Gaillardia pulchella

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Introduction

This sturdy North American native forms attractive, 12 to 24-inch-tall, rounded clumps of soft, hairy, divided leaves and single, semidouble, or double flowers held on long stems above the foliage (Fig. 1). Appearing throughout the summer, the two to three-inch-wide flowers are available in yellow, orange, red, or bicolors, and make excellent, long-lasting cut flowers. The brilliant blossoms are quite attractive to butterflies, and these annual flowers will normally reseed themselves quite readily.

General Information

Scientific name: Gaillardia pulchella
Pronunciation: gay-LAR-dee-uh pul-KEL-luh
Common name(s): Gaillardia, Blanket-Flower
Family: Compositae
Plant type: annual; perennial; herbaceous
USDA hardiness zones: 3 through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 7: May; Jun
Planting month for zone 8: Apr; May
Planting month for zone 9: Mar
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: Mar
Origin: native to Florida
Uses: container or above-ground planter; cut flowers; accent; mass planting; ground cover; attracts butterflies; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size)
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 1 to 2 feet
Spread: 2 to 3 feet
Plant habit: spreading
Plant density: open
Growth rate: moderate
Texture: medium

Figure 1. Gaillardia.
Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate  
Leaf type: simple  
Leaf margin: lobed; serrate  
Leaf shape: oblanceolate; spatulate  
Leaf venation: pinnate  
Leaf type and persistence: semi-evergreen  
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches  
Leaf color: green  
Fall color: not applicable  
Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: yellow; orange; red; bicolors  
Flower characteristic: summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown  
Fruit length: unknown  
Fruit cover: unknown  
Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable  
Current year stem/twig color: not applicable  
Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun  
Soil tolerances: acidic; alkaline; sand; loam;  
Drought tolerance: high  
Soil salt tolerances: good  
Plant spacing: 12 to 18 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable  
Winter interest: no special winter interest  
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

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Invasive potential: native plant that often reproduces into nearby landscapes  
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant  

Use and Management

Suitable for growing along the beaches right on the dunes, Gaillardia does best in light, very well-drained soils in full sun locations, enduring heat, sandy soil and drought extremely well.

Gaillardia shows well in a mass planting spaced two to three feet apart, as an edging plant along a walk or driveway, as an accent in a perennial garden or in front of a shrubbery border. Do not over-water since this could induce root rot.

Cultivars include ‘Yellow Sun’, bright yellow blooms, and ‘Red Plume’, vibrant, dark red blossoms.

Propagation is by seed or root divisions planted in early spring.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.