

Perennial doesn't mean perpetual

PLANTINGS OF perennial flowers are often billed as long-lived and easy-care. And they can be. But "perennial" doesn't mean "perpetual." Establishing a perennials garden that will give years of enjoyment with minimal maintenance takes know-how and planning.

Lee Taylor, extension home horticulturist at Michigan State University, explains that perennials are hardy herbaceous ornamental plants. That is, the roots live for several to many years (hardy), but the tops die back to the ground each fall (herbaceous).

This distinction separates them from annuals, which flower, fruit and die in one

year; and biennials, which take two years to complete their life cycle. Trees and shrubs live for many years, but they have woody parts that usually do not die to the ground each winter. Bulbs, corms and tubers are usually considered separately because they have specialized food storage methods to ensure their survival.

TO CREATE A relatively low-maintenance garden with perennials, you must select plant materials well adapted to the local climate, plant them in an appropriate site and care for them properly.

The plant zone maps in any good seed and plant catalog will guide you in selecting plants and varieties that will grow in

your area. From that variety you begin to narrow your choice by surveying the growing conditions in the proposed planting site.

Some plants prefer sunny rather than shady sites, or moist rather than dry locations. Some will multiply rapidly and invade adjoining lawn areas unless a sidewalk, wall or some other barrier prevents it.

Most perennials grow best in a loose, moderately fertile, deeply cultivated loam. Deep cultivation is especially important for heavy clay soils, which will benefit from additions of organic matter, such as leaf mold, peat moss or manure.

Because perennials will be in place for some years, mistakes in design and plant selection will be around for awhile. Taylor recommends careful planning to achieve an orderly array rather than a chaotic mess. Consider plant size and shape, flower color and flowering time when choosing plants. Carefully selected, perennials in your garden can harmonize and complement one another and provide continuous bloom from March through October.

YOU CAN PURCHASE perennials as seeds, as bare-root dormant plants from mail-order catalogs, in cell packs like annuals, in 4- and 5-inch pots, and in larger containers. The larger-sized plants produce a finished look quicker than seeds or small plants, but they cost considerably more.

First-year seedlings in plastic cell packs take an extra year to get established, but

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the cost per plant is quite low. Growing perennials from seed requires a good deal of patience and the space indoors to start them. A greenhouse, though not necessary, is extremely convenient to house the plants for the year or so they will have to grow indoors before they're ready to transplant.

Set perennials outdoors after the average date for the last killing frost in your area. (This information is available from your local Cooperative Extension Service office.) Space plants properly and be prepared to control weeds. Taylor recommends using summer mulches to discourage weeds and to maintain soil moisture between rains.

Annual care for perennials includes fertilizing in the spring, controlling weeds, mulching for winter protection and removing faded flower heads. After a few years, vigorous perennials will become overcrowded and need dividing. This is usually done in the spring so plants have a chance to get re-established before winter.

Framing your artwork

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wood moulding will frame any style of art. Remember, simple frames complement modern compositions and photographs while more traditional paintings call for elaborate or textured frames.

Once the frame style has been determined, wood moulding can be purchased at local lumberyards, home centers or building supply stores. Wood moulding is available in lengths of three to 16 feet in a wide variety of styles. Measure the picture to be framed beforehand to avoid unnecessary waste.

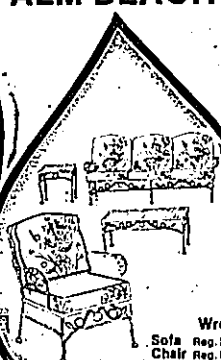
Most home workshops contain the tools required for the job. They include a fine-toothed saw, hammer, nails, corner clamps, glue and a miter box to make accurate 45-degree angle cuts.

THE COMPLETED frame can be stained, painted or finished in a variety of other interesting ways. Gold and silver leafing, scorching and glazing are just a few of the various techniques.

Additional information on making picture frames is available in "How to Make Pictures Frames." To get a copy, send 60 cents to WMPMA, Dept. HP, P.O. 25278, Portland, Ore. 97225.

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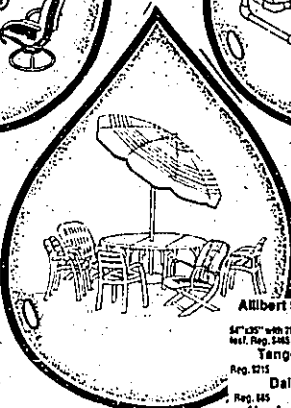
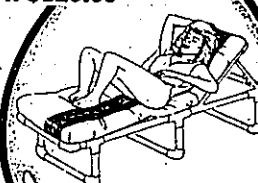


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