

Over the years, Central Oregon has been home to a diverse population of crops depending upon current market and population needs. Farmers are always looking for ways to improve their farm practices and for new crops to grow. Flower seed is a newer crop that is currently being grown and experimented with in the Central Oregon area. Flower seed fields are not only attractive; they are also beneficial to many insects. Two flowers currently being grown are:

Purple Cone Flower

Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), more commonly known as Echinacea, is part of an herbaceous group of flowering plants belonging in the daisy family. There are nine different species in the group, which are referred to as coneflowers. The name coneflower comes from characteristic “cone” shape at the center of the flower. Coneflowers can be found across North American prairies and wooded areas. The plants can tolerate a wide variety of conditions, maintain their purple flowers through the growing season and multiply rapidly by reseeding themselves. Purple coneflower is used in both natural habitats and ornamental landscaping. It is also used for its medicinal qualities. North American Plains Indians first used it for pain relief and it is now widely used for common colds and flus.

Yarrow

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is a flowering plant belonging to the Asteraceae family. It can be found across North American forests and grasslands, blooming from May through June. Yarrow is also grown by many nurseries for landscapes and is a frequent component of butterfly gardens. It prefers to grow in well-drained soil and full sun but can be grown in less ideal conditions as well. Yarrow is believed to be a good companion plant because it attracts many beneficial insects like predatory wasps, hoverflies and ladybugs and can help improve the health of sick plants that are growing near it. The plant also has many medicinal properties and has been used on wounds and as an anti-inflammatory. In the Middle Ages, yarrow was used to flavor beer prior to the development of hops and today is still used to make some liquors and bitters.