



## Perennial choices for the High Plains – By Steve Scott and Shane Smith

Perennials are probably the most misunderstood of all flowering plants among beginning gardeners. Because they are called "perennials," people assume that these are plants bloom all season long and require little care. Unfortunately, this is not true. Most perennials only bloom for about a month at best. All perennials require some yearly care including weeding, dividing the plants when they get large, occasional fertilizing and regular plucking of the spent blooms (called "deadheading"). While many perennials are virtually permanent in your bed for many decades, there are many others, which will only live for three to six years. Still, the perennial garden can fill the season with unequaled beauty. Perennials are treasured not only for their flowers but also for the contrasting foliage that they have providing season long interest.

Because each perennial generally blooms for only a month (some more, others less), it is important to plan a perennial bed to have something interesting in the way of blooms happening everyday of the growing season. This requires the planning of a well-timed bloom season by the mixture of perennials that you choose to grow. Other considerations such as height, water, light and soil requirements are important to think about in selecting your plants.

Patience is one of the most important factors to cultivate in growing a successful perennial bed because they may take a few years to reach their full potential. One of the best sayings about perennials is "the first year they sleep, the second year they creep and the third year they leap."

No matter what type of perennials you choose, it is important to keep in mind the following things. A good rich soil is important to overall success. A greater diversity of plants provides more color and interest over the season. Don't be victimized by the more aggressive, spreading perennials. Just because it is a blooming perennial doesn't mean that you must put up with its bad habits of spreading in your bed. If you don't like the plant or if, in your judgment, you have too many of a particular plant, by all means get rid of it and grow some plants your really wish to grow! A final tip for perennial gardeners is to be sure to tag you plants because it is easy to forget what plant is what after a long winter. A well-meaning spring weeder that didn't recognize the poor perennial has accidentally dug up many an expensive perennial plant.

These letters on the next page correspond to the letters after the plant name. This will help you better understand each plant's characteristics. Note: if one plant is listed with conflicting attributes it is because there are different varieties of the same plant available, each with differing characteristics. For example: some varieties of a plant may reach only 12 inches while others might reach 3 feet tall, depending on which variety you choose to grow.

Use the key on the next page to develop a well-timed and colorful bed. Try to get a mixture of plants that have varying colors and bloom times so that there is something interesting going on in your perennial bed throughout the season.

## NEEDS

**Sh-** Does well in partial shade

**S-** Does well in sun

**Mo-** Does best in moist soils

**D-** Tolerates some drought

## COLOR

**W-** Has flower colors in warm shades such as yellow, red and orange

**C-** Has flower colors in cool shades such as blues, pinks, purples and lavenders

**Wh-** Has flower color of shades of white

## HEIGHT

**T-** Grows to over 30 inches in height

**M-** Grows to between 12 and 30 inches in height

**Sm-** Grows between 4 and 12 inches in height

## TIMING

**Ve-** Tends to bloom very early in the season around March and April

**E-** Tends to bloom early in the season around late April through June

**Mi-** Tends to bloom mid-season from late June through mid-August

**L-** Tends to bloom late season from mid-August through Early-October

**Ln-** Has long bloom period from June through August

**R-** Can bloom for three weeks from early season to late depending upon variety

## OTHER

**B-** Plants come from bulbs, usually planted in fall.

**Bi-** Plants may be biennial and die after second year.

**A-** Might be aggressive, spreading or readily re-seeds

**F-** Has interesting foliage

**Ev-** Evergreen in winter

\* This means you can find this perennial growing on the grounds of the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens

## A Compendium of Perennials Suitable for the High Plains

<u>Botanical Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Needs</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Color</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Other</u>
Achillea sp.*	Yarrow	S,D	Sm,M,T	C,W,Wh	Ln	A,F
Aconitum sp.*	Monkshood	Sh	T,M	C	Mi	F
Ajuga sp.*	Bugleweed	Sh	Sm	C	E	A,Ev
Alcea sp.*	Hollyhock	S,D	T	W	Mi	A,Bi
Alchemilla mollis*	Lady's Mantle	Sh	M	W	Mi	F
Alliumsp.	Allium	S,Mo	M,T,	C,W,Wh	Ve,E	B
Anemone hybrids	Windflower	Sh	M	Wh,C	L	
Anthemis tinctoria*	Golden chamomile	S	M	W	Ln	
Aquilegia sp.*	Columbine	Sh	M,Sm	C, W	Ve-Mi	A
Arabis caucasica	Rock Cress	S	Sm	Wh	Ve	Ev
Armeria maritima	Sea Pink	S,D	Sm	C,	W	Ln
Aruncus dioicus*	Goats Beard	Sh,Mo	T	Wh	Mi	
Aster sp.*	Aster	S	M	C	L	
Aubrieta deltoidea*	Rock Cress	Sh, D	Sm	C	Ve	Ev
Aurinia saxatilis	Basket of Gold	S,D	Sm	W	Ve,E	
Bergenia cordifolia*	Heartleaf	Sh	M	C	Ve	Ev
Brunnera macrophylla	Brunnera	Sh	M	C	E	

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Campanula sp.*	Bellflower	S,Sh	Sm,M	C	Ln	
Catananche caerulea	Cupid's Dart	S	M	C,Wh	Mi	
Centaurea sp.*	Cornflower	S,D	M	C, W	E,Mi	A
Centranthus ruber*	Jupiter's Beard	S,Sh	M	W,C	M	
Cerastium tomentosum*	Snow in Summer	S,Sh,D	Sm	Wh	E	A
Chelone lyonii*	Turtlehead	Sh,Mo	M	C	Ve	Ev
Chrysanthemum sp. *	Chrysanthemum	S	M,T	W,Wh	L	
Convallaria majalis	Lily-of-the-Valley	Sh,S,Mo	Sm	Wh	E	A,B
Coreopsis sp.	Tickseed	S,D	Sm,M,T	W	Ln	
Crambe cordifolia*	Sea Kale	S	T	Wh	E	F
Delphinium sp.*	Delphinium	S,Sh	M,T	C,Wh	E	
Dianthus sp.*	Dianthus	S	Sm,M	W,Wh	E	
Dicentra sp.	Bleeding Heart	Sh,Mo	Sm,M	C,Wh	E	
Dictamnus albus	Gas Plant	S	M	Wh,C	E	
Digitalis sp*	Foxglove	S, Mo	M	W,C,Wh	Mi	
Echinacea purpurea*	Purple Cone Flower	S	M,T	W,Wh	L	
Echinops ritro*	Globe Thistle	S,D	M,T	C	L	A
Eryngium amethystinum*	Sea Holly	S,D	M	C	L	
Eupatorium maculatum*	Joe Pye Weed	S,Mo	Sh,T	C	L	
Euphorbia sp.*	Spurge	S,D	Sm,M	W	E	
Gaillardia grandiflora*	Blanket flower 'goblin'	S,D	Sm,M	W	Ln	
Geranium sp.*	Hardy Geranium	S,Sh	Sm,M	C,W,Wh	Ln	
Geum sp.	Geum	S,	Sm,M	W	E	
Gypsophila sp.*	Baby's Breath	S,D	M	W,Wh	Mi	
Helenium hybrids	Sneezeweed	S	T	W	L	
Heliopsis helianthoides*	Ox Eye Daisy	S	T	W	Mi	
Hemerocallis sp.*	Daylily	S,D	Sm,M,T	W	R	A,B,F
Heuchera sanguinea*	Coral Bells	S,Sh,	Sm,M	W,Wh	E	
Hosta sp.*	Plantain lily	Sh,Mo	Sm,M	C,Wh	Mi	F
Iberis sempervirens	Candytuft	S	Sm	Wh	E	Ev

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Iris sp.*	Iris Flag	S,Mo	Sm,M, T	C,W,Wh	E	
Knautia Macedonia	Knautia	S	M	W	Mi	
Lamiastrum galeobdolon*	Herman's Pride	Sh,D	Sm	W	E	
Lamium maculatum*	Spotted Dead Nettle	Sh	Sm	C, Wh	Mi	F
Lavandula angustifolia	Lavender	S	Sm,M	C	Mi	F
Leucanthemum x superbum*	Shasta Daisy	S	Sm, M	Wh	Mi	
Liatris sp.*	Gay Feather	Sh	T,M	C,Wh	Mi	
Ligularia sp.*	The Rocket	Sh	M	W	Mi	F
Lilium sp.*	Lily	S,Sh	M,T	C,W,Wh	E-Mi	B
Limonium latifolium	Perennial Statice	S	M	C,W,Wh	Mi	
Linum sp.	Blue Flax	S,D	M	C	Ln	A
Lupinus sp.	Lupine	S,Sh	M	C,W,Wh	E	
Lychnis chalconica*	Maltese Cross	S	M	W	E-Mi	
Lychnis coronaria*	Rose Campion	S,D	M	W	E-Mi	F
Lysimachia punctata*	Yellow Loosestrife	S	M	W	E	A
Macleaya cordata*	Plume Poppy	S	T	Wh	Mi	
Monarda didyma*	Bee Balm	S,Sh	M	C	Mi-L	
Myosotis sp.	Forget-me-not	Sh,Mo	Sm	C	E	
Nepeta sp.*	Catmint	S,D	Sm,M	C	Ln	A
Oenothera missouriensis	Missouri Primrose	S,D	M	W	E	
Paeonia sp.*	Peony	S	M	C,W,Wh	E	B
Papaver orientale*	Oriental Poppy	S	M	C,W,Wh	E	A
Penstemon sp.*	Beard Tongue	S,D	M	C,W,Wh	Ln	
Perovskia atriplicifolia*	Russian Sage	S,D	T	C	L	F
Persicaria amplexicaulis	'Firetail' Red Fleeceflower	S,Sh	T	C,W	L	
Phlox paniculata	Summer Phlox	S,Sh	T	C,W,Wh	L	
Phlox subulata*	Moss Pinks	S	Sm	C,W,Wh	E	
Physostegia virginiana*	Obedient Plant	S	T	C,Wh	L	
Platycodon grandiflora*	Balloon Flower	S,Sh	M	C,Wh	Mi	

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Polemonium caeruleum*	Jacob's Ladder	Sh	M	C	E	
Potentilla sp.*	Cinquefoil	S,Sh,D	Sm	W	Ln	
Primula sp.	Primrose	Sh	Sm	C,W,Wh	Ve	
Pulmonaria saccharata*	Lungwort	Sh	Sm,M	C	E	F
Pulsatilla vulgaris	Pasque Flower	S	Sm	C,Wh	E	
Rudbeckia sp.*	Black Eyed Susan	S,D	M	W	Mi,L	
Sagina subulata*	Irish Moss	Sh	Sm	Wh	E,Mi	Ev,F
Salvia sp.*	Purple Sage	S	T,Mi	C,Wh	Mi	
Saponaria ocyroides	Soap Wart	S,Sh,D	Sm	C	E	
Scabiosa caucasica*	Pincushion Flower	S	M,T	C,W	Ln	
Sedum sp.*	Stonecrop	S,D	Sm	C,W,Wh	Mi,L	A,F
Sempervivum sp.	Hen & Chicks	S,D	Sm,M	W	R	A,F,Ev
Sidalcea sp.	Prairie Mallow	S,D	M	W	Mi,L	
Solidago canadensis*	Goldenrod	S	T	W	Mi,L	
Stachys sp.*	Lamb's Ears	S,D	Sm	C	Mi	A,F
Thalictrum sp.*	Meadow Rue	S,Sh,D	Sm,M	C,W	Mi,L	
Thermopsis sp.	False Lupine	S,D	M,T	W	Mi	
Thymus sp.	Thyme	S	Sm	W,Wh	E	F
Tiarella hybrids	Foam Flower	Sh,M	Sm	C,Wh	E	
Verbascum bombyciferum*	Mullein 'Arctic Summer'	S,D	M,T	W,Wh	Mi,L	F
Veronica sp.*	Speedwell	S,Sh	Sm,M	C	R	
Vinca minor	Periwinkle	S,Sh	Sm	C	E	F,Ev
Viola sp.*	Pansy, Violet	S,Sh	Sm	C,W,Wh	Ln	
Yucca filamentosa*	Soapweed	S,D	S,M	Wh	L	F,Ev

Note: There are always new and interesting perennials becoming available. This list is not complete and grows each year. Be open to trying new varieties, especially if their description is appropriate to our climate!

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