

Live Free and Dig with the Littleton Garden Club

Sequence of Bloom, Part Two

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Littleton Garden Club

Last week's article addressed the primary considerations for planting a colorful flower garden. Remember that annual plants provide color throughout the season, must be planted each year, and can be found at your local nursery.

Perennials bloom for only a few weeks but last for many years. Here are some perennial recommendations, starting with the most reliable varieties that offer a longer blooming period.

For reference, I use common names rather than botanical names: Bleeding Heart, Creeping Phlox, Cranes Bill Geranium, 'Stella d' Oro' Day Lily, Shasta Daisy, Russian Sage, Yarrow, Coneflower, Catmint, Roses, and Sedum 'Autumn Joy' are some of the most reliable and longest-blooming perennials suited for our hardiness zone.

All early spring perennials are planted in the fall. Be sure to have your bulb catalogs ready to order in September. Several mail-order companies, such as Breck's, specialize in bulbs.

All spring bloomers have a bulb, rhizome, or corm in which they store nutrients for their early growth. There are many beautiful plants to select, including the ever-popular daffodils and tulips. They are showy and come in several varieties. I favor "Tete a Tete," an attractive miniature daffodil.

Spring perennials will naturalize, meaning that if you do not cut down leaves after the bloom cycle has completed and before die back, they'll form baby bulbs, and your clump will slowly enlarge.

Next comes the Creeping Phlox, a harbinger of the bloom season. It is followed by Peonies, Irises, Bleeding Hearts,

Primulas, Poppies, Columbine, Allium, and Day Lilies. Many varieties of Day Lilies bloom at varying points throughout the growing season.

There are many perennial choices for July blooms. Asiatic Lilies, Delphinium, Coreopsis, Salvia, Bee Balm, Ligularia, Gaillardia, and Black-eyed Susan are all great choices. August suggestions include Phlox, Russian Sage, and Helenium. Also, Turtlehead and Joe-Pye Weed are wildflowers not out of place in a flower bed.

Things are winding down in September, but 'Autumn Joy,' 'Neon' Sedums, and Japanese Anemones are great for color. Last but not least, in October is the fantastic perennial 'Clara Curtis' Chrysanthemum. It looks like a pink daisy and blooms well into October.

If you are wondering what to plant, look around our region. The Littleton Garden Club maintains

several flower gardens in the downtown area. Many feature a mixture of perennials and annuals.

The Rocks Estate gardens in Bethlehem are predominantly perennials. If you fancy a trip further afield, visit Kirkwood Gardens in Holderness, where there is a magical mixture of perennials, annuals, ferns, and shrubs. You can also enjoy lunch on the shores of Squam Lake.

Remember that whatever you plant, be sure to mulch deeply. Mulch is a great solution to reduce weeding and retain moisture. You can also make mulch at home by running your lawn mower over raked leaves several times until they are shredded. This free mulch gives your garden a nice natural look.

For more information about the club and our meetings, please visit www.littletonnhgardenclub.org. Happy Planting!