






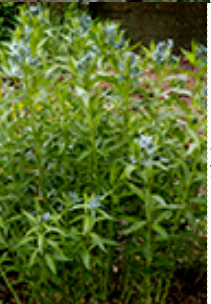
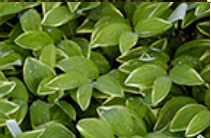
Perennials are great additions to a landscape but take their marketing hype with a grain of salt. No perennial blooms all summer. None are totally care-free. Most need yearly, individual attention to remain healthy enough to bloom fullest and look their best. In addition, most perennials' 2- to 4-week peak bloom season is followed by a lackluster or messy decline.

Choose from this list to come as close as possible to that advertised ideal of simplicity, lots of color and very low care. The plants on this list look good both in and out of bloom and provide a longer than average bloom season. Many add to a scene by way of colorful foliage, too. Most need division only after four or more years to maintain their vigor. If you plant them in an environment that suits them, you can simply keep them weeded and watered, and enjoy them for at least four years. All are hardy to USDA zone 5; most are reliable from zone 4 to 6.

Patience required: The best perennials are not mile-a-minute plants. These easy, best species will bloom and show their other good characteristics in their first year but they need a year to grow before they start showing you their full potential. (The fastest growing perennials, such as daisies, also need more care, more frequently.) If waiting is not an option, look for specialty garden centers that cater to immediate needs, as these may carry larger specimens of these plants.

Plants (in order by bloom season)	Specific name	photo	ht. x width	color*/ feature	season**	site***	care/notes	good use	other notes (download the Excel version and add your own notes!)
lenten rose	<i>Helleborus hybrids</i>		18" x 24"+	w, pi, r-v, y	esp flower, lsp flower-like bracts; evergreen leaf	HS-sh, wd	can clip off old leaves in early spring	edging	
windflower, pasqueflower	<i>Pulsatilla vulgaris</i> / <i>Anemone pulsatilla</i>		1' x 1'	v, rv, w fluff seedheads	esp flower, esu seed	S, wd	tolerates heat, drought	front edge	
lungwort / Bethlehem sage	<i>Pulmonaria species & types</i>		15" x 18" in bloom	pi, bl or pi + bl flower, g+w leaf	esp - sp flower	HS-sh, wd, tolerate S if mwd	mildews if dry and hot	leaf color in shade, edging	
cushion spurge	<i>Euphorbia polychroma</i>		18" x 24"	y-g flower, y- o fall leaf	esp flower	S-HS, wd	no need to deadhead; if cut, be cautious, milky sap may irritate skin	becomes wider after bloom so will cover spring bulbs	




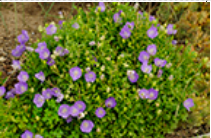




Our Favorites: Easiest Best Perennials page 2

fringed bleeding heart	<i>Dicentra eximia</i>		18" x 18"	pi, r, w	lsp flower may repeat	HS-sh, mwd	may go dormant in summer drought	edging	
red baneberry	<i>Actaea rubra</i>		18" x 12"	w flower, r berry	lsp flower, su berry	sh-HS, wd	don't deadhead	brilliant summer berry excellent accent	Hard to find but worth the looking.
catmint	<i>Nepeta hybrids</i>		18" x 18" shorter after bloom	w, pi, v flower	sp flower, repeats	S-HS, wd, Sa	deadhead for neatest rebloom	edging	
zebra iris	<i>Iris pallida</i>		12" x 12", 18" in bloom	leaf g+w is <i>I. p. argenteo-variegata</i> ; g+y is <i>I. p. aurea-variegata</i>	sp flower but people notice leaf not flower	S, tolerates HS, D, Sa	cut back after bloom to enjoy fresh foliage	accent	
willow leaf bluestar	<i>Amsonia tabernaemontana</i>		3' x 3'; dwarf forms 2'	bl	esp flower, fall y leaf	HS- S- sh	delay fall cutback to enjoy gold leaf	pseudoshrub	
sweet Solomon's seal	<i>Polygonatum odoratum (variegatum)</i>		18-24" x 24"	w flower; leaf edged w, y in fall	sp flower	HS-sh, wd	delay fall cut-down to enjoy buttery fall color	vertical contrast in shady beds	

* w white, bl blue, pi pink, etc. ** esp = early spring, lf = late fall, etc. ***S Sun, sh shade, HS half sun. More on last page.

©2013 Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila www.GardenAtoZ.com

Our Favorites: Easiest Best Perennials page 3



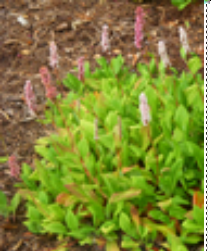

hybrid coral bells	<i>Heuchera and Heucherella</i>		8-18" x 12" (tallest in bloom)	w, pi, r flower leaf g, r, y, r-v	sp or lsp -su flower, by variety; may repeat bloom; winter leaf	HS-S, tolerates sh, mwd	divide every 3 years to maintain vigor	edging	
gas plant	<i>Dictamnus albus</i>		3' x 2'	w, v	lsp flower, su seedheads	S-HS, wd	do not deadhead in order to enjoy seedpods; rarely needs dividing so very low care; caution, foliage may cause burn on skin	accent	
meadowsweet	<i>Filipendula vulgaris</i>		12" x 18", taller in bloom	w flower, pi buds, dark clean green ferny leaf	sp- lsp flower, foliage neat & nearly evergreen	HS-S-sh, mwd	deadhead for neater appearance	groundcover, edging	
Carpathian bellflower	<i>Campanula carpatica</i>		8" x 12"	bl, w	lsp- esu	S-HS	repeats bloom throughout summer; divide every 3 years to maintain this vigor	edging	
perennial geranium/cranesbill	<i>Geranium species</i>		ave. 15" x 15" varieties from 6" to 4' in bloom	v, bl, w, pi	lsp flower may repeat, fall leaf color	HS-sh, wd	deadhead or shear after first bloom for neater appearance, more repeat bloom	groundcover, edging, accent; ex. G. sanguineum 'Elke', G. macrorrhizum, 'Rozanne'	
lady's mantle	<i>Alchemilla mollis</i>		1' x 18"	y-g flower	lsp flower, su y-g seedheads	HS- S, tolerates sh	tolerates heat and drought	1/2 size species <i>A. alpina</i> , <i>A. erythropoda</i> also good	
masterwort	<i>Astrantia species</i>		12" x 12", taller in bloom	w, pi, r-v	esu into su, will repeat	HS- S-sh, mwd	deadhead to encourage repeat bloom	white <i>Astrantia maxima</i> , pink to r-v <i>A. carniolica</i> & <i>A. x rubra</i>	
Dalmatian bellflower	<i>Campanula portenschlagiana</i>		6" x 1'	v, w	esu	HS-S, tolerates sh	shear or mow after bloom, may repeat	fills crevices	

* w white, bl blue, pi pink, etc. ** esp = early spring, lf = late fall, etc. ***S Sun, sh shade, HS half sun. More on last page.

©2013 Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila www.GardenAtoZ.com





Our Favorites: Easiest Best Perennials

page 4

false indigo	<i>Baptisia australis</i>		4' x 4'+; or grow the dwarf form 'Minor', 24"	bl, blv, bl+w spikes, bl-g leaf, black winter seedpods	lsp	S-HS, tolerates sh, wd	good in heat and drought	psedudo-shrub	
goatsbeard	<i>Aruncus dioicus</i>		4' x 4'	w	esu flower, lsu seedheads	HS- S- sh	no need to deadhead; rarely needs division	pseudoshrub; hedge	
border jewel	<i>Polygonum affine/ Persicaria affinis</i>		10" x 12"	w flower, pi seed pod	lsp flower, repeats bloom; leaf mocha in winter	S-HS, mwd to W	do not deadhead to enjoy white bloom with pink seed	edging	
big betony, alpine betony	<i>Stachys micrantha, S. x monieri</i>		15" x 12"	w, pi, v flower	lsp flower, repeats bloom	S-HS, wd	deadhead for neatest apperance	edging	



* w white, bl blue, pi pink, etc. ** esp = early spring, lf = late fall, etc. ***S Sun, sh shade, HS half sun. More on last page.

Our Favorites: Easiest Best Perennials page 5

ornamental salvia	<i>Salvia superba</i> , <i>S. nemerosa</i> <i>varieties</i>		15" + x 18"	v, pi flower	lsp flower, seed pods attractive 2 extra weeks; repeats bloom	S, wd	deadhead for neatest appearance	edging, accent	
Siberian iris	<i>Iris sibirica</i>		1-3' x 1-3' (dwarf or standard)	all colors flower	lsp flower, lf to wi coppery leaf	S-HS, mwd to W but no winter W	divide when center section bloom diminishes	pseudo-shrub, vertical accent	
beardtongue	<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>		3' x 2', some varieties shorter	w, pi, v	lsp flower, su maroon seedpods	S-HS, mwd	deadhead if desired but try 1st year without since seed pods can be attractive	accent	
feather reed grass	<i>Calamagrostis acutiflora</i>		4-5' x 2'	g	esu g-w plumes, fall tan seedheads	S-HS, wd	a big grass that does not overgrow	accent	

* w white, bl blue, pi pink, etc. ** esp = early spring, lf = late fall, etc. ***S Sun, sh shade, HS half sun. More on last page.

Our Favorites: Easiest Best Perennials page 6

dwarf goatsbeard	<i>Aruncus aethusifolius</i>		15" x 18"	w	esu flower, su seedheads	HS-sh-S	may scorch in sun	edging	
golden bleeding heart	<i>Corydalis lutea</i>		12" x 18"	y	lsp flower repeats thru su, peak esu	sh-HS, wd	spreads by seed	bright su color in shade	
daylily, late blooming or reblooming varieties	<i>Hemerocallis hybrids</i>		2-3' x 2-3'	y, o, r, pi, and bicolors	su flower	S	to maintain vigor that allows rebloom, divide every 3 years	edging, groundcover	
bear's breeches	<i>Acanthus spinosus</i>		3' x 2'+	w+v architectural spikes	esu flower, late June/July	HS - S, mwd	attractive seedheads, do not deadhead; caution, spine-tipped leaves	living sculpture	
blanket flower	<i>Gaillardia hybrids</i>		15" x 15, some varieties taller	y, o, r and bicolors	su-lsu flower	S, wd, Sa	deadhead for neater appearance; maintain vigor that allows rebloom by dividing every 3 years	accent, edging	
threadleaf coreopsis	<i>Coreopsis verticillata</i>		24" x 24", some shorter varieties	y; choose named varieties such as y 'Moonbeam',	esu into su, will repeat	S - HS, wd	tolerates hot, dry, and salt; does not tolerate wet	coreopsis with larger leaf also good but needs deadheading and cutback for neatness	

Our Favorites: Easiest Best Perennials






page 7

hosta	<i>Hosta spp. & varieties</i>		6-24" x 6-36", some to 5' in bloom	leaf g, bl-g, y, w and combos; flower pi, w, v	su flower, some lsu, some lsp	HS, sh, some tolerate S, mwd	holes in leaf in summer, control slugs in early spring	cover woodland ephemeral wildflowers, texture in shade	
speedwell/veronica	<i>Veronica species</i>		18" x 12", with some species and varieties shorter, some taller	bl, w, pi, v flower	su flower	S, mwd	deadhead to keep blooms coming; remove any discolored leaves	short V. incana gray leaf, mat forming; V. subsessilis and some hybrids disease resistant so no/few leaf spots	
Chinese astilbe	<i>Astilbe chinensis</i>		15" x 15", some taller varieties	v, w, r-v	lsu flower, wi seedhead	HS, wd	unusual astilbe tolerates drought	shortest 'Pumila' spreads into a fine groundcover	
turtlehead	<i>Chelone obliqua</i>		3-4' x 18"+	pi, w	su - f flower, wi seedhead	HS-sh-S, M to W	in more light, provide more water	pseudoshrub, hedge, cutflower	

* w white, bl blue, pi pink, etc. ** esp = early spring, lf = late fall, etc. ***S Sun, sh shade, HS half sun. More on last page.

Our Favorites: Easiest Best Perennials




page 8

fairy candle	<i>Actaea ramosa</i> / <i>Cimicifuga ramosa</i>		30-36" x 24"	w	flower in f, bronze or purple leaf in sp	HS-sh, M to W		accent	
hybrid cardinal flower	<i>Lobelia x speciosa</i>		36" x 12"	v, pi, bl-v	lsu flower	HS-sh or S, mwd	consistent moisture may be more important to health and good bloom than amount of light. Cut to ground once flower show wanes.	accent; hummingbirds	
blue bush clematis	<i>Clematis heracleifolia</i>		3-4' x 3-4'	bl	lsu flower	HS-sh, mwd	cut to ground each spring	pseudoshrub, cover for spring bulbs or woodland wildflowers	
hardy hibiscus, swamp mallow	<i>Hibiscus moscheutos hybrids</i>		3-6' x 3-4'	r, w, pi flower leaf g, r-v	leaf slow to start growth in spring; su to lsu flower	S, tolerates HS, mwd to W	pinch some stems in early July to stagger & extend bloom	pseudo shrub, cover spring bulbs, occupy wet soil, late color, hummingbirds	
hybrid dwarf goldenrod	<i>Solidago sphacelata hybrids</i> 'Golden Fleece', 'Little Lemon' et al		15" x 15"	y	lsu flower	S, wd		edging	

* w white, bl blue, pi pink, etc. ** esp = early spring, lf = late fall, etc. ***S Sun, sh shade, HS half sun. More on last page.

©2013 Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila www.GardenAtoZ.com

Our Favorites: Easiest Best Perennials page 9

Helen's flower	<i>Helenium angustifolium</i>		3' x 2', some varieties shorter	y, o, r	su flower, repeats bloom	S, wd	keep deadheading for 4-5 extra weeks of bloom; to maintain vigor and repeat bloom, divide every 2 to 3 years	accent	
dwarf butterfly bush	<i>Buddleia davidii</i> varieties		3-5' x 3-5'	v, pi, w	su- lsu flower	S, wd, Sa	deadhead for longer bloom; cut back to stubs in spring for shortest, neatest appearance and	pseudo-shrub, accent	
stonecrop/ sedum, clump species	<i>Tall: Sedum spectabile (S. telephium), S. maximumShort: Sedum sieboldii varieties</i>		12 - 24" x 12-18"	pi, v, w bloom, leaf g or g+w, g+y	lsu - f flower, wi seedheads	S, tolerates HS, mwd	stems tumble if subsoil compacted or clump if old & crowded	late color, winter interest, butterflies, edging; choose short variety 'Sunset Cloud,' for dark summer foliage rather than formerly reliable, now lost 'Vera Jameson' or 'Rosy Glow /Ruby Glow'	

*Key to colors: wh white, y yellow, bl blue, r red, pi pink, g green, o orange, v violet -rv red violet, bl-g blue green, w+y white and yellow (etc.)

Key to seasons noted with Z5 months: **esp = early spring mid-March to mid-April; **sp** spring mid-April to mid-May; **lsp** late spring mid May to mid-June; **esu** early summer mid-June to mid-July; **su** summer mid-July to mid-August; **lsu** late summer mid-August to mid-September; **ef** early fall mid-September to mid-October; **f** fall mid-October to mid-November; **If** late fall mid-November to mid-December; **ew** early winter mid-December to early January; **w** winter early January to mid-February; **lw** late winter mid-February to mid-March. **To modify for warmer zones**, advance spring, match z5 summer thru early fall, lengthen fall. **To adjust for colder zones**, begin spring later, match Z5 summer and early fall, end fall earlier.

***Key to sites: light = S sun, sh shade, HS half-sun, with preferred situation listed first if the plant is adaptable to varied light; soil moisture = wd well drained (never soggy), mwd moist well drained (never soggy but always receives more water before drying down), W wet, D dry; soil grittiness/airiness = C clay, Sa sand

* w white, bl blue, pi pink, etc. ** esp = early spring, lf = late fall, etc. ***S Sun, sh shade, HS half sun. More on last page.