
A close-up photograph of two yellow pansies with black centers, set against a blurred green background. The flowers are in sharp focus, showing the delicate texture of the petals and the intricate patterns of the dark centers. The top flower is slightly more open than the bottom one.

PANSIES
&
VIOLAS

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Introduction: Max Reward, Little Fuss

As summer annuals fade, Pansies and Violas step into the spotlight. Few plants offer as much reward for as little fuss: both are cool-season stalwarts that shrug off PNW frost, keep blooming through gray weeks when little else will, and often carry color all the way from fall into the following spring.

The two are closely related but easy to tell apart once you know what to look for. Pansies produce larger flowers, often 2-3" across, frequently marked with the classic overlapping "face" blotch. Violas are the daintier cousin, with smaller flowers - usually under 1.5" - but a far more prolific, mounding habit that makes them excellent for edging, containers, and mass color.

Both plants thrive in the same conditions our fall gardens naturally provide: cooling soil, shortening days, and the gentle rains that keep root zones consistently moist without the summer heat stress that can stall flowering. Planted now, they'll reward customers with weeks of color heading into the holidays and often rebound again come the first mild days of spring.



Growing Tips & Care

Site & Soil

Choose full sun for fall plantings. As spring days warm, light afternoon shade helps extend bloom before plants set seed and decline. Both prefer fertile, well-drained soil with a slightly acidic pH. Work compost into beds before planting to improve structure and moisture retention.

In the PNW, plant in early-to-mid October while soil is still warm from summer. This gives roots several weeks to establish before winter dormancy sets in.

Watering

Keep soil evenly moist, but never waterlogged! Fall rains often handle most of the work in our region, but check containers and covered beds, which can dry out.

Feeding

A light, balanced, or bloom-boosting fertilizer applied every 2-3 weeks keeps flower production steady through the cooler months. Avoid heavy nitrogen feeds, which push leafy growth at the expense of blooms.

Deadheading

Pinch or snip spent blooms and yellowing leaves regularly. Removing faded flowers before they set seed redirects energy into new buds and keeps plants tidy through winter.

Cold Tolerance

Both plants handle light frost well, and violas are generally the hardier of the two, often shrugging off temperatures that would damage a pansy. In a hard freeze, plants may look wilted or flattened, but typically rebound as temperatures rise.

Pest Watch

Watch for aphids on new growth and slugs after damp nights - both are the most common issues customers report. Hand-picking and routine inspection are usually enough to keep populations in check.

Varieties & Species

A quick tour of the species behind Pansy and Viola offerings, from large-flowered garden pansies to the tiny, self-seeding Johnny Jump-Up.

Garden Pansy

Viola x wittrockiana

- The classic, large-flowered hybrid.
- Prized for bold “faces” and an enormous color range.
- Mounding, compact habit.
- Ideal for beds, borders, and containers.

Horned Violet

Viola cornuta

- Smaller-flowered, but far more floriferous than a pansy
- A spreading, trailing habit that fills in gaps quickly.
- A favorite for mass plantings, window boxes, and hanging baskets.

Johnny Jump-Up

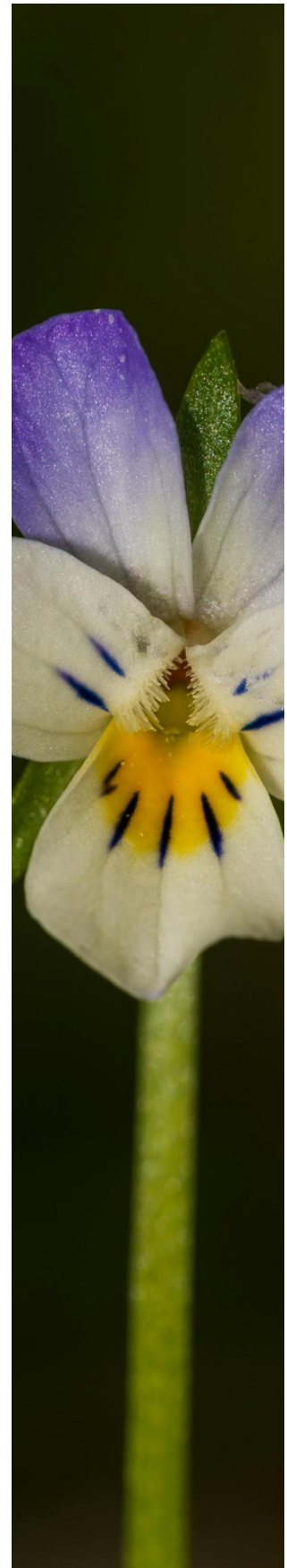
Viola tricolor

- A charming heirloom with tiny purple-and-yellow blooms.
- Self-seeds readily and naturalizes in beds and gravel paths.
- Perfect for a cottage-garden, slightly wild look.

Sweet Violet

Viola odorata

- Grown for fragrance and flower
- A low, spreading habit
- Well suited to shaded groundcover plantings beneath shrubs and along woodland edges.



Spotlight: Pansy ‘Delta’ Series

The Delta series has been bred for early, abundant flowering and holds up well across a wide swing of fall and winter conditions, tolerating both cool snaps and the occasional warm spell better than many older pansy lines. Its compact, mounding habit stays tidy in beds, border, and mixed containers, and the color range runs from clear, unmarked hues to bold, blotched “face” patterns and picotee edges, giving plenty of room to mix and match!

Delta performs especially well massed in beds for a strong carpet of color, and its early flowering means customers see blooms fast after planting - a good selling point for anyone wanting install fall curb appeal.

Pansy ‘Delta’ Series at a Glance	
Height	6-8"
Spread	9-12"
Light Requirements	Full sun to part shade
Watering Requirements	Keep soil evenly moist
Habit	Compact, mounding
Bloom Time	Nearly all year!
Bloom Colors	Clear shades, blotched faces, picotee

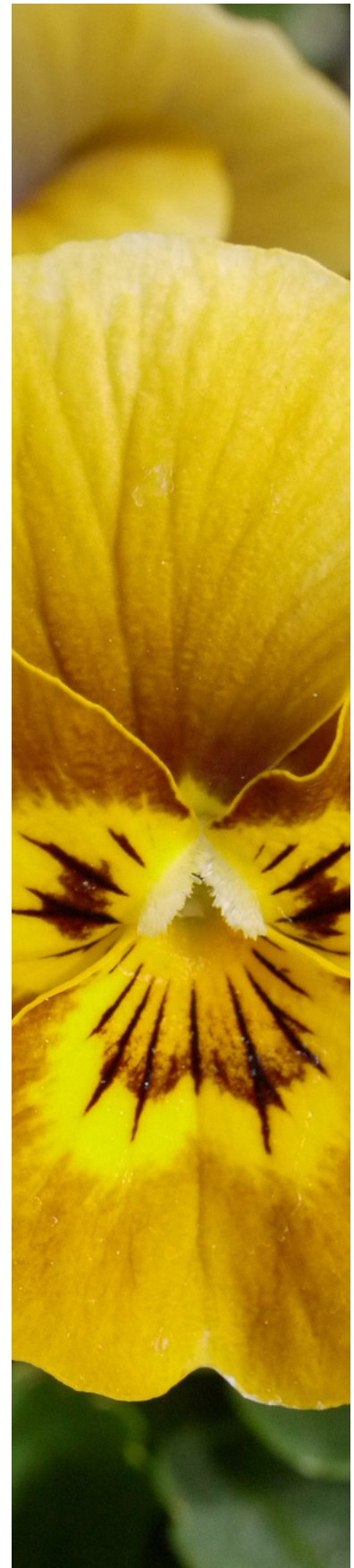


Spotlight: Viola 'Penny' Series

Penny series Violas are well known for an especially compact, uniform habit and extra-early flowering, making them a dependable choice for containers, hanging baskets, and tight bedding spaces where a larger pansy would sprawl. The series holds color well through both cold snaps and mild spells, and its wide range of solid and bicolor blooms covers everything from soft pastels to deep, moody purples.

Because the Penny series stays so compact, it's an easy upsell alongside other container plants. Customers can tuck several colors into a single pot for a full, layered look without any one plant overtaking the rest of the arrangement.

Pansy 'Delta' Series at a Glance	
Height	4-6"
Spread	8-10"
Light Requirements	Full sun to part shade
Watering Requirements	Keep soil evenly moist
Habit	Compact, uniform, mounding
Bloom Time	August-April
Bloom Colors	Solids and bicolors, wide range



Seasonal Planting Guide & Design Ideas

Early October is the sweet spot for planting Pansies and Violas in the PNW. Soil is still warm enough for roots to establish, while cooling air temperatures reduce transplant stress. Planting can continue into November for gardeners wanting fall color, though earlier plantings will build sturdier root systems heading into winter.

When transitioning beds from summer annuals, clear out spent plants and refresh the soil with compost before planting. Pansies and Violas will hold through winter and, in mild years, rebound with a fresh flush of blooms as temperatures rise in early spring.

Garden Design Ideas

Pair for Contrast

Combine Pansies or Violas with ornamental Cabbage, Kale, or Chrysanthemums for varied texture, and Senecio for a soft, silvery backdrop that makes bloom colors pop.

Edge & Spill

Use trailing Violas as a low, spilling edge along walkways, raised beds, or window boxes, where their mounding habit softens hard lines.

Color-Themed Drifts

Mass a single color for impact - an all-purple “moonlit” bed, or a warm gold-and-burgundy autumn blend that echoes changing leaves.

Two-Season Layering

Underplant spring bulbs like Tulips or Narcissus with Pansies in the fall. In the spring, the bulbs will push through just as the Pansies are finishing their own encore bloom, giving beds two distinct seasons of interest from one planting!