

Perennials



What are they? Perennials are plants with soft (non-woody) stems that live for more than one season. The leaves die down each winter but the roots survive to send up new shoots the following year.

Some tender perennials are grown as annuals in colder climates.

Save money by purchasing perennials that reseed or by sowing your own perennials. Good self-seeders include yarrow, columbine, lamb's ears and pulmonaria.

Sharing seeds with neighbours and friends is an economical way of increasing the variety of perennials in your garden. Seeds should be sown in pots and kept warm and humid. Seedlings can be planted outside once they have a set of leaves.

Plan your plantings carefully. Once you plant a perennial it will occupy that spot for years. Draw out your plan, arranging the layout so that all your perennials can show off their flowers and foliage to the best advantage. Remember that perennials look best when planted in clusters. Vary the number of plants in each cluster.



Timing. Plant perennials in spring once the soil warms up or in fall before the ground freezes. Avoid planting in summer when drought and warm temperatures place undue stress on any kind of new planting.

Enjoy beautiful foliage because perennials bloom for a short period of time. Make sure to choose perennials with attractive and interesting foliage to add to your garden's beauty. Some perennials will bloom twice a year, either naturally or after being cut back.



Effective watering is done by a soak and spray method. Give the roots about 2.5cm of water weekly. Soft stems may flop over if watered from above. Floppy stems should be staked to prevent physical damage.



Grooming. Keep perennials compact and bushy by nipping the stem tips off with your thumb and forefinger. This will also prevent leggy stems prone to falling over.

Remove all dead/spent flowers to maintain the look of your perennials. This also helps plant vigour since energy is no longer channelled into dead blooms but instead goes into the plant itself.

Winterize your perennials by removing any dead leaves and/or foliage in the autumn. Also consider mulching which can help perennials survive the winter cold.