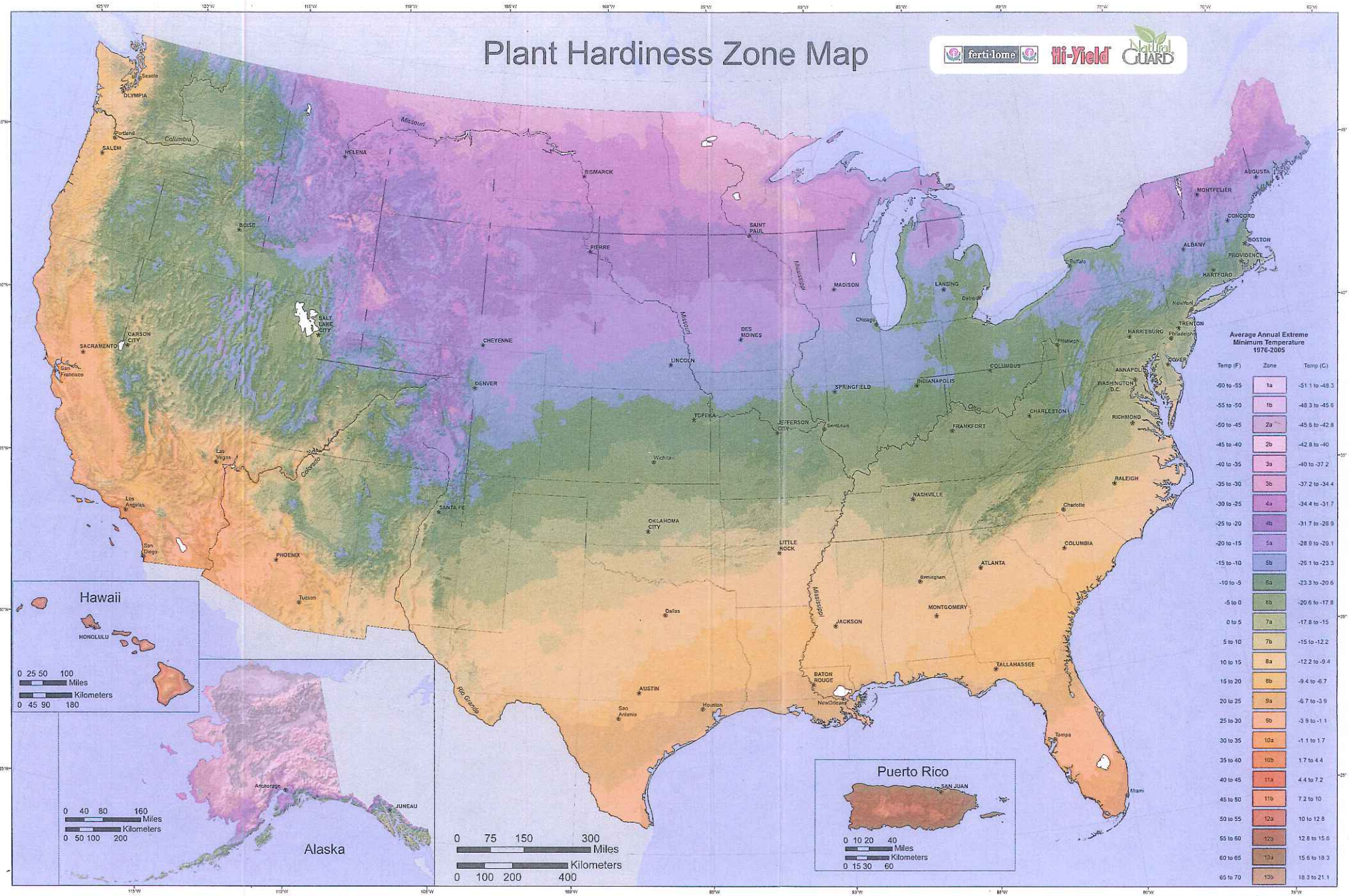


# Plant Hardiness Zone Map



The U.S. Department of Agriculture released a new version of its plant hardiness zone map, the first major revision since 1990. This revised map divides the U.S. into 13 zones and shifts about half of the continental U.S. a half-zone higher, toward the warmer end of the scale. The map is based on averages, which incorporate colder extremes as well as warmer ones, but gardeners still need to be prepared for weather surprises.

A hardiness zone is a geographically defined area in which a specific category of plant life is capable of growing, as defined by climatic conditions, including its ability to withstand the minimum temperatures of that particular zone.

Each zone is based on 10 degrees Fahrenheit. The lower the zone number, the colder the region---zone 1 is coldest (-60 to -50) and zone 13 is hottest (60 to 70). The zones are divided into A and B regions, which are sometimes used to fine-tune plant recommendations.

Locate the color of your local plant zone; consult the color-coded chart at the right of the North American plant hardiness zone map to determine the numeric zone. Use your precise local plant zone to find flowers, vegetables and shrubs most appropriate for your area.