Selected Perennials for the Wasatch Front

Don and Bev Sudbury
USU Master Gardeners

Larry A. Sagers
USU Extension Ornamental Horticulturist
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 growing 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 plants 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

• In the broad sense of the term, many flowers from rhizomes, corms and tubers are also called 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
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.
Does it grow in my area?
The USDA divides Utah into several hardiness zones running from Zone # 3 in northern mountains to Zone # 8 in the southern part of the state.
Selecting perennials

Find out what plant hardiness zone you live in

http://www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/ushzmap.html

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 in 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 perennials with 5A, 5B and higher numbers with little problem.
Selecting perennials

Attempts at lower zone number plants (below 4B) require significant winter protection
Localized Data

http://climate.usu.edu

Freeze Dates
Selecting perennials

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

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

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.
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 and their purpose is to prevent soil temperature extremes.
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 apply to the plants you select
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, and fall.
Selecting perennials

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
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
Light Requirement

- Full sun
- Partial shade
- Full shade
Light Requirement

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  - Uninterrupted sunlight all day
Light Requirement

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Light Requirement

• **Full shade**
  - 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)
• Light requirements are full sun, partial shade and full shade