

# The Soft Stuff

Annuals	\$1-\$2 for a packet of seeds. \$0.50-\$1.50 per bedding plant.	Buying flats (36-48 individual plants) brings down the cost of bedding plants. Self-seeders save money by propagating themselves each season.
Bulbs	\$0.30-\$1 per bulb for common varieties. Spring bulbs, such as daffodils, are cheaper. Lilies and other large plants are in the higher price range.	For bulb bargains, buy a bunch. You pay about 45 cents per bulb if you buy 25, but only 30 cents each if you buy 100.
Groundcovers	\$0.89-\$1.19 for a 2-1/2-inch pot; about \$30 for a flat of 32. \$1.89-\$2.19 for a 4-inch pot; about \$33 for a flat of 18.	Most spread quickly and provide wide coverage for a small investment. Good alternative to grass.
Herbs	\$1.89-\$2.19 for a 4-inch pot. \$5-\$7 for a 1-gallon container.	Most herbs are easy to start from seed.
Hostas	\$3-\$10 per plant.	Rarity determines price. Hostas are easy to divide, so a few go a long way.
Ornamental	\$20 per cubic yard in bulk. \$2.50-\$5 per 40-pound bag for most bark-type mulches; \$7-\$10 per bag for prettier cocoa hulls.	Homemade mulches, such as compost, grass clippings, and newspaper, are just about free; consider looks and durability. Top cheap mulch with a nicer layer.
Grasses	\$5-\$7 for 1-gallon container. \$12-\$15 for a 3-gallon container. \$22-\$25 for 7-gallon container.	Often spectacular, but pricey. Before investing, make sure your site is suitable for the species you pick.
Perennials (including non-woody vines)	\$2-\$3 for a 4-inch plot. \$3-\$5 for a 1-gallon container.	You save money on small plants but wait longer for blooms. But easy-to-divide species to make the most of your investment.
Shrubs (including woody vines and roses)	Some evergreen shrubs and rosebushes start at less than \$10 for a 1-gallon container; popular flowering shrubs often are \$15-\$25 per gallon.	It pays to shop around for roses. A quick study of two catalogs shows the same climbing rose, 'Zephirine Drohin,' priced at \$14.96 in one and \$9.95 in another.
Soil	\$20-\$25 per cubic yard for topsoil; \$30-\$40 for topsoil enriched with manure or compost.	If you plan to grow anything in the soil, it's worth it to buy the enriched kind.
Trees (container grown)	\$8-\$12 per gallon for container-size specimens.	Size and rarity determine price. Evergreen and popular shade trees are cheaper than ornamentals, such as Japanese maples. Fruit trees are often a good bargain and offer multi-season interest.
Turf	\$3-\$7 per 1,000 square feet of Kentucky blue-grass seed; \$10-\$15 per 1,000 square feet of fine fescue seed; \$12-\$18 per 1,000 square feet of tall fescue and Bermuda grass seed. \$1-\$1.50 per 14x21-inch sheet of sod.	Sod costs work out to 50-75 cents per square foot; seed is 1-2 cents per square foot; neither prices includes labor; with sod, you pay for an instant lawn; seed is cheap but takes lots of time, effort, and water.