

Hardy Annuals for the Home Gardener

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Understanding Hardiness



Hardy Options in KY



What is a Hardy Annual?

- A great way to add variety to your garden and landscape to expand your bloom season
- Goes through its entire life cycle in one season like tender annuals
- Can survive cold temperatures (actually prefers them!)
- Planted in fall or early spring/late winter in our zone(s)





The Science Behind It–

- Not all hardy annuals have the same hardiness level
- Growth slows as temps cool and days shorten
- The more stable you can keep the temperatures around your plants, the better off your plants will be
- Root establishment in cool temps is the key!

Understanding the USDA Hardiness Zones

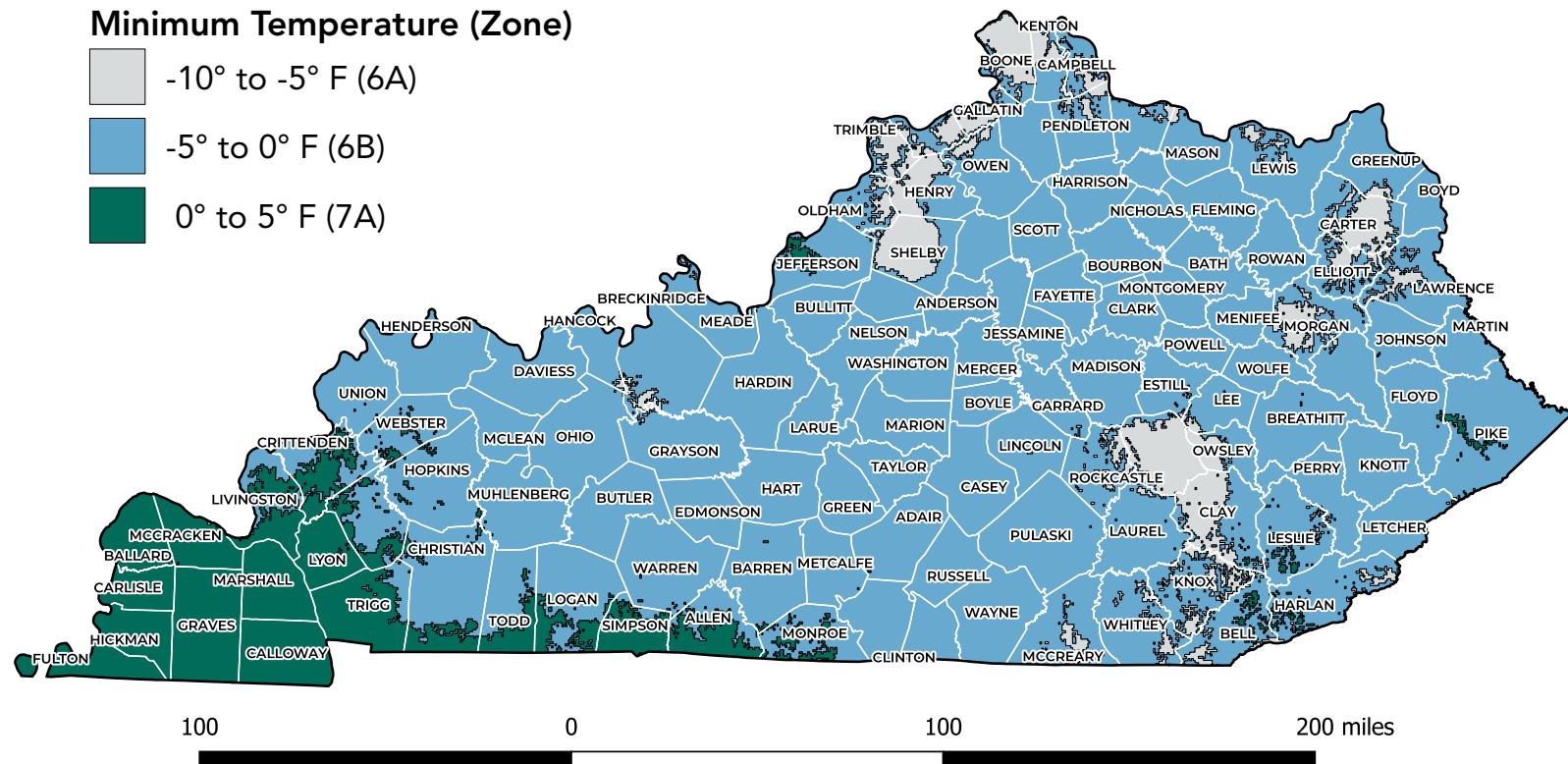
- Based on the **average** annual extreme minimum winter temperature
- Difference between zones is 10F
- Difference between subzones is 5F
- Wind, soil type, soil moisture, humidity, pollution, snow, duration of exposure, and sunshine all play a part



USDA Plant Hardiness Zones of Kentucky

Minimum Temperature (Zone)

- 10° to -5° F (6A)
- 5° to 0° F (6B)
- 0° to 5° F (7A)

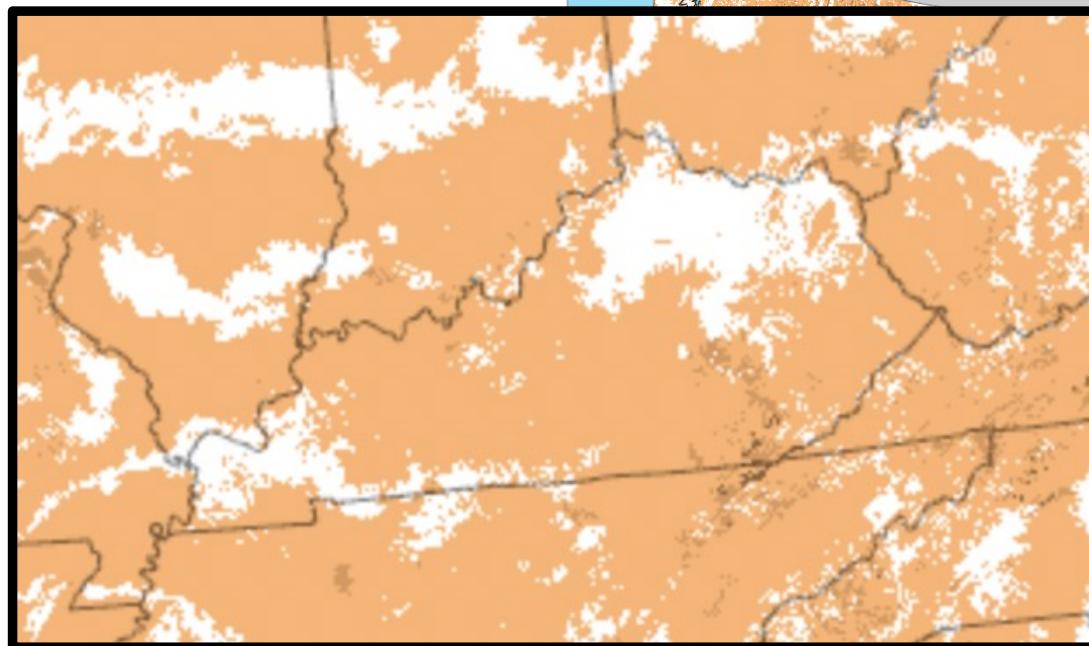


Map prepared by Joshua Knight for Department of Horticulture, University of Kentucky, January 2020. Data acquired from the National Atlas of the United States 1:1,000,000-Scale datasets. March 2016 and United States Department of Agriculture Ag Data Commons Plant Hardiness Zone Map (PHZM) 2012.



USDA Agricultural Research Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Plant Hardiness Half-Zone Changes (2023 Edition – 2012 Edition)



Zone Change

- 3 (5 °F) Half Zones
- 2 (5 °F) Half Zones
- 1 (5 °F) Half Zone
- 0
- 1 (5 °F) Half Zone
- 2 (5 °F) Half Zones
- 3 (5 °F) Half Zones

Note: Caution should be used in interpreting areas of -1 shift and multiple half zone shifts (both + and -); they may be due to differences in modeling methods and data availability rather than shifts in climatic conditions.

Mapping by the
PRISM Climate Group
College of Engineering
Oregon State University



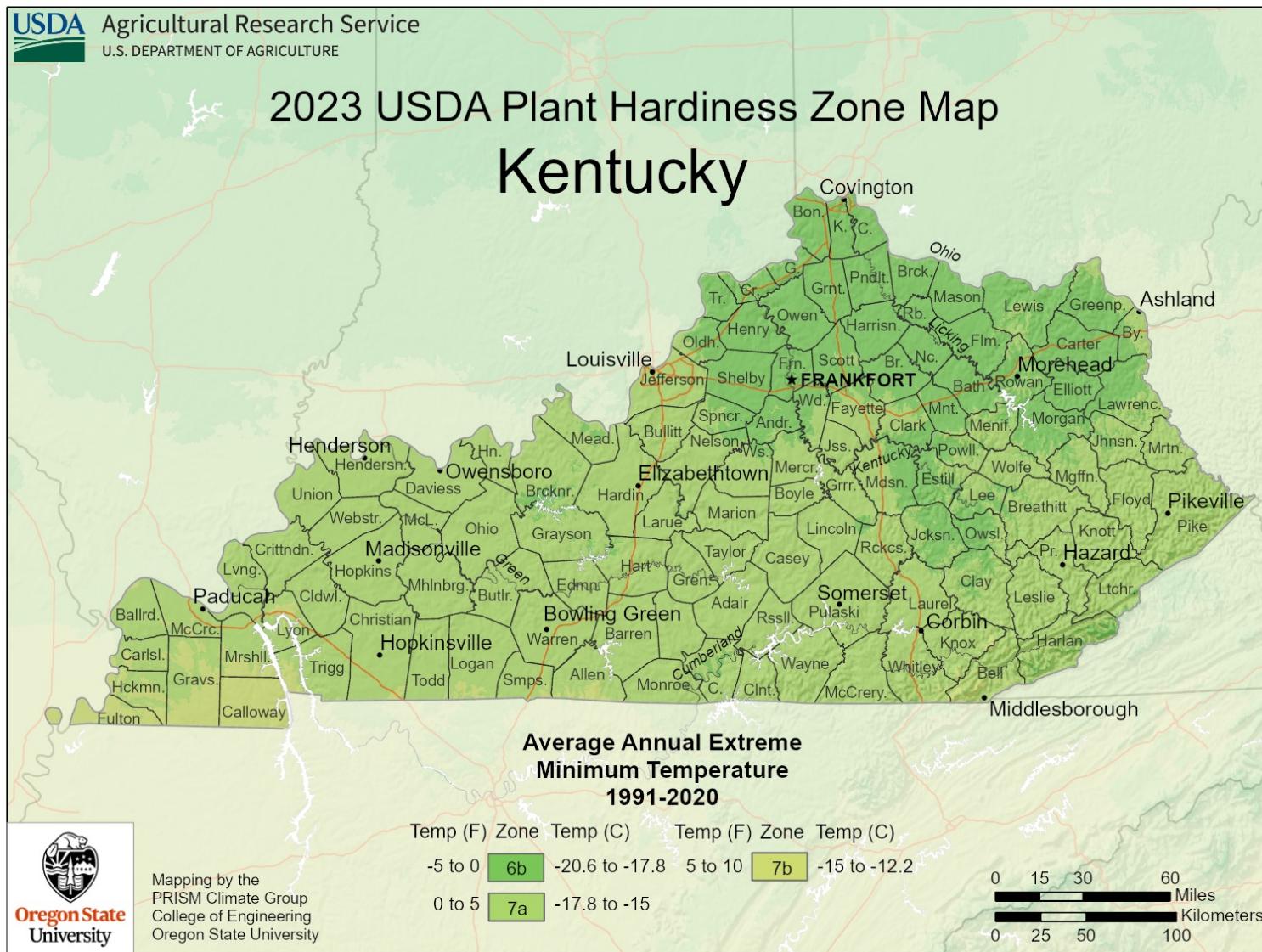
Oregon State
University



Agricultural Research Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map

Kentucky



Oregon State
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Hardy Options in KY





Photo from Red Barn Blooms

Bachelor's Buttons

- Also known as cornflower
- Winter hardiness: Zone 6
- Can be fall-planted spring-planted
- Early bloomer
- Beneficial insects love them even when they aren't blooming



Photo from Firmly Rooted Flowers

Bupleurum

- Winter hardiness: Zone 5
- Can be fall planted or spring planted
- Generally happiest if sown outdoors, but can also be started indoors
- Harvest before the yellow "flowers" start to turn
- Basically a "one and done" crop, so needs succession planting

Dianthus

- Common name: Sweet William
- Winter hardiness: Zone 5
- Can be fall-planted or spring-planted
- So many colors!
- Can produce a fall flush too



Photo from Firmly Rooted Flowers

Campanula

- Common names: Bellflower, Canterbury Bells
- Winter hardiness: Zone 5
- Must be started indoors or bought plugs
- Can be fall-planted or early-spring planted
- Day-length sensitive



Photo from Firmly Rooted Flowers

Delphinium

- Tall spikes that come in shades of whites, blues, and purples
- Winter hardiness: Zone 3
- Start indoors
- Can be a perennial in cool-seasoned areas, but grown as an annual in warm-seasoned areas
- Ideal for fall planting, but can be late winter/early spring planted



Photo from Bellaire Blooms



Photo from Riverbend Blooms

Digitalis

- **Common name: Foxglove**
- **Winter hardiness: Zone 5**
- **Prefers indoor starting, but can be sown outdoors**
- **Great for fall-planting, but can also be spring-planted**
- **Prolific bloomer**
- **All parts of foxglove are poisonous**

Feverfew

- Winter hardiness: Zone 5
- Does best with fall-planting, but can be spring-planted too
- Can come back every year
- Prefers to be started indoors, but can be sown outdoors
- Repels all insects, even beneficial ones



Photo from Rookery Flower Co.



Larkspur

- Tall spikes that come in shades of whites, blues, purples, and pinks
- Winter hardiness: Zone 6
- Sow outdoors (can start indoors, but don't like their roots disturbed)
- Can be fall-planted or spring-planted
- Generally just one cut, but will also get usable side shoots

Photo from Hither Blooms

Nigella

- Common name: Love-in-a-Mist
- Winter hardiness: 6
- Prefers to be sown outdoors, but can be started indoors
- Prefers fall-planting, but can be spring-planted
- Both flowers and the seed pods are fun!
- Have to continually harvest
- Great for dried work

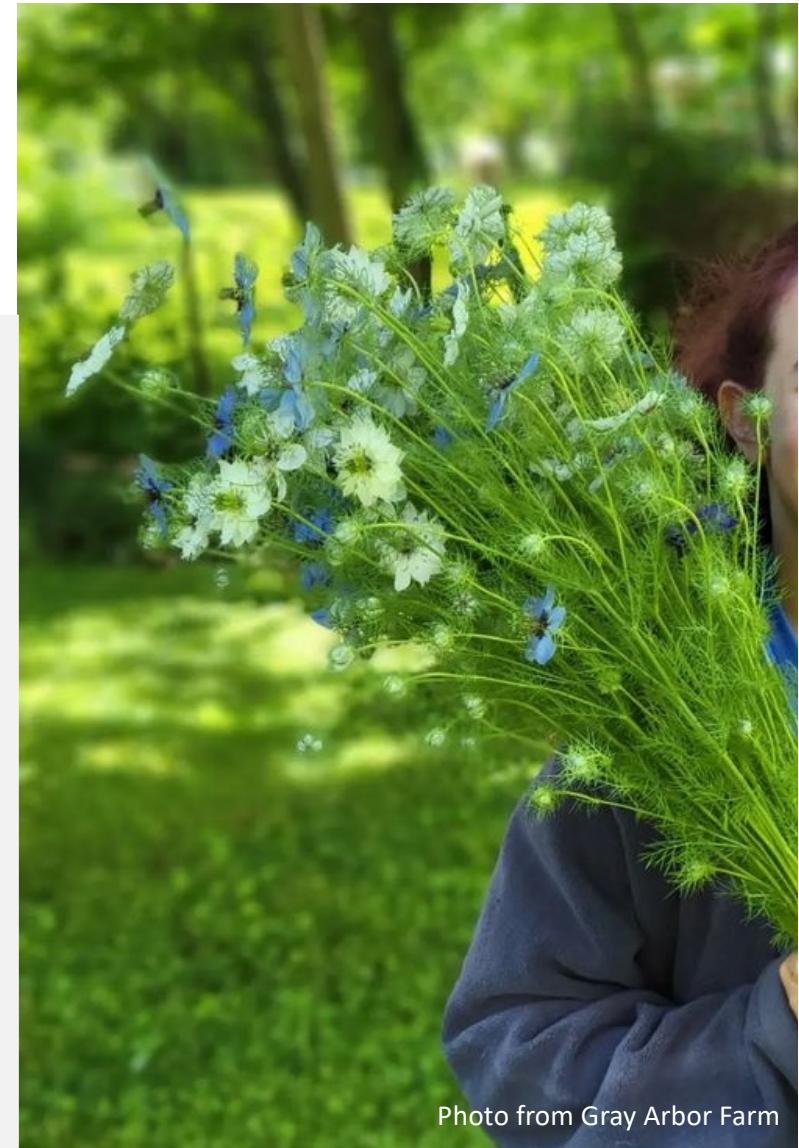


Photo from Gray Arbor Farm

Yarrow

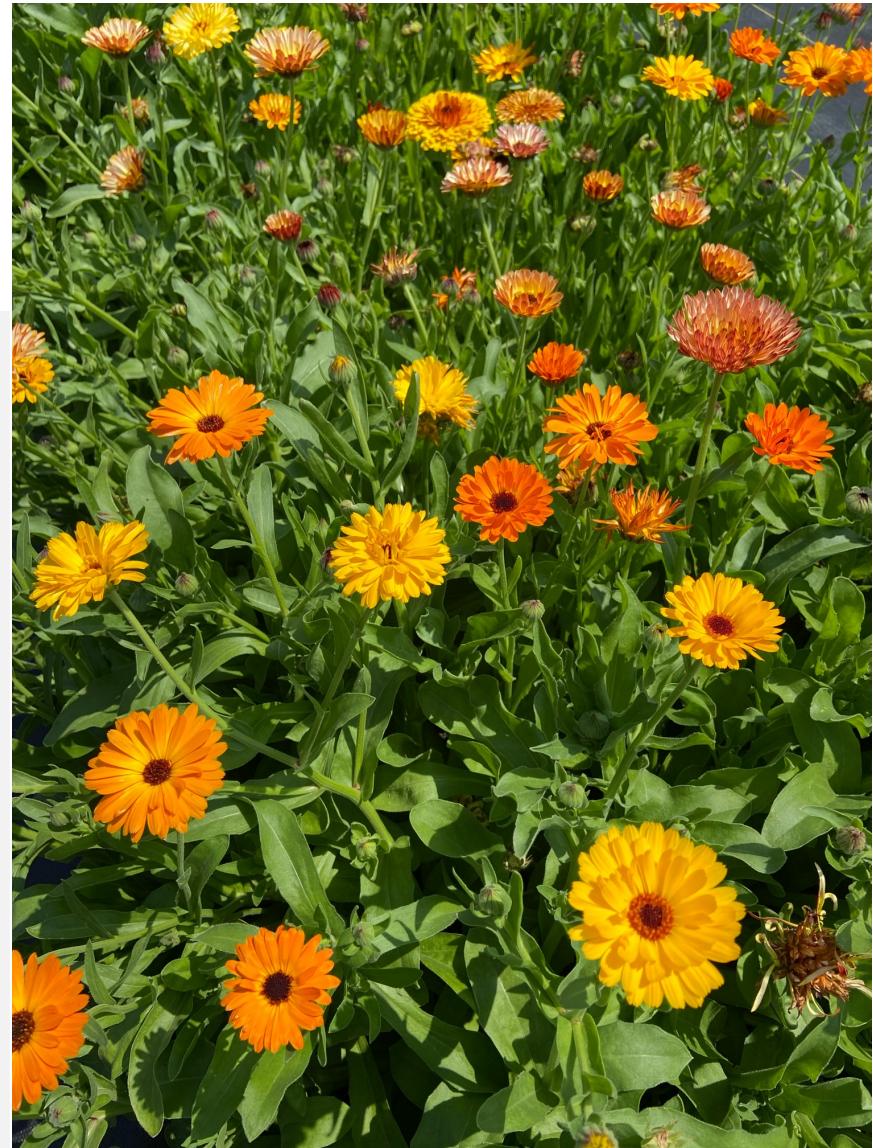
- Winter hardiness: Zone 5
- Can be fall-planted or spring-planted
- So many colors!
- Can produce a fall flush too
- Will come back even better in second and third years



Photo from Firmly Rooted Flowers

Wrapping It All Up–

- Understand what the hardiness zones mean
- Understand the tendencies of your microclimate
- Forgive yourself when things die– it's trial and error often times!
- Embrace the world of cool and colorful– so many great options!





Questions? Discussion?



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