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Living Bicentennial Floral Designs

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

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Living Bicentennial Floral Designs

South Dakota 1976

MT. RUSHMORE—SHRINE OF DEMOCRACY / USA BICENTENNIAL FOCAL POINT

Cooperative Extension Service
South Dakota State University
U. S. Department of Agriculture
Growing floral emblem displays offer a unique, colorful and meaningful way for you to participate in the Bicentennial celebration of our nation’s 200th birthday during 1975 and 1976.

Red, white and blue flowers may be used in many ways as special Bicentennial displays. Yellow or gold flowers make excellent borders for plant beds.

Individuals, groups, clubs or public and private officials may want to develop local participation in the Bicentennial observance through the use of flowers.

Suggestions and guidelines for planting designs as well as types of flowers best for use in South Dakota are described in this publication. Growing flowers can be used in many ways for displays other than those discussed here. Individuals or organizations are urged to use imagination and ingenuity. And once you have those colorful beds growing in full bloom, remember to record them with your camera! Sizes and measurements provided here are guidelines only. These may be altered by scaling for larger or smaller plantings.

Types of Plants To Use
In most cases, low growing plants such as red, white or blue multiflora or grandiflora petunias are good for floral ground beds. Multiflora petunias have smaller flowers than grandiflora petunias but the flowers are more abundant and give nice mass color; therefore, they are recommended over the grandiflora petunias for floral emblem displays. Red and white geraniums as well as petunias are good annual plants for pots, hanging baskets, patio containers and flower boxes for splashes of color. Other low-growing plants which could possibly be used for floral emblem displays include: blue-ageratum and sweet alyssum; white-annual phlox and sweet alyssum; and red-china pinks and annual phlox. These plants should be used in combination to carry out the three-color theme.

Annual flowers that have been started in the greenhouse and are near the blooming stage are ideal for use in floral displays. You should make arrangements early with your local greenhouse operator for the transplants you will need to carry out your floral emblem plans.

Soil Preparation
Good results in growing annuals depends greatly on thorough preparation of the soil where the plants are to be grown. When growing annuals in ground beds, the soil should be prepared to a depth of 6-8 inches. Materials such as sphagnum peat moss, leaf mold, compost and rotted manure can be spaded or forked into the existing soil bed before planting to improve aeration and drainage. Application rates vary with the type of soil you have, but in general you can work 2 to 4 inches of organic matter into the top 6 to 8 inches of the planting area and get good results. Also as the soil is being prepared be certain to work some fertilizer into the soil and use a complete fertilizer such as 5-10-5, or 10-6-4 and apply at the rate of 1 to 2 pounds per 100 square feet of floral bed area.

Formal Flower Beds
Formal flower beds may be designed in any size, shape or form including squares, rectangles, strips, circles or stars. The easiest way is to design the bed on graph paper using a scale of 1 inch on the paper to equal 12 inches (1 foot) on the actual design. This size scale makes it easier to calculate the number of red, white and blue and possibly yellow flowers you would need to complete the project. Perhaps the idea of spelling out “HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA” or “SPIRIT OF ’76” may appeal to you. You can estimate the approximate number of plants needed by making a plot plan for the size of floral emblem you wish to plant and figuring the number of square inches one plant would occupy in the floral display.

Container Plantings
In small containers, you might want to use the three-color idea in a group arrangement. In larger pots you could have three plants of the three different colors.

For hanging baskets, which are becoming quite popular again, you could use a combination of red, white and blue flowers. Perhaps a “Bicentennial Hanging Flower Basket” could become a major display theme for your community.

Larger flower boxes allow for the use of more plants. Many interesting combinations of red, white and blue flowers can be worked out.

American Flag Floral Design
Dimensions of the flag are roughly twice as long as wide. The width can be determined by the width of the 13 red and white stripes. The union or star field is the depth of 7 stripes and three-fourths as long as the flag is wide.

A flag with 1-foot-wide stripes (rows of red and white petunias, for instance) would be 13 feet wide by 26 feet long. The field would be 7 x 10 feet. Make 9 rows for stars horizontally (five rows with 6 stars and four rows of 5 stars) and 11 rows for stars vertically (six rows of 5 stars and five rows of 4 stars). The individual spaces for the stars and background in the field would be approximately 95x11 inches in size.

A flag of this size would take 142 red petunias, 126 white petunias, 49 blue petunias and 50 white alyssum for the stars. Yellow dwarf marigolds could be used for a border (or gold fringe!) if desired. This border would take 132 flowers at 8-inch spacing.
1776-1976 Floral Design
This could be made by using block or squared numerals. The number 1's could be 1 foot wide and 5 feet high. The 6's and the 9 could be 3 feet wide and 5 feet high, leaving a 1-foot square opening. The 7's could be 3 feet wide and 5 feet high. Numerals could be cut out of sod and planted to white petunias. The design could also be made in bare soil. In this case open spaces could be filled in with red or blue petunias. For just the numerals for this size design it would take 68 white petunias.

Liberty Bell Floral Design
The dimensions for a Liberty Bell emblem could be 6 feet high. The top part could be 3 feet wide (start with a 3-foot diameter circle), and then flared or belled out to a 7-foot width at the bottom. The flaring should start about 2 feet below the top of the bell. A circle 1 foot in diameter should be made on top of the bell to represent the support. This should be filled with the same color flower as the rest of the bell. Bronze colored dwarf marigolds could be used for the bell. The crack should be about 3 feet long and could be made with yellow dwarf marigolds. This would take about 112 plants (6 to 8 for the crack). It would be easiest to plant the outline of the bell and the crack first and then fill in the remainder of the area.

Flag Star Field 10x7 feet (120x84 inches)
Each square approximately 11x9 inches.
Each broken-line square represents 4 feet or 48 inches.

For best display of the emblems it would be good to plant them on a sloping site. This could be the backslope of a road or highway, some naturally sloping terrain, or a man-made sloping mound in some prominent area of your community.

COVER: This is the official logo used in the South Dakota Bicentennial observance.
Suggested plantings:
- blue petunias and white alyssum for star field.
- white petunias
- red petunias

Each broken-line square represents 20 inches.

Each broken-line square represents 12 inches.
How to Outline a Large Star

1. Mark out a circle about the size of the star desired.
2. Divide the outline of the circle into five equal parts by trial and error. The distance will be a few inches longer than the radius (half the diameter) of the circle. For a 4-foot diameter circle it would be 28 inches (straight line from one point on the circle to another). For an 8-foot diameter circle it would be 56 inches (straight line from one point to another on the circle).
3. Join every other division point and the resulting figure should be a 5-pointed star.
4. The five points could also be located by using a compass to measure five angles of 72 degrees from the center of the circle.

Star diameter 4 feet. Each square on drawing represents 2 feet. Distance between points equals 28 inches straight line from one point to another on the circle.

Each broken-line square represents 2 feet or 24 inches on the star diagrams.

Star diameter 8 feet. Each square on drawing represents 2 feet. Distance between points equals 56 inches straight line from one point to another on the circle.

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