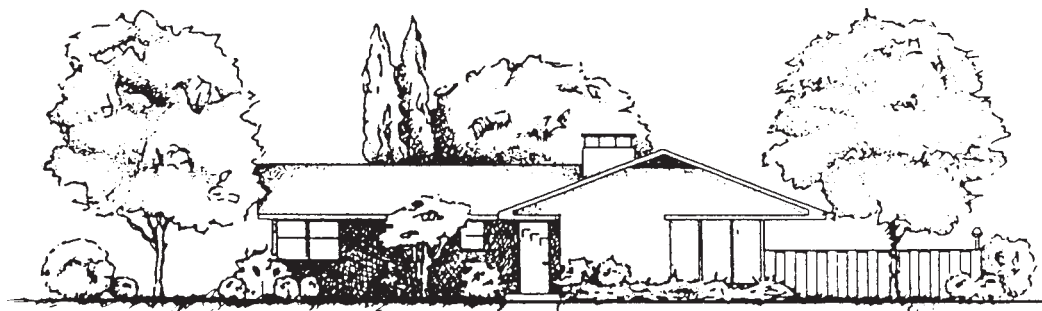


FLOWERING PERENNIALS

Landscaping



Perennial flowers have become more popular in recent years because of a demand for flowers that do not have to be replanted each year.

Perennials may grow for many years, depending upon the species. Although the foliage dies during the winter, the roots remain alive to produce a new plant that flowers next year. Biennials require two growing seasons to complete their life cycle. During the first year they are vegetative, often having a rosette growth habit. The second season the plants produce flowers, set seed and die.

Perennials offer the gardener a wide range of flower forms, plant forms, flowering seasons and flower colors. Perennials require less maintenance than annuals since they remain in place for several years. Annual bed preparation is not necessary, and the plants can compete with weeds during the early part of the growing season.

The drawbacks of perennials include the necessity of removing faded flowers to maintain vigor, the relatively large area needed for perennial beds, the need to divide and replant many species on a three- or four-year cycle (some require annual division), and the difficulty in controlling weeds if they do become a problem.

Perennial plant hardiness is described in terms of hardiness zones, based on average minimum winter temperatures. Kansas falls in Zones 5 and 6 (the dividing line runs diagonally across the state from Seward County in the southwest to Leavenworth and Jefferson counties in the northeast). Zone 5 has expected average minimum winter temperatures in the range of -10° to -20°F; Zone 6 is in the 0° to -10°F range. The northernmost hardiness zone in which a perennial can survive will be listed in garden catalogs and books. Since hardiness zones are based on averages, not extremes, some

perennials will be susceptible to winterkill in the northernmost areas of their hardiness range.

Another consideration is summer survival. Many perennials can withstand the cold winters but will not survive the hot, dry Kansas summers. Unfortunately, this problem generally is not mentioned in books and catalogs.

The perennials described here were chosen to provide a continuous bloom from April through October, an assortment of plant heights and forms, and suitability for the average garden site in the state. These are the most commonly and easily grown perennials. They are presented in approximate bloom sequence; blooming period is given in parentheses after the scientific name.



The chrysanthemum continues to add color in the fall, long after most of the summer flowers are gone.

Recommended Perennials for Kansas

Basket-of-Gold, *Aurinia saxatilis*, or *Alyssum saxatile* (April–May). Basket-of-gold is commonly used in rock gardens or on the edge of the perennial border due to its short height (9 to 12 inches) and spreading growth habit (up to 15 inches across). The flowers form tight clusters on the ends of the flowering stems. The golden-yellow flowers complement the purples and blues of many of the other spring-flowering perennials. Once seed is set, the stem begins to grow longer and should be removed to encourage low branching. This plant is easily propagated by seed, stem cuttings or division. Division should be done after flowering; stem cuttings should be taken in June.

Creeping or Moss Phlox, *Phlox subulata* (April–May). Another spring-flowering perennial, moss phlox bears flowers in shades of lavender, lilac, purple, rose, red and white. The plant will form a dense mat (3 to 6 inches tall, up to 2 feet across) of needle-like foliage that is covered with blooms in the early spring. It is commonly used in rock gardens, as a ground cover or in the perennial border. It is easily propagated by layering or stem cutting after flowering. This plant tends to be evergreen in protected sites.

Garden or Chinese Peony, *Paeonia lactiflora* (May–June). The garden peony, a Memorial Day tradition, was commonly sold as cut flowers to place at gravesites. The plant is usually 3 feet tall and has a shrublike growth habit. The large flowers (up to 6 inches across) can be single, Japanese, anemone, semi-double or double in form. The double form, the most commonly grown, is available in a wide selection of colors. The key to successful peony culture is proper planting; the eyes or young buds should be set 1 inch below the soil surface. Peonies need at least six hours of sunlight each day. Most peony cultivars require three years before full blooming can be expected. Peonies rarely need division.

Bearded or German Iris, *Iris germanica* (May–June). The bearded or German iris is easy to grow and maintain. It comes in a wide selection of colors ranging from white to shades of yellows, oranges, golds and browns, and to reds, pinks, lavenders, purples and blues; many bicolor cultivars are available. Iris range in height from 2 to 4 feet and require a sunny location for best growth.

Some newer dwarf-bearded iris can be used in a rock garden. The rhizomes (thick, fleshy roots) should be planted just barely below the soil surface and should be kept moist. When flower production or flower size decreases, it is a good indication that the rhizomes need to be dug and divided. This should be done in late August through September to allow plenty of time for establishment before winter.

Coral Bells, *Heuchera sanguinea*, (June–July). A very compact perennial, coral bells forms mounds of foliage 8 inches high. Mature plants can reach 12 to 15 inches in diameter. The tiny ($\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch) flowers are borne on flowering stems 10 to 20 inches above the foliage. The attractiveness of the plant is due to the heart-shaped leaves

and tiny bell-shaped flowers in shades of pink and red—a favorite of hummingbirds. The flowering season may be extended by removing the faded flowering stems and by watering during dry periods. Coral bells can be effective in a partially shaded rock garden or perennial border. It should be mulched to help keep the shallow roots moist and is easily propagated by seed or division.

Tickseed, *Coreopsis lanceolata*, (June–September). Tickseed, also known as coreopsis, has brilliant yellow flowers, making it a showy addition to the perennial borders after many other perennials have finished blooming. The plant grows 18 to 24 inches tall and forms a large mound up to 24 inches across. It prefers full sun and does best in a naturalized setting since it readily reseeds. To prevent reseeding, remove old blooms after flowering; this also encourages flower production. An added advantage to coreopsis is its ability to survive under harsh conditions.

Blanket Flower, *Gaillardia grandiflora*, (June–October). Blanket flower gets its name from the colors of its flowers which are reminiscent of those in blankets woven by the American Indians. The rich shades of yellow, red and burgundy make this a welcome addition to the perennial border. A plus is the wide variety of butterflies which visit this plant. The plant does well in a full sun location with light soil; heavy clay soil can cause root rots. Many improved cultivars are available today, ranging in height from 8 inches to 3 feet. All cultivars require removal of old flowers. This is extremely important with the dwarf cultivars since many of the resulting seedlings will not be dwarfs. The plant can be propagated from seed, root cuttings or division.

Fernleaf Yarrow, *Achillea filipendulina*, *A. eupatorium*, (June–August). A 3- to 4-foot-tall perennial with blue-gray foliage, fernleaf yarrow is an excellent choice for the back of a perennial border. The plant bears large, golden flowers (up to five inches across) that can be used in dried flower arrangements. Removing the heads will prolong the blooming season, prevent seed set and increase the plant's vigor.



Sedum is a heat- and drought-resistant perennial that requires little care.



A good way to landscape with flowers is to use them around the perimeter, keeping the lawn open and uncluttered.

The species prefers full sun and dry sites; fertilization with bonemeal will encourage healthy growth. The plant is most easily propagated from seed or division in the spring on a four-year cycle. Several other species of *Achillea* offer a range of plant height and flower color. All do very well in Kansas.

Daylily, *Hemerocallis* hybrids, (June–October with proper variety selection). The daylily is one of the most commonly grown perennials. The orange daylily (*H. fulva*) and the yellow daylily (*H. flava*) are found on many old farmsteads. Through hybridization, many varieties have been introduced that bear flowers in shades of red, yellow, pink, gold and blends of color. There are also doubles and reflowering cultivars available through specialty catalogs. The tuberous roots of the daylily can be planted in naturalized settings along ponds and streams, on banks, in a woodland or in an open area provided the soil is well drained. The plants do best in full sun; the pastel-colored cultivars do best with some shade to prevent fading of the colors. With proper cultivar selection, daylilies can be seen in the garden all summer long. The plants are best propagated by division in mid-August to early September on a four- to six-year cycle. Over 240 varieties of daylilies can be viewed at the Delmez Daylily Garden in the KSU Gardens on the Kansas State University Campus.

Shasta Daisy, *Chrysanthemum superbum* or *C. maximum*, (July–October). Shasta daisy is an excellent perennial for Kansas. Its large daisy flowers can be used in flower arrangements. Alaska, the most commonly grown variety, bears large 2-inch flowers on 2-foot stems. Shasta daisy will flower profusely throughout the summer if grown in full sun conditions; partial shade is desirable for the weaker doubles.

The shasta daisy is a vigorous plant that, under proper conditions, will need division every two years.

Summer or Garden Phlox, *Phlox paniculata*, (July–September). The traditional lavender summer phlox has been improved recently with the introduction of varieties with much larger flower heads bearing attractive purple, red, pink or white flowers. This tall perennial (2 to 4 feet) serves in the middle to back of the perennial border to display shorter species against its dark green foliage. The plant flowers best in full sun; partial shade will reduce the head size. Care should be taken to locate this plant where there is good air circulation to prevent powdery mildew from occurring on the foliage. Phlox is a high-maintenance perennial needing staking, irrigation during drought, and flower cluster removal to prolong the season of bloom and to prevent reseeding. The plants can be readily propagated by lifting the clumps in the fall and dividing them.

Hardy or Garden Chrysanthemum, *Chrysanthemum x morifolium*, (August–October). The last perennial to flower in autumn, the chrysanthemum symbolizes the end of the growing season. Chrysanthemums come in a broad range of colors and types. They grow best in full sun and when given plenty of fertilizer and water. The cushion-type growth forms mounds of flowers on plants 1½ feet tall and 2½ feet across. The flowers can be cut and used in flower arrangements. The plant is easily propagated by division in the early spring. Chrysanthemums are available in the spring or autumn at garden centers and retail florists. The florist chrysanthemum, commonly grown in a 6-inch pot for indoor use, is generally not winter hardy and should not be transplanted to the garden. Always choose garden cultivars.

Other perennials for Kansas:

Adam's Needle, *Yucca filamentosa*
Baby's Breath, *Gypsophila paniculata*
Balloon Flower, *Platycodon grandiflorus*
Bee Balm, *Monarda didyma*
Black-eyed Susan, *Rudbeckia hirta pulcherrima*
Bleeding Heart, *Dicentra spectabilis*
Butterfly weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*
Blue Flax, *Linum perenne*
Cardinal Flower, *Lobelia cardinalis*
Coneflower, *Echinacea purpurea*
Columbine, *Aquilegia* species
Evening Primrose, *Oenothera missouriensis*
Fleabane, *Erigeron* hybrids
Gayfeather, *Liatris* species
Golden Marguerite, *Anthemis tinctoria*
Goldenrod, *Solidago* hybrids
Hens and Chickens, *Sempervivum tectorum*
Lamb's Ear, *Stachys byzantina*
Loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria*
Oriental Poppy, *Papaver orientalis*
Plantain Lily, *Hosta* hybrids
Plume Poppy, *Macleaya cordata*
Sedum, *Sedum spectabile*
Silver Mound, *Artemisia schmidtiana*
Sneezeweed, *Helenium autumnale*
Spiderwort, *Tradescantia virginiana*
Spurge, *Euphorbia epithymoides*
Torch Lily, *Kniphofia uvaria*

Shade-tolerant perennials

Bee Balm, *Monarda*
Bleeding Heart, *Dicentra*
Cardinal Flower, *Lobelia*
Columbine, *Aquilegia*
Coral Bells, *Heuchera*
Foxglove, *Digitalis*
Harebell, *Campanula*
Loosestrife, *Lysimachia*
Plantain Lily, *Hosta*
Solomon's Seal, *Polygonatum*
Virginia Bluebells, *Mertensia*

Drought-tolerant perennials

Basket-of-Gold, *Aurinia*
Black-eyed Susan, *Rudbeckia*
Blanket Flower, *Gaillardia*
Butterfly Flower, *Asclepias*
Daylily, *Hemerocallis*
False Indigo, *Baptisia*
Fleabane, *Erigeron*
Gayfeather, *Liatris*
Goldenrod, *Solidago*
Iris, *Iris*
Sage, *Salvia*
Sedum, *Sedum*
Silver Mound, *Artemisia*
Spanish Bayonet, *Yucca*
Spurge, *Euphorbia*
Stonecrop, *Sedum*
Tickseed, *Coreopsis*
Torch Lily, *Kniphofia*
Yarrow, *Achillea*

Perennials for Cut flowers

Anemone, *Anemone*
Aster, *Aster*
Baby's Breath, *Gypsophila*
Black-eyed Susan, *Rudbeckia*
Blanket Flower, *Gaillardia*
Chrysanthemum, *Chrysanthemum*
Coneflower, *Echinacea*
Coral Bells, *Heuchera*
Daylily, *Hemerocallis*
Foxglove, *Digitalis*
Gayfeather, *Liatris*
Goldenrod, *Solidago*
Iris, *Iris*
Peony, *Paeonia*
Pincushion Flower, *Scabiosa*
Pinks, *Dianthus*
Plantain Lily, *Hosta*
Poppy, *Papaver*
Sneezeweed, *Helenium*
Sunflower, *Helianthus*
Tickseed, *Coreopsis*
Torch Lily, *Kniphofia*

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