

Year Round Gardening

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Shady Gardening with Begonias

Begonias add constant color and beautiful foliage throughout the season in places with little to no direct sunlight. They can be used as bedding plants, in window boxes and in hanging baskets.

Begonia is a genus of perennial flowering plants in the family Begoniaceae with more than 1,800 different plant species. Their bright colorful flowers have sepals but no petals. There are two types of begonias commonly used for growing outdoors in the summer—fibrous and tuberous. They are not hardy, and need to be treated as annuals or brought inside for the winter. A third type, rhizomatous, is most commonly grown a houseplant in Colorado.

Fibrous Begonias

Few other annuals can beat the Wax Begonia (*Begonia x semperflorens-cultorum*) for hardiness and continuous flowering throughout the summer. Small, bushy plants, with shiny, heart-shaped leaves of green, bronze-red or mahogany are covered with small white, pink, rose or red flowers. Wax begonias withstand drought and heat better than other begonias, although they definitely prefer moist, well-drained, fertile soil. Learn more at <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/begonia/>

Tuberous Begonias (*B. x tuberhybrida*)

These begonias are popular for their beautiful 2 to 4-inch wide flowers that come in a variety of colors and forms: red, orange, yellow, white, salmon and pink blooms may be single or double and may be plain, ruffled or toothed.

Tuberous begonias bloom throughout the summer, thriving in shady spots where few other plants with long bloom periods and showy flowers grow. They are often used as container plants on patios and porches, in hanging baskets, and as bedding plants. They need frequent watering and light fertilization. Excess of either causes flower bud drop. The 'Non-stop' cultivars are compact and small-flowered multiflora types that will delight you throughout the summer. Learn more at <https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/2004/2-27-2004/begonias.html>

When you have questions, Colorado State University Extension has research-based answers. Get answers to your horticulture questions from Colorado Master Gardeners by visiting ask.extension.org any time day or night. Follow us on FaceBook at Colorado Master Gardeners – El Paso County.