

# Perennials

## Discover the delights of a perennial garden!

Perennials are relatively easy to grow, last from year to year and offer an abundance of shapes, colors, and textures. Many of the flowers you remember from grandma's garden are the same perennials we enjoy today. We hope the following information will help you with the basics of perennial gardening. There are many informative books on the market to supplement your knowledge.

## Designing and Planting Your Perennial Garden

**Location** - Is your desired area sunny, shady, dry, wet, rocky. The best garden location is relatively level, has good drainage, reasonably rich soil, protection from strong winds and has some sun.

**Design** - Do you desire a formal garden with neat, geometric shaped beds or do you prefer an informal bed or border with soft, curving edges. Will your garden be seen from all sides or will it have a background of some sort, i.e. a fence or wall.

**Plant Selection** - Should be based on location and design. Some points to consider are height and spread of mature plants, color and texture, form, flowering time and foliage of plant when not in flower. Taller plants should be placed in the back of a border with the shortest plants in the front. In a bed, the taller plants go in the center with the shorter plants around the edges. Be sure to choose plants with the right light and soil requirements for the area you have selected for your bed. (sunny, shady, wet or dry etc.)

**Bed Preparation** - Whether you are planting in an established bed or creating a whole new bed, you will need to determine the texture and structure of your soil. Dig up the soil a bit; take a handful of soil, squeeze it in your palm and then open your hand. Clay soil will sit in your hand in a big lump. Sandy soil will not stick together even briefly. If the soil holds together for a few seconds and then crumbles apart, it's good loam. If you have clay or sandy soil, you should amend it with plenty of organic matter such as compost, peat moss (moisten first) and manure or a product such as Garden Magic Compost and Manure®, Posy Power™, or Schultz® Clay Soil Conditioner™. Next check your pH and correct it if necessary. Most perennials grow best in neutral or slightly acidic soil.

To determine the shape and size of your bed, outline the area with a garden hose and find a shape that pleases you. Use this outline as a pattern when you are ready to dig. New beds will need to be stripped of sod first. To prevent recurring grass, spray the area with Roundup®; wait one to two weeks and then strip dead sod. Next, spread your amendments on the bed, add a fertilizer such as Espoma Plant Tone® and cultivate either by hand or cultivator. Dig and turn the soil to a depth of 6-10". Break up large clods and rake out weeds and rocks. Now you're ready to plant!

**Planting Your Perennials** - Buy healthy, quality plants! Set your potted perennials out on the bed to determine position. Plant in groups, clumps, or drifts and use odd numbers of plants 3, 5, or 7 of a particular kind for the nicest effect. Be sure to check the height and spread of the mature plant. Dig a large enough hole so that you can spread the roots. The depth of the hole will be determined by the size of the roots. Place the crown of the plant (where the roots meet the stem) at ground level. Spread roots and pack soil in gently. When the hole is filled, firm it down by stepping on the loose soil. Water in thoroughly and label if desired. Mulch the bed 2" deep, keeping mulch a few inches away from the crown; or treat the bed with Preen® and then mulch. This step is worth every penny if you don't want to spend time weeding. Water regularly until plants are established.

**Maintenance** - Deadhead flowers regularly to extend their bloom time. Fertilize in Spring and Fall with an all-purpose fertilizer such as Plant Tone®. Water well and thoroughly and let the soil dry out between waterings. Divide plants as needed. If your plant is dying out on the middle or overcrowding other plants, it probably needs to be divided. Give plants a midsummer boost with Miracle-Gro® or Espoma Flower Tone™.

# Perennials

## Plants for Sunny, Dry Areas

Achillea Yarrow  
Anthemis tinctoria Golden Marguerite  
Armeria maritima Sea Thrift  
Artemisia schmidtiana Silver Mound  
Asclepias tuberosa Butterfly Flower  
Baptisia australis False Indigo  
Catananche caerulea Cupid's Dart  
Coreopsis lanceolata - Coreopsis  
Coreopsis verticillata Threadleaf Coreopsis  
Echinops ritro Globe Thistle  
Euphorbia - Spurge  
Gaillardia grandiflora Blanket Flower  
Hermerocallis - Daylily  
Lavandula angustifolia English Lavender  
Malva alcea Hollyhock Mallow  
Oenothera - Sundrops  
Perovskia atriplicifolia Russian Sage  
Sedum Sedum, Stonecrop  
Sempervivum tectorium Hens and Chicks  
Stachys byzantina Betony or Lamb's Ears  
Yucca filamentosa Yucca, Adam's Needles

## Plants for Moist to Wet Areas

Astilbe arendsii - Astilbe  
Cimicifuga racemosa Snakeroot, Bugbane  
Dicentra Bleeding Heart  
Houttuynia cordata 'Variegata' - Houttuynia  
Iris ensata Japanese Iris  
Lobelia cardinalis Cardinal Flower  
Lysmachia cl. Gooseneck Loosestrife  
Lythrum salicaria Purple Loosestrife  
Matteuccia pensylvanica Ostrich Fern  
Physostegia virginianica Obedient Plant  
Tradescantia Spiderwort  
Trollius eurapaeus - Globeflower

## Plants for Long Bloom Season

Achillia 'Moonshine' Moonshine Yarrow  
Asclepias tuberosa Butterfly Weed  
Coreopsis lanceolata - Coreopsis  
Coreopsis verticillata 'Moonbeam'  
Dicentra eximia Fringed Bleeding Heart  
Echinacea purpurea Purple Coneflower  
Gaillardia Blanket Flower  
Lythrum salicaria Purple Loosestrife  
Rudbeckia f. 'Goldstrum' Black-eyed Susan  
Salvia x superba Perennial Salvia  
Sedum Autumn Joy

**While by no means complete, these plant lists should help you with choosing the best perennials for your particular garden. Keep in mind height, spread, bloom time shape and texture in addition to color when choosing your favorites.**

## Flowers for Cutting

Achillia species Achillia, Yarrow  
Anemone x hyb. Japanese Anemone  
Aquilegia species - Columbine  
Chrysanthemum x sup. Shasta Daisy  
Dicentra species Bleeding Heart  
Echinacea pur. Purple Coneflower  
Gaillardia x grandiflora Blanket Flower  
Gypsophila paniculata Baby's Breath  
Helianthus x mult. Perennial Sunflower  
Heuchera sanguinea Coral Bells  
Lavandula ang. English Lavender  
Liatris species - Gayfeather  
Lupinus 'Russell Hybrid' - Lupine  
Platycodon grandiflorus Balloon Flower  
Rudbeckia species Black-eyed Susan  
Veronica spicata Spike Speedwell

## Plants for Full Shade

Ajuga reptans - Bugleweed  
Convallaria majalis Lily-of-the-Valley  
Gallium odoratum Sweet Woodruff  
Helleborus orientalis Lenten Rose  
Hosta Hosta, Plantation Lily  
Lamium maculatum Lamium, Deadnettle  
Mertensia virginicana Virginia Bluebells  
Polygonatum Solomon's Seal  
Pulmonaria - Lungwort  
Tradescantia - Spiderwort  
Violet odorata Sweet Violet

## Plants for Partial Shade

Alchemilla mollis Lady's Mantle  
Anemone x hybridia Japanese Anemone  
Astilbe - Astilbe  
Aquilegia - Columbine  
Bergenia cordifolia Heartleaf Bergenia  
Brunnera macrophylla Siberian Bugloss  
Ceratostigma plumbaginoides - Plumbago  
Dicentra Bleeding Heart  
Doronicum cordatum Leopard's bane  
Geranium - Cranesbill  
Heuchera sanguinea Coral Bells  
Myosotis sylvatica Forget-Me-Not

## Attractive to Butterflies

Achillia species Achillia, Yarrow  
Asclepias tuberosa Butterfly Weed  
Chrysanthemum Garden Mums  
Coreopsis vert. Threadleaf Coreopsis  
Echinacea pur. Purple Coneflower  
Gaillardia x grand. Blanket Flower  
Lavandula ang. English Lavender  
Liatris spicata - Gayfeather  
Lythrum salicaria Purple Loosestrife  
Monarda didyma Bee Balm  
Phlox paniculata Summer Phlox  
Rudbeckia species Black-eyed Susan  
Sedum 'Autumn Joy'

## Attractive to Hummingbirds

Alcea rosea - Hollyhock  
Aquilegia species - Columbine  
Asclepias tuberosa Butterfly Weed  
Dianthus species - Pinks  
Dicentra species Bleeding Heart  
Digitalis species - Foxglove  
Hemerocallis species - Daylily  
Heuchera sanguinea Coral Bells  
Lobelia arinalis Cardinal Flower  
Monarda didyma Bee Balm  
Penstemon species Beardtongue

## Fragrant Flowers

Arabis caucasica Rock Cress  
Convallaria maj. Lily-of-the-Valley  
Dianthus plumarius Cottage Pinks  
Hosta plant. Fragrant Plantation Lily  
Iris hybrids Bearded Iris  
Lavandula ang. English Lavender  
Paeonia lactiflora - Peony  
Viola odorata Sweet Violet

## Dried Flower or Fruit Use

Achillia species Achillia, Yarrow  
Asclepias tuberosa Butterfly Weed  
Catananche caerulea Cupid's Dart  
Echinops ritro Globe Thistle  
Gypsophila paniculata Baby's Breath  
Iris siberica Siberian Iris (seed pod)  
Lavandula ang. English Lavender  
Limonium latifolium Sea Lavender  
Papavar o. Oriental Poppy (seed pod)  
Physalis a. Chinese Lanterns (seed pod)

