



NB
YEAR
OF THE
ZINNIA

2011 IS THE “YEAR OF THE ZINNIA”

Easy to grow, colorful and multi-colored,
choose from one of many varieties
available here to grow in own garden.



NB
NATIONAL
GARDEN
BUREAU INC.

'Crystal White', AAS (All America Selections) winner in 1997, daisy-like blooms with yellow centers. It is more compact than the and may overwinter in Zones 9-11. Probably the least known of is *Z. haageana*, or the Mexican zinnia. It is disease-resistant, and has small, bicolored flowers.

Then

Zinnias were collected and brought to Europe in the 18th century, much to look at. Named for Dr. Johann Gottfried Zinn, who, in his description of the flower, the genus *Zinnia* had to wait for the mid-18th century to become successful in the garden. It is probable that the first zinnia was introduced in the West Indies, for it was from seed from those islands that the first zinnia was introduced in France. Brightly colored 1 ½-inch 'Lilliput' zinnias were developed in France in the 1880s, and in the late 19th and early 20th century separate colors of small, double flowers began to be grown. These included some of what we now know as 'Pumila' or 'Cut-and-come-again' zinnias. 'Mammoth', the first strain of large, double-flowered zinnias, appeared in the late 19th century. But the start of the zinnia's real popularity began in the early 20th century when Bodger Seeds Ltd. introduced the dahlia-flowered 'Giant Dahlia' zinnia. It was later discovered it as a natural mutation in a field of 'Mammoth' and in the 1920s years selected the large, flat-flowered 'California Giant' from the 'Mammoth' strain. In 1930, separate colors, it was considered to be a new trend in plant breeding. 'California Giant' won a gold medal from the Royal Horticultural Society of London in 1930. 'Mammoth', an example of a modern dahlia-flowered zinnia developed through polyploidization, was introduced by the Ferry Morse Seed Company in 1930. It has four, rather than the usual two sets of chromosomes; the polyploid has increased disease resistance, vigorous growth, and large flowers on a stem. A few other zinnias available today are tetraploids.

In the early 20th century, as breeding progress, the modern F1 hybrid was still waiting in the field, so to speak—because of the difficulty of emasculating (removing the male parts) a zinnia without destroying the flower itself. A chance discovery by an unknown breeder, working at the time for W. Atlee Burpee, changed all that. He discovered a zinnia in the field with flowers that had no petals but were completely functional. These were the male reproductive parts. They could form seeds only after being pollinated. This discovery led the way to the dwarf F1 hybrid 'Peter Pan' series, introduced by Burpee in 1971 to 1980. Yoshiro Arimitsu and Charles Weddle bred a series of dwarf zinnias that were recognized as AAS Winners. Bodger Seed Ltd introduced a series of dwarf zinnias, the 'Ruffles' series ('Scarlet', AAS, 1974; 'Cherry' and 'Yellow', introduced by Burpee in 1974), developed by Mondry (who had by then resigned from Burpee) as cut-flower zinnias. Although still available, these early hybrids have been largely replaced in the market by later introductions.



the first in 10 years. They represented the best traits of both speedily tolerance, disease resistance, easy maintenance (no dead-pretty 2- to 3-inch single flowers, and compact growth (12 to 18 artificial interspecific hybrids developed at the University of Maryland their own species name: *marylandica*. Subsequent hybrids of ed as *Zinnia marylandica* 'Zahara Starlight Rose', 'Double Zahara Zahara Cherry', all 2010 AAS winners. With larger flowers than re color variations, they represent the new benchmark for beautiful, innias.

their Glory

s for the popularity of the zinnia is its diversity. Like dahlias and zinnias have a variety of flower forms—they may be single, semi-Single-flowered zinnias have just one row of petals and the center osed: *Z. angustifolia* 'Crystal White' is a delightful example. Double- with so many rows of petals that the center is hidden, have several zinnias, with rows of flat petals on small blooms, such as 'Small S, 1982), really do look like little beehives. Button-type flowers are except the flower is flatter. The edges of each petal on cactus- under and the petal twists and bends. Dahlia-flowered zinnias als, and are usually semi-double, that is, the flowers have many the center can be seen; they are great to use as cut flowers.

in an amazing array of colors. Most are solid, but some, in particu- re bicolored with a contrasting color at the tip of each petal. You'll , cherry, pink, purple, scarlet, and white, as well as fashionable out every color, in fact, but blue.

ant consideration when planning a garden, and zinnias have grow- very need. Tall, 3- to 4-foot varieties are best for the middle or rear cutting garden. Dwarf plants grow 8 to 14 inches tall and do well in the front of a garden. *Z. angustifolia* plants are only about 12 inches are excellent in the ground, in pots or hanging containers, and as ground covers.

From Seed

start from seeds, indoors or outdoors. The seeds of most of them they're a perfect choice for a child to sow in the garden. For earlier der zones, you may want to give the plants a head start by sowing

oors:

e seedlings have at least two sets of true leaves, transplant individual 2¼-inch or larger pots. Provide as much sunlight



... to transplant them. If you're using peat pots, sow two to three seeds in each pot. Cover the seeds lightly with a layer of mix and water the mix with enough water to moisten it slightly.

Place the flat with a sheet of clear plastic wrap or place it in a plastic bag to keep the mix from drying out while the seeds are germinating. Set the flat in a dark location or under grow-lights. Keep the growing medium at a constant temperature of 70-80° F (24° - 26 °C) by placing it on a heat mat or warm surface.

Seedlings should emerge in about a week. Remove the plastic cover and keep the mix evenly moist—not soggy—by watering the flat from the bottom.

When the seedlings have two pairs of leaves, thin them to the correct spacing. If you carefully pull out the unwanted seedlings, you can transplant them to other parts of the garden. Otherwise, simply snip them at ground level.

—they have a tendency to wick moisture from the soil when exposed to wind. When taking zinnias for cutting, it's a good idea to stake the plants unobtrusively to support them.

Buying Plants

If you grow your plants from seeds, you'll find many zinnias at your local nursery. Growers and garden centers often sell zinnias in six-packs of individual pots. Those plants will be smaller and may or may not be in bloom. When buying, look for plants with healthy, green leaves, fairly compact growth, and good drainage—it is actually better if they are not yet in bloom. If you can't plant them when you bring them home, water them well and set them under a tree or patio umbrella to be protected from the drying effect of direct sun.

Plant zinnias in full sun, which means six or more hours of direct sun daily. In desert gardening zones 9 to 11, choose a site that gets some shade at midday or in the afternoon. They prefer a moist but well-draining soil—whether planted in containers—so it's important to prepare the planting bed by working in organic matter, such as compost, especially if the soil is sandy, or heavy clay.

When transplanting any plant is on a cloudy day or in late afternoon so that the plants have a chance to get settled in before they have to contend with the heat of the sun. Don't crowd zinnias; air circulation is essential to keeping them healthy. Space out plants so that taller zinnias (*Z. elegans*) are 12-18 inches apart; medium plants are 6-10 inches apart; and *Z. angustifolia* are 6-10 inches apart. Space the new

