

Welcome To Our Class

Designing Summer Flower  
Beds  
2006



It Is Presented By  
Larry A. Sagers  
Horticulture Specialist  
Utah State University Extension  
Thanksgiving Point

The Class Is Done Through A  
Cooperative Arrangement Between  
Utah State University Extension  
Service And Thanksgiving Point

Thank You For Being A Part Of Our  
Educational Offerings

Designing A  
Flowerbed Does  
Not Have To Be  
A Daunting Task



Flowerbeds Are:

Way To Express Your Creativity

Indulge Your Horticulture Passions

Make Your Home And Garden Look  
Better



# Designing Flowerbeds Is A Great Part Of Gardening



**This Class Will Help You Create  
Living Works Of Art That You And  
Those Around You Can Share**



It Will Give You Ideas For Putting A  
Flower Bed Together Using Your  
Creativity And Planning

It Will Help You Learn To Make The  
Flower Bed Work For You, Not The  
Other Way Around

## Class Guidelines

- Be On Time
- Turn Off Cell Phones
- Respect Others Who Are Taking The Class

## Class Guidelines

- Take And Collect Pictures
- Make Lists Of Your Favourite Plants
- Ask Questions To Understand
- Have Fun



# Lets Start With Some Definitions For The Class





# What Is A Flower



Flow·er (Flou“...r) N. 1.A. The  
Reproductive Structure Of Some  
Seed-bearing Plants,  
Characteristically Having Either  
Specialized Male Or Female  
Organs Or Both Male And Female  
Organs



Flow·er (Flou“...r) *N.* 1.A. Such As  
Stamens And A Pistil, Enclosed In  
An Outer Envelope Of Petals And  
Sepals.

Flow·er (Flou“...r) *N. B.* Such A  
Structure Having Showy Or Colorful  
Parts; A Blossom. 2. A Plant That Is  
Cultivated Or Appreciated For Its  
Blossoms.

### 3. The Condition Or A Time Of Having Developed Flowers:

4. Something, Such As An Ornament Or A Figure Of Speech, That Resembles A Flower In Shape, Fineness, Or Attractiveness. 5. The Period Of Highest Development; The Peak.



# What Is A Bed



Bed (Bɪd) *N.* This Word Has  
Twelve Different Definitions 1.A. A  
Small Plot Of Cultivated Or Planted  
Land: *A Flower Bed*



# What Is A Garden





Garden (Gär“dn) *N.* 1. A Plot Of  
Land Used For The Cultivation Of  
Flowers, Vegetables, Herbs, Or  
Fruit.

Gar·den (Gär“dn) *N.* 2. Often Gardens. Grounds Laid Out With Flowers, Trees, And Ornamental Shrubs And Used For Recreation Or Display: *Public Gardens; A Botanical Garden.* 3. A Yard Or Lawn.



# What Is A Design





De·sign (D<sup>1</sup>-z<sup>0</sup>n“) V. De·signed,  
De·sign·ing, De·signs. --*Tr.* 1.A. To  
Conceive Or Fashion In The Mind;  
Invent. B. To Formulate A Plan For;  
Devise:

To Plan Out In Systematic, Usually  
Graphic Form: 3. To Create Or  
Contrive For A Particular Purpose  
Or Effect

To Have As A Goal Or Purpose;  
Intend. 5. To Create Or Execute In  
An Artistic Or Highly Skilled  
Manner.

De·sign *N.* 1.A. A Drawing Or Sketch. B. A Graphic Representation, Especially A Detailed Plan For Construction Or Manufacture.



De·sign *N.* 2. The Purposeful Or  
Inventive Arrangement Of Parts Or  
Details.

De·sign *N.* 3. The Art Or Practice  
Of Designing Or Making Designs. 4.  
Something Designed, Especially A  
Decorative Or An Artistic Work. 5.  
An Ornamental Pattern.

**Class Definition: To Make Or Execute Plans Or To Create Designs For A Plant That Is Cultivated Or Appreciated For Its Blossoms On A Small Plot Of Cultivated Or Planted Land**



**Class Definition: To Plant Flowers So  
They Look Good And Grow Well Together**





Before You Start  
Planning Or Planting,  
Ask Some Questions  
So You Can Start  
With A Purpose In  
Mind



The Reason For Having A  
Flowerbed Can Be Nothing More  
Than For Enjoyment And  
Enhancing The Landscape

Having A Focus  
Or Theme Can  
Make The  
Design Process  
Much Easier





## Possible Themes Include

- Water Garden
- Fragrance Garden
- Woodland Garden
- Cottage Garden

## Possible Themes Include

- Cutting Garden
- Butterfly Garden
- Moonlight Garden
- Hummingbird Garden

## Other Possibilities Include A Collection Of One Type Of Plant

- Hostas
- Iris
- Peonies
- Daylilies



# A Garden Devoted To A Particular Season

- Spring
- Summer
- Autumn



The More Focused The Theme,  
The Narrower The Choice Of Plant  
Material To Use In The Garden

Our Focus here will be spring  
gardens



- Who Is Going To Take Care Of The Flowerbed?
- How Much Time Do You Want To Spend Planting And Maintaining The Flowerbed?

While Thumbing Through Flower Books And Magazines, It Is Easy To Get Inspired By Beautiful Photos Of Grand Flowerbeds Overflowing With Annuals And Perennials

The Next Thing You Know, You Are  
Tilling Up Large Sections Of Lawn  
For A Huge Flower Border



Fantasy Meets Reality When It  
Comes Time For Planting,  
Weeding, Deadheading And Other  
Maintenance

Choose A Size  
That Is Realistic  
But Can Be  
Enlarged As  
Needed



If You Cannot Devote Much Time  
To Maintenance, Focus On Low-  
maintenance Plants Or A Style  
(Prairie, Cottage, And Meadow)  
That Do Not Demand As Much  
Attention



*How Much Do I Want To Spend?*

Setting A Budget Helps Dictate The  
Size Of The Flowerbed And The  
Amount Of Plant Material You  
Purchase

Do Not Purchase All The Plants In One Season. With A Plan, Add Plants Each Year And 'Build' Your Flowerbed Over Time Rather Than Making An Instant Flowerbed



As The Flowerbed Evolves, The  
Look And Your Ideas, Will Change

*What Is The Site Like?*

Before You Grab The Shovel Or Buy Any Plants, Take An Inventory Of The Location Where You Want The Flowerbed. Consider The Following Items:

*Soil Quality* - Annuals Will Grow  
Even Though They Do Not Thrive  
In Poorly Prepared Soil



*Soil Quality* - Perennials Seldom  
Survive More Than One Year If The  
Soil Is Not Properly Prepared

A Rich, Black Loam With Abundant Organic Matter Is Preferred. In The Fall Add Organic Matter To Improve Soil Quality

Spread 4 To 6 Inches Of The  
Material On The Flowerbed And Till  
It In. In The Spring, Before Planting,  
Till The Soil Again

**Do Not Waste Your Money On  
Expensive Plants Until You Correct  
Any Serious Soil Problems**



Do Not Use Peat Moss In Clay  
Soils Because They Both Hold  
Water Like Sponges

Organic Matter Must Be Fully  
Decomposed Or You Must Add  
Extra Nitrogen To Speed  
Decomposition

*Drainage* - Soil Drainage Is Also Crucial. Create Well-drained Soil For Most Flowers Except Few (Marsh Marigold, Bee Balm Etc.) That Thrive In Wet, Boggy Conditions

Poorly Drained Soils Are A Problem  
For Many Perennials. Some Plants  
(I.E. *Scabiosa*, *Chrysanthemum*,)  
Winterkill If The Soil Is Too Wet In  
The Winter



To Test A Site For Drainage, Dig A Hole Two Feet Deep And Fill The Hole With Water. Allow The Water To Soak In. Fill The Hole With Water Again

If Water Remains In The Hole After  
2 Hours, Correct The Drainage  
Before Planting Most Perennials

*Soil Ph –*

The Ideal Soil Ph For Most Flowers  
Is Near Neutral

Soils In Utah Are Always Alkaline

In Spite Of Many Recipes You Can  
Do Little To Change The Ph



Control Tough Perennial Weeds  
Before Planting. Check The Label  
To See How Long After Application  
You Must Wait Before Planting

*Existing Elements* –Take Stock Of  
Your Plants And Planting Areas

*Existing Elements* – When You  
Landscaped Your Home, You  
Created A Plan And Selected  
Plants That Enhanced The  
Architecture And Property

Flower Beds You Design Should Fit  
Naturally Into The Landscape  
Rather Than Appear To Be An  
Afterthought



Consider The Style Of Your Home.  
If You Have A Cottage, A Formal  
Flowerbed Looks Out Of Place But  
A Mix Of Old-fashioned Perennials  
Are Right At Home

# A Large Home Benefits From Bold Plantings With Formal Elements

# Make A Sample Plan

Most Flower Bed Failures Can  
Probably Be Attributed To Lack Of  
Planning. Careful Planning Almost  
Guarantees Success



There Are Two Approaches:

First Approach:

Select A Landscape Site Where You Need Color. It Can Be A Small Bed Near The Mailbox, Or A Long Perennial Border Near A Fence Or Hedge

Select Plants That Are Adapted To  
The Site

What Are The Characteristics Of  
The Site?

How Much Sun Or Shade Does It  
Get?

How Much Water Does It Get?



There Are Flowers For Every Site!  
Many References Are Available To  
Help You Select Plants. Contact  
Your USU County Extension Office,  
Local Bookstore Or Library

## Second Approach

Select Plants First. For Example, It May Have Been A Childhood Dream To Have A Formal Bulb Garden

## Second Approach

Perhaps You Like Particular  
Flowers At A Garden Center Or A  
Neighbor's Yard And Decided You  
Need Them In Your Design

Select A Site That Is Appropriate  
For The Chosen Plants. There Are  
Many References Available To Help  
Determine The Needs Of Specific  
Plants

Do Not Be Afraid To Try Something Different! Remember The Maintenance Requirements And How Much Time You Are Willing To Invest



Making A Plan Can Sound Like A  
Daunting Task But It Does Not  
Have To Be

A Plan Can Be Something As A  
Rough Pencil Sketch On A Piece Of  
Scrap Paper Or As Elaborate As A  
Detailed, To-scale Drawing

The Idea Is To Get Your Thoughts  
Down On Paper. It Is Much Easier  
To Shift Plants Around On Paper  
Rather Than Doing It After They  
Are Planted

A Plan Gives A Feel For Whether  
The Flowerbed Is Large Enough  
For The Plants You Intend To  
Grow, And If They Are Compatible  
For The Site

This Plan Also Serves As Your  
'Blueprint' . When You Go To  
Plant, You Will Have Their Location  
Right At Your Fingertips



To Make A Sample Plan, Measure  
The Flowerbed Area. Use A Scale  
Of  $\frac{1}{4}$  Inch,  $\frac{1}{2}$  Inch, Or 1 Inch  
Equal To One Foot

If Your Flower Bed Is 20 Feet By 10 Feet (200 Square Feet), Draw A Bed 20 Inches By 10 Inches (200 Square Inches) On A Piece Of Paper

Graph Paper Makes This Job A  
Little Easier Since The Grids Are  
Already Marked

The Next Step Is To Draw In The Plants You Intend To Grow. You Need To Determine The Width The Plants At Maturity

Generally, The Width Is Equal To The Height But There Are Exceptions. Use A Catalog Or Other Reference To Find This Information



You Can Either Draw The Plants  
Directly On The Plan, Or Use  
Cutouts To Move Them Around.  
Use The Same Scale You Did For  
Drawing The Flowerbed Outline

Assuming You Used 1-inch Equals  
1 Foot For Your Flowerbed Plan, A  
Plant That Spreads 4 Feet Is  
Represented By Circle 4 Inches In  
Diameter

**This Exercise Eliminates A Problem  
For Gardeners**

The Problem Of Not Having A Plan  
Is You Go To The Garden Center  
And Return Home With A Carload  
Of Plants And Start Shoehorning  
Them In Randomly

Pick A Focal Point



Place Beds Where You Can View  
Them From Inside Your Home And  
Where You Spend Time Outdoors

Locate Them In High Visibility  
Areas, Such As A Front Yard, Near  
Windows, The Porch Or Patio

Keep In Mind Factors Such As Soil Type, Drainage, Ph, And Light

Tentatively Decide Where The Flower Bed Should Be. You May Find There Are Several Locations That Need Flowers

Create A Courtyard Bed, A Patio  
Bed, Or A Bed Near The Front Door  
– Rather Than One Large,  
Overwhelming Flower Bed



Incorporate Flower Borders In The Front Yard In Place Of Foundation Shrub Plantings If The Area Has The Best Light And Visibility

**Make A ‘Wish List’ Of Plants**

A Good Place To Start In Making  
Your Plant List Is To Think About  
Your Favorite Flowers

They May Be Family Favorites,  
Flowers You Remember From  
Childhood Or Those That Give You  
Special Memories

You Might Look Through A Catalog  
And Pick Out Plants That You Like  
Based On The Photos



**Do Not Buy On Photos Alone. Make  
A List And View The Plants At  
Garden Centers, In Display Beds,  
Or At Local Gardens**

**Before You Actually Purchase The  
Plants, Ask Questions About Its  
Suitability For Our Climate**

Experienced Salespeople Can  
Recommend Adapted Plants And  
Steer You Away From Plants That  
Will Not Perform Well In Your  
Locale

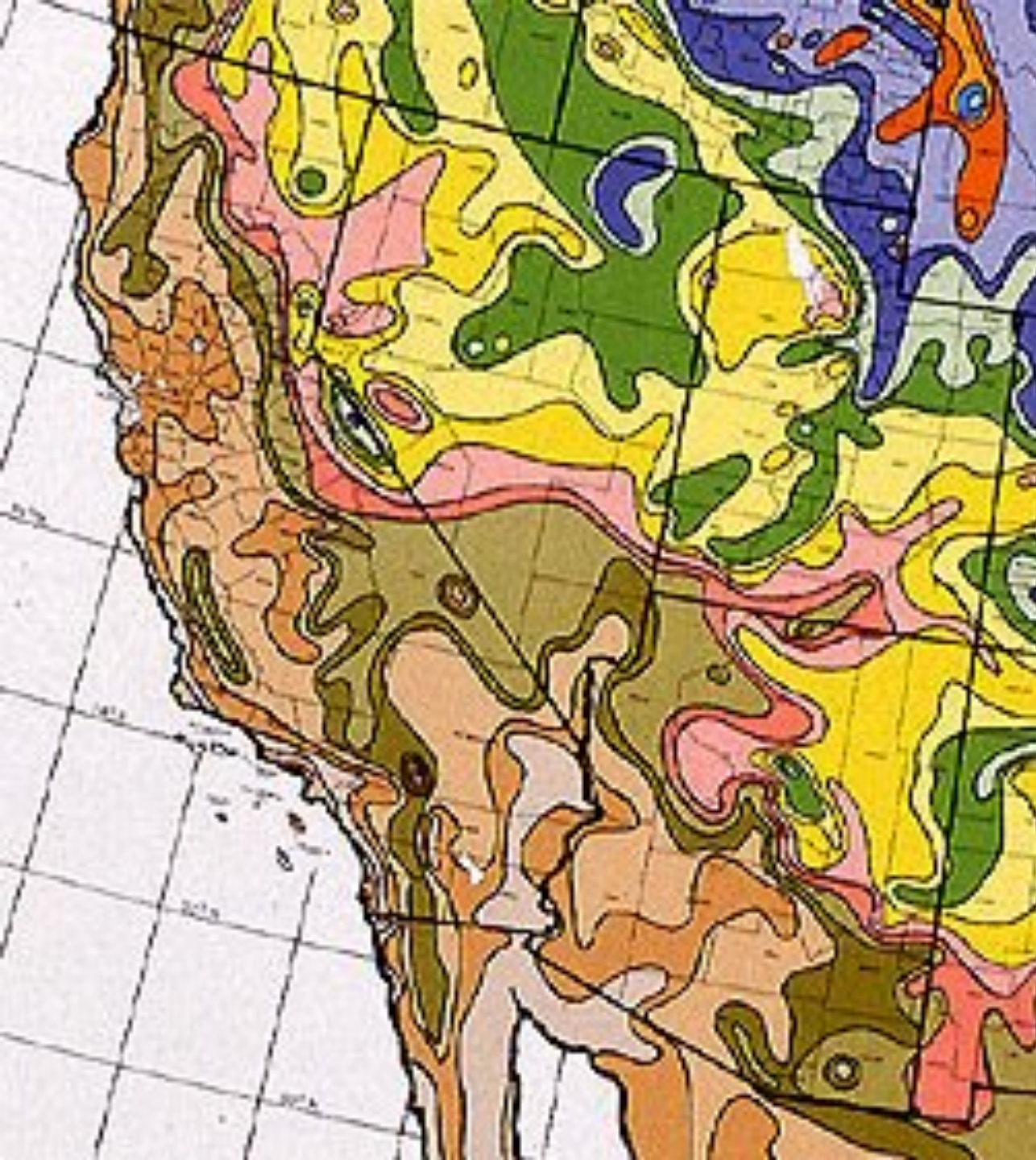
*Does It Grow In My Area?*

# Find Out What Plant Hardiness Zone You Live In

[Http://Www.Usna.Usda.Gov/Hardzone/  
Ushzmap.Html](http://Www.Usna.Usda.Gov/Hardzone/Ushzmap.Html)



The USDA Divides Utah Into  
Several Hardiness Zones Running  
From Zone 3 (In Northern) To 9 (In The  
Southern Part Of The State)



## Average Annual Minimum Temperature

Temperature (F)      Zone

Below -50	1
-45 to -50	2a
-40 to -45	2b
-35 to -40	3a
-30 to -35	3b
-25 to -30	4a
-20 to -25	4b
-15 to -20	5a
-10 to -15	5b
-5 to -10	6a
0 to -5	6b
5 to 10	7a
10 to 15	7b
15 to 20	8a
20 to 25	8b
25 to 30	9a
30 to 35	9b
35 to 40	10a
40 to 45	10b
45 +	11

Most Flower Books And Some  
Catalogs Have A Picture Of The  
Zone Map In Them



The Average Annual Frost-free  
Days And Minimum Winter  
Temperatures Determine Zones

Most Of Utah Falls Within Zones 4b  
To 5b. Zones Are Important When  
Selecting Plants From Catalogs Or  
Nurseries



Flowers Can Usually Grow Plants  
In Their Zone As Well As Two Or  
Three Zones Higher. For Example,  
If You Live In Zone 4B, You Can  
Grow 5A,5B And Higher With Little  
Problem

Attempts At Lower Zone Plants  
(Below 4b) Will Require Significant  
Winter Protection

An Exception To This 'Rule'  
Involves Microclimates That Exist  
And Are Particular To Various Sites

Microclimates Are Areas That Are Unique For Ability To Support Plants That Are Technically Planted Outside Of Their Hardiness Zone

For Example, If You Live In  
Hardiness Zone 5, There May Be  
Areas Unique To A Particular  
Property That Could Support Zone  
6 Or 7 Plant Material



These Areas Are Usually Located  
Where There Is Some Protection  
During The Colder Parts Of The  
Year

Areas Protected By Buildings,  
Fences, Hedges, Or Other  
Structures Or Land Features Can  
Often Be One Or Two Planting  
Zones Different Than Other Parts  
Of The Yard

Because These Areas Are So  
Unique And Individualized, They  
Are Often Found Only After  
Working And Observing Your  
Flowerbed For Several Seasons

Winter Temperatures Are Not The Only Consideration In Choosing Perennials. Summer Temperatures Also Influence Plant Growth And Survival

A Plant Heat-zone Map, Similar To  
The Plant Hardiness Zone Map,  
Divides The U.S. Into 12 Heat  
Zones Based On The Average  
Number Of Days Per Year Above  
86 Degrees F



Utah Is Divided Into Four Heat  
Zones:

The Map Is Available Online At  
[Http://Www.Ahs.Org/Publications/  
Heat\\_zone\\_map.Htm](http://Www.Ahs.Org/Publications/Heat_zone_map.Htm)

Note That The Hardiness Zones  
And The Heat Zones Are Not The  
Same Numbers.

This Week We Are Going To Put  
Together Some Flower Beds.

*We First Will Consider Several  
Other Factors Of Design.*

*How Long Does It Flower?*



# Annuals Provide Color Constantly From Spring To Frost





Most Perennials Bloom For One To Three Weeks With Some Having Repeated Flowering Seasons



With Careful Selection, You Can  
Have Something In Flower During  
Spring, Summer, And Fall



Add Plants With Winter Character  
(Ornamental Grasses And The  
Seeds Of Some Perennials), For  
Four Seasons Of Interest









While Budget And Maintenance  
Issues Affect The Final Decision Of  
What Plants Are Used, Careful  
Plant Selection Helps You Get The  
Best Display For The Investment

# *Is The Foliage Attractive?*





# Most Gardeners Ignore The Importance Of Choosing Plants That Have Attractive Foliage



Too Often, A Designer Selects  
Plants Based On The Type Of  
Flower And Usually Its Color



With Perennials, There Are Times  
When Only The Plant And Its  
Foliage Are Showy





Make Sure That The Foliage Is Attractive Enough To Serve As Filler Or Backdrop For Other Plants In Bloom Or Locate Them Where They Are Not In The Most Prominent Beds

**Be Careful Where You Locate  
Plants That Are Susceptible To  
Foliar Diseases Or Other Problems  
That Make The Plant Unattractive**

Plants That Fit In This Category  
Include Iris, Peony, Monarda And  
Zinnia

*Exposure* - Annuals And Perennials  
Are Grouped According To Four  
Sunlight Requirements

*Full Sun* - Receives Sun For Six Or More Hours Each Day

*Partial Sunlight* - 3 To 5 Hours Of Sun Each Day



*Partial Shade* - No More Than A  
Few Hours Of Dappled Sun

*Full Shade* - Absence Of Direct  
Sunlight

Few Plants Can Grow In The Full Shade Of A Forest Or Grove Of Trees. Full Shade Plants Must Still Receive Some Filtered Light

It May Be Possible To Thin Out  
Trees And Shrubs Branches To  
Allow More Light For Growth. Do  
This Carefully To Avoid Destroying  
The Plant Shape

Plants Growing Near Trees And  
Shrubs Must Compete For  
Nutrients, Light And Moisture

In Addition To Choosing Plants  
Based On Hardiness And Personal  
Likes, There Are Other  
Considerations



Take Specific Plant Characteristics  
Such As Height, Width, Flowering  
Time, And Texture Need To Be  
Taken Into Account

*Height* - Annuals And Perennials Differ In Their Height And Width. Place Shorter Plants In The Front, Medium Height Plants In The Middle, And Taller Plants In The Back

This Progression Is Broken Up To Create Interest And Appear More Natural. Experiment With Varying Heights Until You Get A Pleasing 'Skyline'

*Spread* – This Varies By Species.  
Newly Planted Bed Look Sparse  
When Plants Are Set At  
Recommended Spacing, But This  
Allows Them To Fill In Without  
Overcrowding

Plants That Are Set Too Close  
Compete For Nutrients And  
Moisture And Infringe On Each  
Other Causing Lopsided Growth



Annuals Planted At Recommended  
Distances Will Fill In During The  
Growing Season

In A Perennial Bed, It May Take 2 Or 3 Years For The Plants To Fill In. During These Times, It Is Helpful To Add Colorful Annuals To The Bed

*Form* - Form Takes Into Account  
The Shape Of The Entire Plant As  
Well As Its Individual Parts

# Herbaceous Plants Grow In Five Basic Shapes

Rounded

Vertical

Open

Upright

Spreading Or Prostrate



# Rounded





# Vertical





# Open





# Upright





# Spreading Or Prostrate



The Use Of Varying Forms Is A Design Consideration. Using Only One Form Gives A Monotonous Display



- Individual Flowers Have Various Forms.
- Some Of The More Common Ones Are

# Bell-shaped ([I.E. *Campanula*])





# Daisy-like (I.E. Shasta Daisy, Aster, Zinnia)





# Spherical (Peony, Marigold)





# Frilly Or Lacy (I.E. *Dianthus*)





# Star-shaped (I.E. *Amsonia*)ffedc



# Trumpet-like (I.E. *Hemerocallis*)

- *Texture* - Texture Refers To The Plant's Appearance, Not The Way It Feels To The Touch. It Is Fine, Medium, Or Coarse With Variation In-between (I.E. Medium Fine)



–Density Of The Foliage, Form Of The Flower, Flower Size, And Foliage Size Determine Texture. Small, Dissected, Lacy Leaves Are Considered Fine Textured (I.E. Baby's-breath - *Gypsophila paniculata*)

–Plants With Large Leaves Are Generally Considered Coarse-textured. Some Examples Of Coarse Plants Are Castor Bean And Canna

–Coarse-textured Plants Appear Closer To The Viewer While Fine-textured Plants Appear To Recede

–If Your Flower Bed Is A  
Considerable Distance From Where  
It Will Be Viewed, Use Plants With  
Large Leaves So That They Show  
Up



–Texture Is Important In Creating Interest. A Flowerbed With A Variety Of Textures Creates Interest. A Flowerbed Composed Of Similar Textures Is Visually Boring.

–The Key To A Successful Planting  
Is To Put Together Pleasing  
Combinations Of Plants

–What Makes One Planting Stand Out Better From Another? The Following Key Elements Will Help You Create Top-notch Plantings.

–*Color* - When You Begin To Think About A Flower Bed And Plant Selection, Often The First Thing That Comes To Mind Is Color



–While This Is Not Necessarily The Most Important Item, It Is Worth Considering Since It Is One Of The Qualities We Use To Determine Whether Or Not We Like A Particular Flower Bed

–Color Is A Very Personal Thing.  
There Are No ‘Wrong’ Colors!  
Flowerbeds Made Up Of Many  
Colors Can Be Just As Beautiful As  
Those Where The Designer  
Painstakingly Chose Various Tints  
And Shades

–Do Not Be Trapped Into Designing  
An Elaborate Scheme Based On  
Color. Choose What Pleases You

–If You Decide To Go The Route Of Designing Your Flowerbed Based On Color, There Are Some Guiding Principles.



–Color Can Be Used To Your Advantage. Warm Colors (Red, Yellow, And Orange) Are The Boldest, The Most Exciting, And Tend To Be The Strongest

–They Show Up From A Distance,  
Make A Statement, And Are Good  
For A Dramatic Display

–Red Is The Strongest You Can Use.  
In Large Areas, Red Shows Up And  
Gives A Splash Of Color

–Likewise, Yellow Captures The Eye Quickly. It Also Looks Good With Most Other Colors



–Orange Is Difficult To Use And Can Be Harsh To View. In The Right Combination, It Can Add A Bit Of The Unexpected

–Cool Colors (Blue, Green, And Purple) Are Recessive, And Therefore Tend To Get Lost In The Distance

–Cool-colored Flowers Look Best In Bright Light And In A Location Where They Can Be Viewed Up-close, On A Patio, For Example. They Also Contrast Beautifully With Brighter-colored Flowers

–Use White And Silver/Gray Plants For Blending The Colors. Plantings Of Red, Purple, Or Blue Are Greatly Enhanced With White Or Gray



–Likewise, Plants With Colorful Or Variegated Foliage (I.E. Coralbells, Coleus, Plectranthus, Or Hosta) Can Provide Texture And Season-long Interest.

– *Contrast* - Contrast Is Defined As  
Two Opposing Elements

–The Most Eye-catching Designs Incorporate This Element, Allowing The Flowerbed To Have Some Interest Rather Than Looking Like ‘Floral Mush’

–The Easiest Way To Accomplish  
This Is To Contrast Colors (Red  
And Green, Violet And Yellow,  
Orange And Blue, Yellow And Blue,  
Orange And Red, Or Red And  
Violet)



–Another Way To Provide Contrast  
Is To Use Different Plant Forms Or  
Flower Forms.

- Plant Forms May Be Conical, Mounded, Rounded Or Vertical. Plants With Distinctive Forms Create Interesting Groupings

–For Example, Tall, Vertical Plants  
Create Emphasis Among A  
Grouping Of Shorter, Rounded  
Perennials

–Individual Flower Forms Also Vary From Rounded (Daisy-like) To Spiky. Matching Up Plants That Have Different Forms Of Flowers Creates Contrast



–*Mass* - Using A Mass Of Plants Has More Impact In The Flowerbed. The Masses Provide Sweeps Of Impact Among Patches Of Color And Texture.

–For Most Flowers, Plant At Least  
Three Of Each Variety -- Meaning  
The Same Color, Height, And  
Spread

–The Plants Within The Group Eventually Merge To Form A Showy Clump. Plants Do Not Have To Be Massed If Flowerbed Space Is Limited And/Or The Plants Are Large (I.E. Peony, Castor Bean, Or Canna).

–For An Informal Look, Plant Uneven Numbers Of A Variety (I.E. 3, 5, Or 7) And Stagger The Plantings.



–*Drift* - **Never** Line Up The Masses  
Or Plants In Straight Rows Unless  
You Are Designing A Formal,  
Symmetrical Flower Bed

–Instead, Let One Mass Of Plants Embrace, Overlap Or Drift Into An Adjoining Mass. The Overall Appearance Is More Natural

–Think About How Nature Does It;  
Rarely, If Ever Are The Plants Lined  
Up

–*Repetition* - Repetition Provides A Sense Of Unity In A Flowerbed. In A Small Flowerbed, This Is Not As Important As It Is For A Larger Border



–Using This Technique Moves The Eye Through The Flowerbed And Gives A Finished, Harmonious Look

–You Can Achieve Repetition By Repeating The Same Color Or Plant Material Throughout The Flowerbed

–For Example, You Could Use Splashes Of Red-flowered (Or Yellow, Or White, Or Any Other Color) Plants Throughout The Flowerbed Or Simply Use The Same Plant Scattered Through The Border

– *Plant Placement* -Plants Are  
Divided Into These Categories  
Based On Height



- Edging, Less Than 1 Foot
- Foreground, 1 Foot To 2 Feet
- Mid-border, 2 Feet To 3 Feet
- Background, 3 Feet To 5 Feet
- Specimen Or Accent, Any Height

- Groundcover Plants Are Usually 6 Inches To 1 Foot In Height And Are Used For Larger Areas Or Under Trees

- Specimen Or Accent Plants Are Placed For Emphasis Anywhere In The Planting

–In A One-sided Border (A Border Next To A Fence, Wall, Structure Or Hedge) The Plants Nearest The Viewer Are *Edging* Plants



–Next Are *Foreground*, Followed By *Midborder*, And Finally *Background* So That The Plants Are Stair-stepped Shortest To Tallest

–Using The Drift Technique  
Described Previously Prevents The  
Planting From Appearing Too  
Staged

- Occasionally Bringing Taller Plants To The Front Of The Bed Adds Interest And Breaks Up The Formality

–Island Beds Are Not Placed Against A Structure But Are Placed Apart In The Landscape And Are Viewed On All Sides



–These Beds, Which Are Round, Oval, Half-moon, Or Kidney Or Any Other Shape, Look Best When Surrounded By Expanses Of Lawn

–The Same Rule For Plant Placement Applies:

- Shorter Plants At The Edge
- Medium Plants In The Middle
- Tallest Plants In The Center

–This Gradual Placement Of Plants  
By Size Is Easier On The Eye Of  
The Viewer

–A Jump From A 12 Inch Edging Plant To A 12 Foot Plant Is Usually Too Drastic Unless That Was The Design Intent



– *Diversity* – The Well-rounded  
Flowerbed Includes A Variety Of  
Plant Materials

–Most Gardeners Focus On Using  
Annuals And Perennials

–A ‘Mixed Border’ Incorporating Vines, Trees, And Shrubs Provides An Ever-changing Display Through The Seasons

- The Larger The Flower Bed, The More Opportunity For Including A Diverse Palette Of Plants

–A Small Flowerbed Offers The Same Challenge. Because Space Is Limited, You Want To Include As Many Different Plants As Possible



**–Be Creative – Think Outside The Box**

–Guidelines Are Only Guidelines,  
Not Rules

–They Are Meant To Be A Starting Point, Not The Law. Let Your Creative Juices Flow As You Plan Your Flowerbed And Choose Plants

–The More Personal You Make It,  
The More You Will Enjoy It

–You Will Find The Flowerbed Is Not  
The Means To An End



–Just When You Think It Is Finished,  
You Will Come Up With Ways To  
Change It

–The Flowerbed Is Ever Changing,  
Too

–Plants Die And Need Replacing,  
Become Too Large And Need  
Dividing, Or Do Not Meet Your  
Expectations

–These Need To Be Removed And  
You Always Want To Add  
Something New

–Use The Natural Soil And Amend It  
According To What Is To Be  
Planted



–A Good General Mix Is 75 Percent  
Topsoil And 25 Percent Composted  
Organic Matter

–Place Beds Or Border Where They Can Be Readily Seen And Admired From Inside Your Home As Well As Outdoors

- Try To Locate Them In Areas Of High Visibility, Such As A Front Yard, Near Windows, The Porch Or Patio

- Curved Flowerbeds Are Usually More Restful To The Eye Than A Sharp, Angular Pattern, And Preserve An Informal Effect

–Straight, Angular Lines Are Usually Uninteresting And Monotonous Because They Occur As Walks, Houses And Property Lines



- Round Backyard Corners With Curved Planted Areas

- Keep The Flower Border In Proportion To The Rest Of Your Landscape

- Maintain A Sharp Edge On The Flowerbed Or Border To Contrast With The Lawn And Form A Strong, Dominant Line And Pattern

–Lawn Edging Or Bricks As A Mow Strip Are Acceptable

- Avoid Tacky Distracting Edges Like Rows Of Painted Stones In Front Of A Bed Or Border



- In Conclusion
- Chose The Plants That Will Grow In Your Garden

- Amend Your Soil So It Will Grow Attractive Plants

- Fight Weeds Diligently

- Add And Remove Plants As Needed

- Keep Experimenting And Having Fun With Your Gardens



- Thank You For Being A Part Of Our Education Program For Utah State University And Thanksgiving Point Institute

- Come Back Often And Enjoy Our Programs Gardens And Many Other Activities

Leaving Open Spots Means You  
Can Add Plants To Fit Your Taste  
And Improve The Overall Look Of  
The Flowerbed

A Successful Flowerbed Usually  
Has Combinations Of Annuals And  
Perennials

Perennials Form The Backbone Of  
The Flowerbed And Give It  
Permanence



The Advantage Of Using Perennials  
Is That They Have A One-time Cost  
And Live For Several Years

**Annuals Are Less Expensive Plants  
But Only Live For The Season**

During The First Year Or Two Fill  
The Border With Annuals To Give  
Color And Mass Until The  
Perennials Fill In

Roses, For Example, Require  
Frequent Care, While Verbena  
Thrive On Neglect.

Select Drought Tolerant Plants To  
Cut Down On Your Water Bill

Since The Plants Are Not Mature,  
The Tendency Is To Plant Them  
Closer Than They Should Be



Within A Few Years, The Plants  
Mature And Begin To Crowd Each  
Other, Resulting In Poor Growth,  
Competition For Nutrients And  
Moisture

This Creates Lopsided Growth,  
More Disease Problems, And The  
Need For Immediate Division/  
Replanting