Selected Perennials for the Wasatch Front

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Flower Classification

• Annual- A plant that completes its life cycle in one growing season
• Annuals go from seed to seed in their season
Flower Classification

• Summer Annual - A plant that starts to grow in the spring and dies with the first frost. They are also called tender annuals.
Flower Classification

- Winter Annual - A plant that starts to grow in the fall and completes its life cycle the following spring. They are also called hardy annuals.
Flower Classification

- Biennial - A plant that takes two seasons to complete its life cycle. Many biennials form a rosette the first season and then send up a flower stalk the second season.
Flower classification

- Perennial - A plant that lives for more than two seasons. By definition, most perennials are herbaceous meaning they die back to the ground each winter. That separates them from woody plants where the branches stay alive during the winter.
Flower classification

- Perennial- Hardy perennials are able to live through the winter and grow the next season in spite of the cold.
Flower classification

- Perennial- Tender perennials are not able to live through the winter and grow the next season. We grow these plants as annuals in our gardens in Utah.
Flower classification

- Vines are plants that produce long, trailing stems. Vines are annuals or perennials and they are herbaceous or woody.
Flower classification

- Groundcovers are plants that grow less than 12 inches tall and spread across the soil. Many groundcovers have stolons or rhizomes to help them spread. Groundcovers are annuals or perennials and they are herbaceous or woody.
Flower classification

- Ornamental grasses are monocots, which are botanically different than most other flowers. Ornamental grasses are annual or perennial plants.
Flower classification

- Bulbs in the broad category are plats with underground fleshy stems. Technically a bulb is a specific modified stem with a small root system and modified leaves that are the scales of the bulbs.
Flower classification

• Bulbs are also classified as spring blooming bulbs and summer blooming bulbs.
Flower classification

• Bulbs are also classified as hardy bulbs and tender bulbs.
In the broad sense of the term, many flowers from rhizomes, corms and tubers are also called bulbs.
Utah growing conditions make it difficult to grow certain flowers
• The number one criteria when select any perennial flowers is “Under what conditions will the plant thrive.”
If you ignore their adaptability, they are never going to perform well.
Selecting perennials

Does it grow in my area?
Selecting perennials

- Find out what plant hardiness zone you live in
  
– The USDA divides Utah into several hardiness zones running from Zone in northern) to in the southern part of the state
Selecting perennials

- Most flower books and some catalogs have a picture of the zone map in them
Selecting perennials

– The average annual frost-free days and minimum winter temperatures determine zones
Selecting perennials

- Most of Utah falls within zones 4B to 5B. Zones are important when selecting plants from catalogs or nurseries.
Selecting perennials

– Perennial 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.
Selecting perennials

- Attempts at lower zone plants (below 4B) will require significant winter protection
Selecting perennials

- An exception to this ‘rule’ involves microclimates that exist and are particular to various sites
Selecting perennials

- Microclimates are areas that are unique for ability to support plants that are technically planted outside of their hardiness zone.
Selecting perennials

- For example, in hardiness zone 5, there are unique areas that could support zone 6 or 7 plant material
Selecting perennials

– Another aspect of growing perennials that does not apply to trees and shrubs is mulch.
Selecting perennials

– Soil only gets so cold so protecting the soil means protecting the plants.
Selecting perennials

- Mulches are often misunderstood. They are to prevent extremes in soil temperatures.
Selecting perennials

– Apply mulches after the soil freezes in the fall. They do not prevent freezing but keep the plants frozen so they do not go through frost heaving.
Selecting perennials

- Look for specific microclimates that are going to apply to the plants you have selected.
Selecting perennials

- These areas are usually located where there is some protection during the colder parts of the year
Selecting perennials

- 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.
Selecting perennials

– Because these areas are so unique and individualized, they are often found only after working and observing your flowerbed for several seasons
Selecting perennials

- Winter temperatures are not the only consideration in choosing perennials. Summer temperatures also influence plant growth and survival.
Selecting perennials

- 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.
Selecting perennials

- Utah is divided into four heat zones:
- The map is available online at
- http://www.ahs.org/publications/heat_zone_map.htm
Selecting perennials

– Note that the hardiness zones and the heat zones are not the same numbers.
Selecting perennials

- How long does it flower?
Selecting perennials

- Annuals provide color constantly from spring to frost
Selecting perennials

- Most perennials bloom for one to three weeks with some having repeated flowering seasons.
Selecting perennials

– With careful selection, you can have something in flower during spring, summer, fall and even winter
Spring Flowers
Fall Flowers
Winter Flowers
Additional Winter Beauty

- With the addition of plants with winter character (many ornamental grasses and the seedheads of many perennials), the planting can have four seasons of interest
Common Name

- "Common Name" lists several names for the perennial
- Cross referencing is helpful through the text for convenience
• Common names leave guesswork when finding the right plant
• The scientific name is included so that the enthusiast knows which perennial is referred to

Scientific Name

DAISY
- Bellis
- Rudbeckia
- Pyrethrum
- Chrysanthemeum
Height

- Varies with
  - Fertilization
  - Light
  - Soil conditions
  - Plant vigor

- Keep records so plants can be moved into better locations at future dates
Blooming Time

- Gives the chance to "orchestrate" and synchronize the blooming sequence
- Plant this bloom sequence for continuous bloom from spring to fall
Flower Color

- Lists the colors available in the nursery trade
- Does not refer to the cultivars mentioned under the scientific name
- If not mentioned, check other sources for the plant
Light Requirement

- **Full sun**
  - Uninterrupted sunlight all day

- **Partial shade**
  - Filtered sunlight through tree leaves or a minimum of 6-8 hours of sunlight per day

- **Full shade**
  - Indicates plantings under a dense foliage canopy or less than 6 hours of sunlight each day
Landscape Use

• Suggests planting locations

• Indoor uses
  – Cut flowers
  – Dried flower arrangements
Appendix

- An appendix at the end of this list aids in plant selection. It lists perennials under three designing regimes: height, bloom time and light requirement.
Appendix

- Height is categorized from 0-11" tall, 12-24" tall, and 24" and above. Bloom time is broken into spring bloom (March-June) summer bloom (June-August) and fall bloom (August-October).
Appendix

- Light requirements are categorized into full sun, partial shade and full shade.