

# PERENNIALS

## Requirements

**Full sun** is best for most perennial gardens. Some perennials thrive in the shade. Be careful to select plants suitable for your degree of sunlight.

**Rich well drained soil.** If your site lacks in soil fertility or drainage, be sure to make the necessary amendments of organic matter such as sphagnum peat moss or mushroom compost. A raised bed will also help with drainage.

**Careful planning** of your perennial border will yield the most pleasing effect.

- Combine perennials with dwarf shrubs, evergreens, bulbs and annuals for year round appeal.
- Vary blooming times to extend the season.
- Vary heights and be sure to put the taller plants towards the back of the planting.
- A fence or evergreen screen can make a nice backdrop for a perennial planting.
- Mass the perennials for best effect. Use at least three of each variety in the planting.
- Keep air circulation in mind. Allow room for plants to grow and still have good air circulation to keep disease at bay.
- Put your plan down on paper. It will be easier to determine just how your garden will look and to double check heights, etc. Shopping and planting will also be easier with a plan in hand.

## Bed Preparation

**Determine** the bed design and lay it out using a garden hose, rope, or a trail of bonemeal.

**Strike off** the area to be used for the perennial bed with a spade.

**Remove grass** and weed roots from the area with a spade, or you can use a systemic weed killer such as glyphosate (Roundup). If using a weed killer, wait to proceed till you have good weed kill, usually about a week.

**Spade up or till** the soil to a depth of about a foot, working in 3-4" of organic matter such as mushroom compost or sphagnum peat moss. 3-4 lbs/100 sq. ft. of a fertilizer high in phosphorus should be added at this time too. Be sure to end up with the bed 3-4" higher than the surrounding area to insure good drainage.

## Planting

**Lay the plants** out on the bed while still in their pots to determine proper placement.

**Dig the planting holes** a few inches wider but the same depth as the root balls on the plants.

**Remove the pot** and loosen the roots of pot bound plants.

**Backfill** and lightly tamp in the plant.

**Water** well immediately, with a Root Stimulator solution.

**Mulch** entire bed with 2-3" of shredded hardwood or cypress bark mulch.

## Care and Maintenance

**Fertilize** in the early spring with a fertilizer high in phosphorus such as Fertilome Root 'n Bloom. Reapply in 4-6 weeks.

**Water** during periods of drought. Be sure to soak slowly and thoroughly. A soaker hose is excellent for this.

**Remove faded flowers** to prolong blooming period.

**Improve winter hardiness** by leaving old stems till spring to cut down. After the ground freezes in the fall, mulch such as evergreen boughs or shredded bark may be added over the crowns of the plants.

**Remove mulch** over the crowns and cut back the old tops just before new growth begins in the spring.

**Divide plants** as needed to maintain a healthy vigorous planting. (See care sheet on dividing perennials)