



## Perennials for a Sunny Garden

Written by Adrian van der Bijl  
*Master Gardener*

Spring has arrived and you can't wait to get started on that perennial bed you've been dreaming about over the long winter months. Perennials come in so many different colours, heights and shapes, with different soil and space requirements. You must also consider the blooming period of the plants you choose so that your garden will have colour all season. Therefore some planning is called for. The best way to do this is to map out your plan and take it with you to the Garden Center. I recommend the following as some of the plants you should consider when making your decisions.

### ***Spring Flowering Perennials:***

**Candytuft** (*Alyssum saxatile*) a mass of bright yellow creates a striking specimen plant in the spring with leafy rosettes adding texture for the rest of the season.

**Cushion Spurge** (*Euphorbia polychroma*) a 12 to 18" perfectly shaped mound covered in sulphur-yellow flowers. The attractive green foliage lasts all summer, and turns red in the fall. Related to the poinsettia, this plant does well in poor soil, and hot, dry locations.

**Elephant-ears** (*Bergenia cordifolia*) large 8 to 10" leaves stay bright green throughout the year. Delicate clusters of pink flowers rise a foot above the foliage as soon as the snow melts. A lovely, low maintenance plant.

**Leopard's Bane** (*Doronicum caucasicum*) first of the garden's daisies are a beautiful yellow/gold splash of colour lasting many weeks, it's a hardy, easy to grow plant that thrives in most soils.

**Creeping Phlox** (*Phlox*) is available in a wide variety of colours and makes a statement in a rock garden or as a border plant. Allow airspace and water at base to avoid mildew.

**Rock Cress** (*Aubretia*) is one of the first perennials to bloom in the spring and will invite butterflies and bees into your garden. It is available in red, purple and mauve flowers that last for weeks. The foliage is evergreen growing in dense mats that are perfect for edging, rock gardens, borders and hanging over retaining walls.

### ***June & July Flowering Perennials:***

**Bachelor Buttons** (*Centaurea montana*) also known as Cornflower, this easy to grow plant will thrive in any soil, reaching a height of 24". Available in blue and white, the plant will bloom again in late summer if it is cut back after the first flowering.

**Heeman Greenhouses & Strawberry Farm**

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**Bellflower** (Campanula) among the longest flowering perennials, Bellflower comes in a wonderful variety of colours and sizes from compact mounds to sturdy upright plants and is exceptionally hardy.

**Sweet William** (Dianthus) This centuries old plant is also called Pinks as the fringed petals look like they have been trimmed with pinking shears. With a large selection to choose from, deadheading will promote more flowers over a longer period of time.

**Sunray** (Coreopsis grandiflora) the wide daisy-yellow blooms bring mid-summer colour to your garden and table alike as it makes an excellent cut flower. Reaching a height of 18" it adds cheer to any garden.

### ***August & September Flowering Perennials:***

**Coneflower** (Echinacea) growing 18 to 36" with purple, rose or white blooms all summer long, Coneflower will grow well in poor soil and hot, dry, windy locations.

**Fleabane** (Erigeron) aster-like feathery flowers in pink or blue give a great show right through to fall. Also an excellent cut flower.

**Globe Thistle** (Echinops ritro) reaching a height of 3' this striking plant does well in hot, dry areas and is perfect in fresh or dried bouquets.

October is time to put your perennial garden to bed, but not before enjoying the last blast of colour with Asters (Michaelmas daisy), Chrysanthemums (Shasta Daisy) and Turtlehead (Chelone).

Always remember when planning your new garden that one of the most important keys to success is to be sure that the area is weed free before you start planting. You will be glad you did!