flower Garden Project. You

may also want growing space in several different areas of your yard with different growing conditions.

2. Design four experiments for your replicate plantings. These may be comparisons of two different varieties of the same kind of plant given the same care, or the same variety of plant cared for in two different ways.
3. Keep careful records of what you do, and the size, quality, and quantity of blossoms and foliage on your plants in each experiment. You will need this data to make comparisons between the different ideas you have tried.
4. Attend 4-H meetings and take an active part in the functions of your club. Your experiments will make good topics for project talks and/or demonstrations which will be of interest to other 4-H members.

SUGGESTIONS*

There are many activities which will expand the scope and add interest to your Experimental Ornamental Garden Project. The following are

some of the things you can do in addition to the requirements:

1. Make a visual record of your project through pictures.
2. Participate in flower arranging classes and/or make arrangements using your flowers.
3. Participate in flower judging contests and flower shows.
4. Exhibit some of your flower arrangements at a local or county fair.
5. Prepare a teaching exhibit showing the results of one or more of your experiments. Enter this exhibit at the county fair.
6. Submit a record and story of your project to your local leader at the end of the season. This will qualify you for regular 4-H achievement awards.

You may carry the Ornamental Garden Project for two or more years. When this project is carried for a number of years, the kinds of experiments should be varied to explore new cultural practices and varieties of plants.

CARRYING OUT THE PROJECT

Discuss your Experimental Ornamental Garden Project with your family. You may need a larger or different area than you had in the previous projects, or you may want several different spaces which have different exposures, soil types, or other differences which will be suitable for your experiments. You can use any kind of ornamental planting for your project. This can be lawn, shrubs, ground covers, and trees in addition to flowers. You do not have to plant all of the ornamental plants in your project, but you should assume the care and maintenance of all the plants in your garden area.

Next, plan your project. Decide what plants you are going to plant and what experiments you want to do. Most of your experiments will probably be with annual plants, but you can also try different cultural practices on some established plantings. For example, you could use two different fertilizers on separate sections of lawn or mow two patches of lawn at different heights to see which grows the healthiest.

The objective of this garden project is for you to discover what works best for you in your yard.

Keep your experimental plantings the same in every respect except the one factor you are experimenting with.

Examples of single factor experiments:

1. Compare two varieties of the same flower
2. Compare two plantings of the same flower variety in different locations that have:
 - a. different soil types
 - b. different amounts of light
3. Compare one planting fertilized with an identical planting not fertilized
4. Compare the number of blossoms on two identical plantings when the old blossoms are removed on one planting and not the other
5. Compare the growth response on plantings made on two different dates four or five weeks apart
6. Compare the blooming dates and sizes of flowers from bulbs planted at different depths
7. Compare the number of blossoms on flowers planted at different spacings
8. Compare the rooting time on cuttings with and without rooting hormone treatments
9. Water relationships
10. Mulching

These are only a few of the many "ways to do things" you can experiment with to discover the best cultural practices for your garden.

When you have planned your garden project, plant and care for your garden with as little help as possible through the entire growing season.

KEEP RECORDS

Record what you do and the results you get on a regular basis. You are now experimenting and accurate records are an absolute necessity for experimental work. Measure and describe all the differences you can see in your experimental plantings on a regular basis (about once a week).

At the end of the season, examine your records and draw conclusions about which way of doing things worked best.

*In some states the suggested activities may be requirements. Check with your local leader before you begin the project to be sure of the total requirements in your state.

FENCE (full sun exposure)



Zinnias in sun



Gladiolus in sun



Tulips
Planted 8" deep



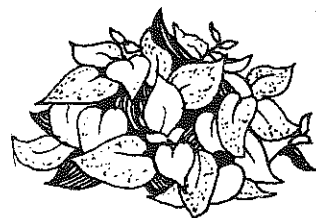
Dahlia
Blossoms removed



Tulips
Planted 2" deep



Dahlia
No blossoms removed



Coleus

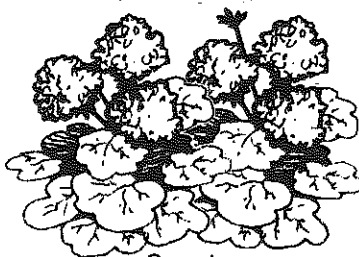


AN EXPERIMENTAL FLOWER GARDEN PLAN

- o Light experiments with zinnias and gladiolus
- o Planting depth experiment with tulips
- o Blossom removal experiment with dahlia
- o Fertilizer experiment with pansies



Pansies fertilized



Geraniums



Pansies No fertilizer



Zinnias in shade



Gladiolus in shade

NORTH WALL OF HOUSE (shade exposure)

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