

Clubhouse Gardening

Perennials Vs. Annuals

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OF hardy perennial flowering plants the question may be asked, are they supplanting the old familiar and perhaps better known annuals? Personally, I think they are. The reason for this may be attributed to various causes.

In the first place perennials give far less trouble, therefore are far less costly—that is, after the first expense of buying and planting is over. They will also produce a greater variety of bloom, and if carefully handled have a longer duration of flowering. Added to this they will continue on for an indefinite time. As a matter of fact perennials are spoken of as the plants that come up every year, but this should be accepted with a certain amount of reserve, for much depends upon the treatment they receive as to their reappearance, year after year, especially some varieties of which I may have an occasion to speak later on.

Long Flowering Season

With a good collection of these hardy flowering plants, and in a normal season, one may look for a quantity of flowers early in May extending throughout the season even until November.

Now in the case of annuals, these plants require operations to commence in March or April at the latest to get good vigorous stock. This would mean artificial heat of some kind and with few exceptions perhaps one cannot reasonably expect much flowering until mid-summer. Oftimes their period of flowering is shortened by early frosts, meanwhile much trouble is involved from first to last.

Show Specimens Increase Popularity

Although perennials have been known and grown for a great many years it is not so long ago since they gained such popularity with the gardening world, and one of the influences at work in this respect is no doubt the many flower shows that are held periodically throughout the country and where cut flowers of perennials are largely exhibited for competition. Still another reason is a better cultural knowledge of the requirements of these plants by those who are interested in flower gardens, also by importations of new varieties from various parts of the world and by improvement through careful selection and by hybridizing different species.

Buying Table Flowers Expensive

When a golf club is fortunate in having a well developed flower garden and cut flowers are extensively

used for table decoration, it would be an interesting thing for someone to price the the flowers used for such purposes during the entire season. I think the results would be rather startling.

With regard to the culture of perennials—a good friable soil, well drained, is best suited for their requirements. They can be grown in heavy clay soil or light sandy soil but those who are conversant with the extremes of soil structure know the demands to be made to render such soils suitable or capable of good results.

Spring vs. Fall Planting

For some reason or other a great number of people choose the spring for planting out perennials. That they may be planted at this season with safety I readily admit, but it will be found that in the majority of cases when planted in the fall they will succeed and give better results. For this reason, which is a most important one they will establish a rooting system before severe weather sets in, and all such plants consequently will start off much stronger in the spring. Whereas, those planted in spring in many cases will be pushing up their flowering spikes before they have sufficient roots to support them. In many instances it would be good policy to remove such inflorescence and so keep them from seeding, which would be a double strain on a newly set plant.

Plant Perennials and Annuals Separately

To insure success and to allow of proper treatment it is wise to keep your beds and borders for what they are intended for, viz., perennials, and not to attempt growing shrubs or annuals in conjunction. To do so will be to court failure in the end as it will be a case of the survival of the fittest.

The size of borders should be determined by conditions, financial or otherwise. Not less than six feet wide if variety and effect are desired, but one of nine feet is infinitely superior. The space allowed between each plant should be determined by size and vigor of the plant and may vary from nine inches to thirty inches apart.

(To be continued)