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Herbaceous perennials are becoming much more popular.
New varieties are very appealing.
One common fallacy is you can plant and forget about perennials.
Local nurseries have a much greater availability of plants.
Gardeners want something different in the garden
These and many other factors help the resurgence of perennials.
Perennial gardening is more than just choosing plants.
Those that are successful, long term have these characteristics
Proper attention to soil preparation
Soil Amendments
Mulches
Weed control.
Perennial gardens are treasures but are not without peril.
In my opinion, the greatest risk comes from weeds.
Weeds use as much or more water than the plants themselves.
Garden plants never thrive if weeds steal water, nutrients and sunlight.
Perennial weeds in perennial flowers are certain disasters.
The worst offenders are outlaws with their pictures on the post office wall.
There are many problem weeds including those that follow.
Oxalis
Field bindweed
Quackgrass
Bermudagrass and several others.
Deep spreading roots make them more aggressive than perennials.
If you have these weeds, get them under control before you plant.
Perennials are there to stay and removing problem weeds is difficult
This process will usually take several seasons.
Never skimp on soil preparation.
• Perennial enthusiasts recommend double digging the beds where you dig the beds deeply and turn the soil over while adding substantial amounts of organic matter.
Soil preparation is essential.
With perennials, do it before plants are put in the ground
Unlike annuals beds, you cannot till and add organic matter every year.
Organic mulches

- Improve the soil as they decompose
- Help control the water robbing weeds
- Cool the soil
- Reduce water evaporation
- Help prevent frost heaving
Be generous with mulches as you grow your perennials
The flowers will reward you well.
After thoughtful preparations, spend some time selecting plants.
The challenge is to select those that need the same conditions.
Many gardeners start out to design perennial plantings.
They plant the plants and are not willing to let them establish well.
They then mix in annuals and then water and care for those plants.
That can negate the benefits of designing the garden for perennials
Accept that many perennials normally bloom for a short time.
Orchestrating a long bloom season takes planning
Height

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

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

- Digitalis
- Usually grown as a winter annual or biennial
- Excellent transition flower for spring to summer beds
Eremurus

- Desert Candle or Foxtail Lily
- Prefers dry soil
- Grows from roots
Delphinium

- Avoid windy areas
- Usually need support
- Spectacular flowers for early summer
Lupinus polyphyllus

- Lupine
- Many native lupines
- Use for height and spread
- Bloom at different times
Width or Spread

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

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

Paeonia

Height: 36 inches
Bloom Season: May-June
Flower Color(s): Many
Exposure: Full sun to partial shade
Use: Accent or cut flowers
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
Look for the Right Plants

• Many Different Colors
• Many Different Species
• Many Different Forms
• Many Choices
Using Perennials in Gardens

• Bring perennials into the garden where they fit the best
• Perennial purists use only perennials
• Most gardeners are more successful with perennials added to annuals, biennials, trees, shrubs and accessories