

A good garden takes careful planning

If you want to enjoy a beautiful blooming summer garden this year, you'd better get busy. Planning a flower garden takes time and a certain amount of imagination.

Spring is usually the best time to plant, whether you choose herbaceous plants (annuals, perennials and bulbs) or woody plants (trees and shrubs). Don't plant too early, an unexpected late frost can destroy tender flowers. However, some plants like pansies, calendulas and snapdragons, will survive light frosts and can be planted several weeks before the last frost in your area.

Before putting your plants into the ground, it is important to have the soil in ideal shape. Proper soil not only holds plants in place, but also gives them moisture and nutrients they need to grow and flower.

Soil should not be too sandy or too hard (clay-like). The best soil, called loam, is crumbly and well-aerated, with lots of organic content. Roots thrive in loam soil.

Use compost, manure, leaf mold or peat to make your soil more loamy. Prepare the soil to a depth of eight to 12 inches (about the depth of a garden spade) and rake the surface, breaking up any clods of dirt.

It is also important to know the fertil-

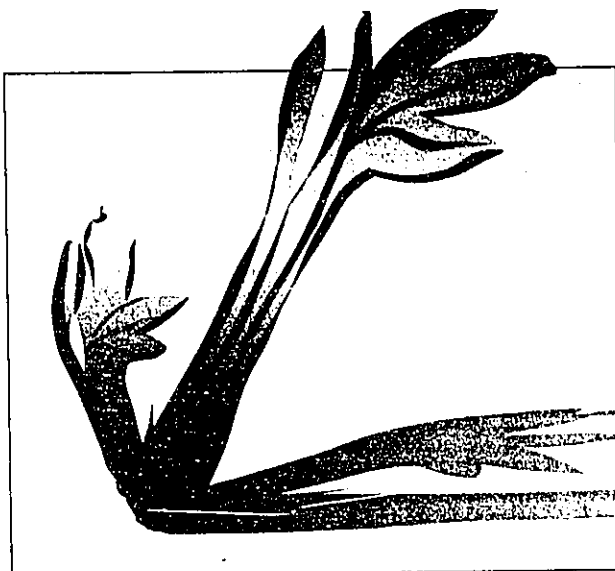
ity of your soil. Fertile soil has the proper balance of three essential nutrients - nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. If you are not sure about the fertility of your soil, use a moderate amount of fertilizer with about twice as much nitrogen as phosphorous and potassium.

There are three type of plants to choose from for your flower garden. Annuals, which grow readily from seeds, can be used to fill beds and borders with brilliant, long-lasting color. Most annuals live only one season but bloom for many weeks. Popular annuals include impatiens, geraniums, snapdragons, larkspur and dahlia.

Perennials add seasonal color to the garden. Their sturdy roots allow many of them to flower year after year although some, called biennials, live only two years. Perennials grow from seeds or bulbs but do not bloom until the second year.

For faster flowering, buy plants in containers. Popular perennials include daffodils, tulips, hollyhock, columbine, crocus and iris.

Flowering shrubs, trees and woody vines add substance and height to your garden. Even when they are not blooming, these plants provide a green backdrop for other flowering plants.



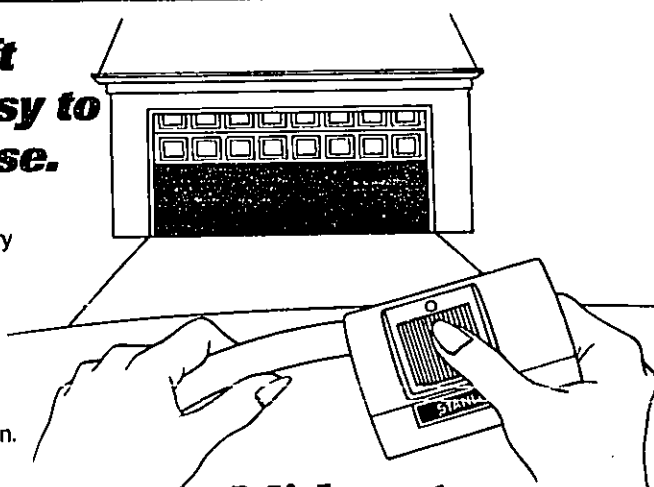
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