

## Perennials for Summer Interest

There is such an incredible array of perennials that offer interest in the summer garden that it is difficult to decide which ones to grow. In fact, you might find yourself looking at your yard differently, wondering just where you might be able to fit in another perennial bed or where you could tuck in a select plant or two. Summer perennials look their best at different times, depending on the variety of plant, the location where it is planted and the type of weather we are experiencing.

### How Soon Will It Happen?

By the time summer rolls along, the vast majority of the summer perennials will be up and growing. As you garden, you will learn which varieties of perennials will develop early and which might make you nervous because they wait so long to sprout. A good example is perennial hibiscus. Just when you are sure you have lost the plant, it will sprout, sometimes as late as mid-June. Most landscapes also offer several *micro-climates*, small areas that are slightly colder or warmer than average. For instance, an area along the south side of a dark brick home may be half a zone warmer because of the shelter and the heat retaining quality of the brick. Perennials planted in warmer exposures might develop several weeks earlier than their counterparts in a cool location in the landscape. Summer-blooming perennials can be grouped as early, mid-season and late.

### Blooms and Foliage

While blooms may be the showiest part of summer, don't overlook all of the plants with interesting foliage. Since foliage stays all season and the flowers are fleeting, the appearance of the foliage is very important. Look at the shape and size of the leaves as well as their texture and structure. The overall shape and size of the plant can play an important role too.

When selecting perennials for their bloom, try to imagine what else will be blooming or what other foliage plants will be nearby to complement the flowers. Perennials are wonderful, but their strength is their ability to come back year after year. In exchange for this virtue, we give up the constant blooms we can expect from annuals. The duration of blooming varies greatly. Some are very fleeting, lasting only a few days. Most bloom for 2-3 weeks and a few will bloom for a month or so.

### These are a few perennials that bloom almost all summer:

- Yarrow *Achillea*
- Baby's Breath *Gypsophilia*
- Fern Leaf Bleeding Heart *Dicentra eximia*
- Stella D'Oro Daylilies *Hemerocallis*
- Blanket Flower *Gaillardia*
- Pincushion Flower *Scabiosa* 'Blue Butterfly'

### There are a number of plants that have attractive foliage and are interesting all summer:

- Ornamental Grasses
- Ferns
- Hostas
- Lungwort *Pulmonaria*
- Lady's mantle *Alchemilla*
- *Lamium* and *Ajuga* Groundcovers
- Lamb's Ears *Stachys*
- Coral Bells *Heuchera*
- Woolly Thyme *Thymus lanuginose*
- Solomon's Seal *Polygonatum*
- Ginger *Asarum*

## Summer Perennials

### Early Summer

Woodland Phlox *Phlox stolonifera*  
 Bearded and Siberian Irises  
 Peonies (late May through June)  
 False Indigo *Baptisia*  
 Jacob's Ladder *Polemonium*  
 Astilbes, early  
 Carnation *Dianthus*  
 Bellflower *Campanula*  
 Lady's Mantle *Alchemilla*  
 Alliums, several varieties  
 Blue Star *Amsonia*  
 Primroses *Primula*  
 Columbine *Aquilegia*  
 Thrift *Armeria*  
 Blue-Eyed Grass *Sisyrinchium*  
 Cornflower *Centaurea*  
 Delphiniums/Larkspur  
 Gas Plant *Dictamnus*  
 Foxglove *Digitalis*  
 Fern Leaf Bleeding Heart  
 Some hardy Geraniums  
 Avens *Geum*  
 Meadowsweet *Filipendula*  
 Foamy Bells *Heucherella*  
 Lupine *Lupinus*  
 Catchfly *Lynchnis*  
 Sundrops *Oenothera*  
 Poppies *Papaver*  
 Beardstongue *Penstemon*  
 Meadow Rue *Thalictrum*  
 Spiderwort *Tradescantia*

### Mid-Summer

Asiatic Lilies  
 Daisy Fleabane *Erigeron*  
 Globe Thistle *Echinops*  
 Coral Bells *Heuchera*  
 Goatsbeard *Aruncus*  
 Butterfly Flower *Aesclepias*  
 Astilbe, most varieties  
 Catchfly *Lynchnis*  
 Mallow *Malva*  
 Shasta Daisy *Leucanthemum*  
 Delphiniums, a few varieties  
 Coneflower *Echinacea*  
 Hostas  
 Daylilies, most varieties  
 Some hardy Geraniums  
 Perennial Sunflower *Heliopsis*  
 Tansy *Tanacetum*  
 Lavender *Lavandula*  
 Gayfeather *Liatris*  
 'The Rocket' *Ligularia*  
 Flax *Linum*  
 Bee Balm *Monarda*  
 Catmint *Nepeta*  
 Sundrops *Oenothera*  
 Sage *Salvia*  
 Summer Phlox *P. paniculata and maculata*  
 Balloon Flower *Platycodon*  
 Thyme *Thymus*  
 Goldenrod *Solidago*  
 Veronica, some varieties

### Late Summer

Goldenrod *Solidago*  
 Veronica, some varieties  
 Culvers Root *Veronicastrum*  
 Daylilies, some varieties  
 Oriental Lilies  
 Monkshood *Aconitum*  
 Mallow *Malva*  
 Catmint *Nepeta*  
 Bee Balm *Monarda*  
 Sage *Salvia*  
 'Desdemona' *Ligularia*  
 Cardinal Flower *Lobelia*  
 Gooseneck Loosestrife *Lysimachia*  
 Anemone, some varieties  
 Asters, some varieties  
 Hostas  
 Astilbe, a few varieties  
 Coneflower *Echinacea*  
 Perennial Sunflower *Heliopsis*  
 Sneezeweed *Helenium*  
 Gayfeather *Liatris*  
 Joe Pye Weed *Eupatorium*  
 Shasta Daisy *Leucanthemum*  
 Snakeroot, Bugbane *Cimicifuga*  
 Turtlehead *Chelone*  
 Russian Sage *Perovskia*  
 Summer Phlox *P. paniculata*  
 Obedient Plant *Physostegia*  
 Balloon Flower *Platycodon*  
 Stonecrop *Sedum*  
 Toad Lily *Tricyrtis*