

MESSENGER-INQUIRER



December 13, 2025

White Flowers in the Summer Bring Back Memories of December Snow

Annette Meyer Heisdorffer, Ph.D.

Extension Agent for Horticulture Education – Daviess County

While looking for relief from hot temperatures in the upcoming summer, the white flowers appearing on annuals and perennials will remind me of our cold, snowy weather this December. Also, I like white flowers on my deck reflecting the moon and porch lights during the evening when there is finally time to enjoy them. Many flowering annuals and perennials with white flowers fit into containers or in landscape beds. Several are mentioned below.

Summer snapdragon (*Angelonia angustifolia*) prefers to grow in full sun and well-drained soil. It tolerates the heat of summer. Cultivars are available with white flowers. The 1-inch flowers are produced on spikes. The plant height ranges from 12 to 24 inches tall, depending on the cultivar.

A variety of petunias (*Petunia*) are available with different characteristics and white flowers. Some cultivars perform better in pots and others in the ground. In general, petunias need full sun and well-drained soil. The white flowers of the different cultivars may range from 2 to 4 inches in diameter. The height of the plant, depending on the petunia, ranges from 7 to 20 inches.

MESSENGER-INQUIRER

A plant that works well as a filler in hanging baskets and pots with season-long bloom is *Calibrachoa*, which is also known by the common name of million bells. It is covered with what seems like a million little petunia-like flowers reaching over 1 inch wide. This plant is available in a wide range of colors, including white. Plant height may reach 6 to 10 inches tall, depending on the cultivar. It prefers to grow in well-drained soil and full sun.

Wax or fibrous-rooted begonia (*Begonia x semperflorens-cultorum*) is a popular annual used in shady locations. The flowers of wax begonia range in size from 0.75 to 2 inches across. The plant height ranges from 8 to 12 inches. Cultivars with white flowers are available with bronze or green leaves. The green-leaved begonias prefer shade, and bronze-leaved begonias handle shade to full sun.

SunPatiens© (*Impatiens x hybrida*) group is a hybrid between New Guinea impatiens and wild impatiens. It has been bred to grow in full sun to partial shade. Many cultivars are available, including ones with white flowers. Plant height ranges from 18 to 29 inches with a wide-spread for a mounding habit. Well-draining soil is best.

For hot, dry growing conditions, periwinkle or vinca (*Catharanthus roseus*) is an annual with white flowers. In addition, you can find blossoms with white petals and an eye of another color to coordinate with the color in other flowers. Depending on the cultivar, the flower size may reach 2 inches across. The plant height ranges from 12 to 14 inches. Periwinkle grows in full sun and prefers well-drained soil. It can grow in containers or in the ground.

Fan flower (*Scaevola* hybrid) is what I consider a tough plant that thrives in a hot, humid climate and can withstand wind. The common flower color is violet, but it is also available in

MESSENGER-INQUIRER

white. The fan-shaped flower blooms throughout the summer. The unique bloom looks nice in hanging baskets or window boxes.

Zinnias (*Zinnia*) with white flowers are available and easy to grow from seed planted directly in the garden, especially the common zinnia, *Zinnia elegans*. Look for powdery mildew resistant types such as the narrow-leaf zinnia (*Zinnia angustifolia*), which has several different series and cultivars. Some of those flowers are 1 to 2 inches across, covering the plant throughout the summer. The narrow-leaf zinnia tolerates dry soil conditions.

The moon vine (*Ipomoea alba*) has the unique characteristic of beginning to open its white blossoms in late afternoon to early evening. The impressive white trumpet-like flowers open 5 to 6 inches wide. The fragrant flowers open for only one night, but the vine is always covered with them. The attractive, heart-shaped, green leaves are 4 to 6 inches long. Plant seeds outside as soon as the threat of frost has passed in the spring, or start them indoors earlier to maximize the length of time flowers are produced. This tender, tropical perennial is an annual in our zone since it is killed by freezing temperatures. Moon vine prefers full sun and well-drained soil. It blooms in summer to late summer.

Tall phlox 'David' (*Phlox paniculata* 'David') is a perennial plant with fragrant, white flower panicles 6 to 9 inches long and 6 to 8 inches wide. The individual florets are 1 inch across. 'David' blooms in the summer and is fragrant. The plant grows 36 to 40 inches tall. This garden classic is mildew resistant but needs good air circulation and plenty of moisture. When grown in average soil, it does not need to be staked. A location with full sun and well-drained soil is best.

MESSENGER-INQUIRER

‘PowWow White’ coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea* ‘PowWow White’) has 3- to 4-inch white flowers, with arching petals pointing to the ground, surrounding a light brown cone of seeds. This plant, including the flower stem, reaches 2 to 3 feet tall and spreads 1 to 1.5 feet wide. This perennial can be planted in full sun or partial shade in well-drained soil. Coneflowers tolerate drought conditions.

For more information about plants with white flowers, contact the Daviess County Cooperative Extension Service at (270) 685-8480 or Annette.heisdorffer@uky.edu.

Annette’s Tips:

If you have leftover spring-flowering bulbs that have not been planted, go ahead and plant them. They may not flower as well, but the bulbs will not dry out and die.

This Institution is an Equal Opportunity Provider.