

'Profusion' Zinnias

An endless summer of vivid blossoms

Jimmy Turner



Above and across: 'Profusion' zinnias — here, 'Profusion Orange' — produce 2-inch blooms on well-branched plants all summer long. The 'Profusion' series also offers superior resistance to mildew and leaf spot, which commonly afflict other zinnias.

'Profusion' zinnias live up to their name: Flowers are produced in profusion all summer long. This series is a breakthrough in zinnia breeding, crossing the large, cut-flower type zinnias (*Zinnia elegans*) with the smaller, trailing *Z. angustifolia*. 'Profusion' combines the best of both species: larger flowers, compact growth habit and, most importantly, super resistance to diseases.

Although all zinnias do well in Texas, they are often plagued by mildew and leaf spot. The 'Profusion' series is by far



the best zinnia for use in Texas, and resists both of these ailments. The 2-inch flowers are produced constantly on well-branched, compact plants. While the blooms are smaller than cut-flower types, they are produced in great numbers.

'Profusion' zinnias are best grown in full-sun with well-drained soil. Like all zinnias, wet feet are a sure way to kill them. Once the plants are established, they require little care and are quite drought-tolerant.

Their flowers come in five colors: white, cherry, orange, apricot and fire. My personal favorites are the orange, apricot and fire. 'Profusion Orange' is a bright golden-orange that shows up well from a distance. The newest color, 'Profusion Fire,' is even brighter — a deep scarlet-orange that glows in full sun. 'Profusion Apricot' bears terra cotta-color blooms that mix well with pastels and softer colors. 'Profusion White' features soft white flowers with orange centers. The only color I don't recommend is 'Profusion Cherry.' Although it is disease-resistant and heat-tolerant like the others, its flowers fade in our extreme summers. In cooler climates, however, this is one of the most popular colors.

These mounding plants make great additions to containers and raised beds, and are equally useful planted in masses or spotted into perennial borders for summer color. Zinnia 'Profusion' series can be purchased as flowering plants in 4-inch containers or planted directly from seed. Either way, you'll find these plants indispensable as summer and fall color. ★

About the author: Jimmy Turner is Director of Horticulture Research at the Dallas Arboretum and is responsible for all color installations there. He also heads the plant trials and trial gardens for the Arboretum.

AT A GLANCE

Latin name: *Zinnia x hybrida*

Common name: Zinnia

Flowers: Available in white, cherry, fire, orange, apricot

Foliage: Soft green and fine-textured

Mature height: 12 to 18 inches tall and wide

Hardiness: Summer annual

Soil: Well-drained

Exposure: Full sun

Water usage: Medium

Sources: Local retailers or from seed