

INDIAN BLANKET/GAILLARDIA

Gaillardia pulchella



Characteristics

- Type: Annual
- Zone: 2 to 11
- Height: 1.00 to 1.50 feet
- Spread: 0.50 to 1.00 feet
- Bloom Time: June to frost
- Bloom Description: Red, yellow on red/yellow bicolor with dark centers
- Sun: Full sun
- Water: Dry to medium
- Maintenance: Low
- Flower: Showy
- Attracts: Birds, Butterflies
- Tolerate: Drought
- Texas Native

Culture

Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soils in full sun. Thrives in sandy soils and dry summer heat, and tolerates poor, dry soils. Sow seed directly in the garden after last frost date or start seed indoors 4-6 weeks earlier. Set seedlings out after last frost date. Space plants 12" apart. It may be difficult to find starter plants of annual gaillardias at local nurseries, since nurseries seem to primarily stock perennial gaillardias (e.g., see *F. x grandiflora*). Deadheading spent flowers is not necessary but will tidy the planting and may encourage additional bloom. Reseeds in optimum growing conditions if flowers are not deadheaded.

Noteworthy Characteristics

Gaillardia pulchella is a hairy annual wildflower that is native to dry open places with sandy soils from Virginia to Minnesota south to Florida, Arizona and Mexico. Typically grows 12-18" (less frequently to 24") tall on upright stems that are mostly leafless at the top. Two-inch daisy-like flower heads feature rays in shades of red, yellow or red/yellow bicolor, with contrasting darker center disks. Cultivars include some double-flowered forms and expand the available flower colors to include interesting shades of orange and maroon. Blooms late spring to fall. In areas where goldfinches are present, gardeners should consider leaving some spent flower heads for the birds. Oblong to oblanceolate gray-green leaves grow up to 3" long. The sometimes common name of blanket flower is in probable reference to the resemblance of the rich and warm flower colors and patterns of species flowers to blankets woven by Native Americans. However, some authorities suggest this common name was originally in reference to the habit of wild species plants to form colonies that blanketed the ground.

Problems

No serious insect or disease problems. Root rot may occur in poorly drained soils, particularly during periods of protracted heavy summer rains. Watch for aphids and thrips.

Garden Uses

Mass plantings for beds and borders. Rock gardens. Naturalize in meadows, cottage gardens or native wildflower gardens. Containers.

Courtesy of Missouri Botanical Society Plant Finder