

# NORTHERN *Gardener* CREATING & CARING FOR YOUR ENVIRONMENT

## Perennials

### CARING FOR YOUR ENVIRONMENT

- ✓ A perennial garden can be a great transition zone between lawns and native areas.
- ✓ A well-placed perennial garden can help control soil erosion.
- ✓ Reduce your yard's "monoculture" by diversifying through perennial plantings.

Perennials are herbaceous plants that die to the ground each fall and come up again each spring. Most perennials are valued in the landscape for their colorful blossoms. Some make excellent cut-flowers as well, while others are valued for their foliage that can add color and texture to the garden, such as Silver Mound or the ornamental grasses. There are literally hundreds of varieties of perennials to choose from, with an almost infinite variety of blooming times, color and texture. With just a small assortment of perennials, you can have a variety of color throughout the season.

Perennials can be used in a number of ways in the landscape. They can be used in combination with shrubs and evergreens to provide color and variety. Low, spreading perennials are frequently used as groundcovers and in place of mulches to give a greener, warmer feel to an area. A perennial garden can also be created that will provide color throughout the growing season and cut-flowers for the home. While perennials cannot rival the season-long color of annuals, the beauty of the individual flowers of many perennials is unequalled and eagerly awaited each year.

### Soil Preparation

Good soil preparation is the key to success with perennials since they will occupy their spot in the garden for several years. Most perennials prefer a well-drained soil that is high in organic matter. With heavy soils that may drain poorly, you may consider raising the area to improve drainage. For heavy or light soils, incorporating garden compost, well-rotted manure or peat into the top 8 to 12 inches will increase the organic matter and aid in drainage and soil aeration.

### Mulching

Organic mulches, such as wood chips, shredded bark, cocoa bean hulls or leaves, are beneficial in many ways. They help provide a cool, moist soil that perennials prefer, help to reduce weeds, allow perennials to spread, and help in overwintering by reducing frost penetration into the soil. For winter, a 4-6" mulch of leaves, marsh hay or straw will provide protection for shallow rooted perennials like mums, shasta daisies, delphiniums, etc. Rock mulches restrict the spreading of perennials.

### Dividing Perennials

Many perennials benefit from being divided periodically. If permitted to go undivided, they become crowded, lose their vigor and become vulnerable to diseases. Iris, daylilies and lilies are some of the perennials that benefit from being divided about every three years. Other perennials may never need dividing. Consult your local garden center if you are unsure as to what varieties need dividing.



Name	Color	Time of Bloom	Height	Spacing
<b>TALL</b>				
Daylily	Yellow, red, orange, rose-pink, mahogany	Late spring to fall	18-48"	18-24"
Delphinium	Blue, white, violet, pink, purple	Early summer and early fall	18-72"	20" sm/30" lg
Iris, bearded	White, blue, red, pink, yellow, others	Spring	18-36"	8-10"
Iris, Siberian	White, purple, blue	Early summer	18-30"	18"
Liatris	Rose-purple, white, bluish purple, pink	Late summer	24-48"	14-24"
Lilies	White, yellow, orange, pink, red	Summer	18-60"	12-20"
Lupines	White, pink, blue, red, yellow,	Early summer	36-48"	12-18"
Salvia	Blue, purple, white	Spring to fall	18-48"	18-20"

### MEDIUM

Aster	Lavender, mauve, pink	Fall	12-48"	10-36"
Astilbe	White, pink, red	Early summer	12-30"	12-18"
Baby's Breath	White, pink	Early summer	36"	18"
Bee Balm/Monarda	Pink, red	Summer	2-3'	18-24"
Bleeding Heart	Pink, ivory	Spring	12-18"	10-26"
Chrysanthemum	Yellow, red, white, pink, bronze	Fall	12-36"	15-24"
Columbine	White, yellow, pink, blue, red	Late spring	18-30"	18"
Coreopsis	Yellow	Summer to fall	18-36"	18-24"
Dictamnus/Gas plant	White, rose-pink	Summer	24-36"	20-30"
Ferns	Green foliage	All season	12"-4'	12-24"
Gaillardia	Yellow, red-orange	Summer to fall	18-24"	12-18"
Oriental Poppy	White, pink, orange, salmon, mahogany	Spring	24-36"	24"
Peony	White, red, pink, rose, cream	Spring	36-48"	36-48"
Phlox	Salmon, red, white, pink, red-orange, purple	Summer	18-48"	18-48"
Sedum Autumn Joy	Pink	Late summer	18-24"	18"
Shasta Daisy	White	Spring, summer	24-36"	12-20"

### LOW

Bergenia	Pink, red	Late spring	12-18"	18"
Snow-on-the-Mountain	White and green foliage	Summer	12"	7-10"
Coral Bells	White, pink, red	Late spring-early summer	15-24"	12-15"
Fernleaf Bleeding Heart	Pink, white	Spring-summer	12-18"	12-15"
Lily of the Valley	White	Spring	8-10"	12"
Hosta	White, blue, mauve	Summer-fall	12-36"	10-18"
Moss Phlox	White, pink, blue, rose-red	Early Spring	6"	20-30"
Silver Mound	Silver foliage	All season	12-18"	10-15"
Stone crop/Sedum	Yellow, pink, red	Summer	3-12"	12"



## Designing a Perennial Bed

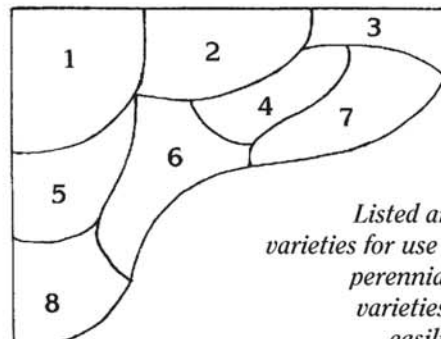
Designing a perennial bed can be an enjoyable experience. For the beginner, it may seem a bit overwhelming, but keep in mind that if you are not happy with the initial planting scheme, it can always be changed. Obtaining, for the first time, perennials that will give you a good mix of seasonal bloom, color and the proper heights, can be difficult even for the experienced gardener. It is usually best to start with a plan. Illustrated is a simple plan for a perennial bed that has been designed with lower growing plants in the foreground and taller plants in the back, to provide a long-season of bloom and variety of color.

### SUN

1. Peony - Pink
2. Daylily - Yellow
3. Siberian Iris  
- Dark Blue
4. Rudbeckia Goldstrum
5. Chrysanthemum
6. Lamb's Ear (Stachys)
7. Columbine  
- Mixed Colors
8. Coreopsis Moonbeam

### SHADE

- Old Fashioned Bleeding Heart
- Astilbe Fanal (Red)
- Hosta Frances William
- Astilbe Bridal Veil (white)
- Hosta Royal Standard
- Lily of the Valley
- Ajuga Bronze Beauty
- Bergenia Morning Red



### Proposed Perennial Garden

Listed are some possible varieties for use in this proposed perennial garden. Other varieties or colors could easily be substituted.



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