Favorite Flowers of the Chesapeake Master Gardeners

Zinnia by Vicki Roberts

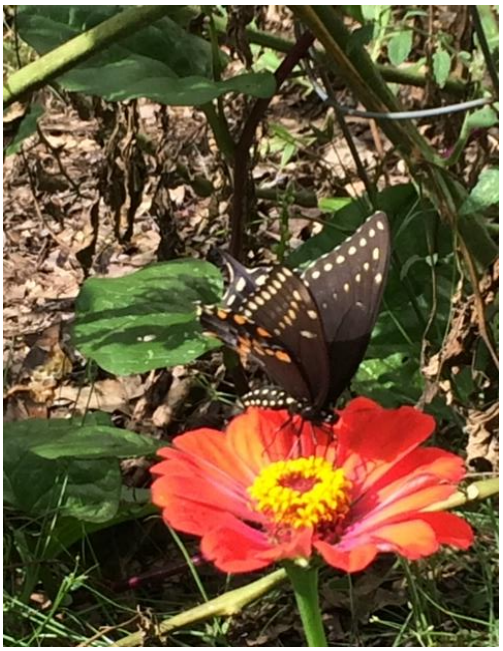
Zinnia elegans is the botanical name for a flower that is commonly known just by its first name Zinnia.

Family- Asteraceae which includes sunflowers and daisies. There are many flower forms and sizes.

Zones - 2-11

Colors- All but blue and brown.

Conditions- prefer full sun and moist soil.



This annual is a workhorse in any sunny garden, flowerbed, or container as it has many cultivars that have multiple flower forms and colors that easily compliment any specific color scheme you may have. Zinnias are easily propagated from seed by placing them directly in the soil, they are inexpensive, and are readily available both online and in gardening establishments. The shortest cultivars are dwarf varieties which are about ten inches tall with varying flower size. Landscape varieties are around twenty inches tall, and there are tall cultivars which grow to up to four feet. They continue to flower from June through the first frost providing vivid colors and bushy foliage, but they also are pollinator magnets drawing beneficial insects throughout the spring, summer and fall.

Zinnias were a staple at the edges of my father's vegetable garden. I loved them as they were the only thing that didn't require weeding, and provided a glimpse into the amazing world of insects. Zinnia's if cut just above a leaf node will continue to bloom. A couple of my favorites are 'Cut and Come Again' a prolific re-bloomer, and 'State Fair Mix ' has single and double blooms in multiple colors that make wonderful fresh bouquets. Plant zinnias; it's a win for you and the pollinators.

Resources:

http:missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder

Photos by Vicki Roberts