

Perennial favorites

SPRING

Lungwort (*Pulmonaria* spp.)—Several varieties; oval leaves with metallic spots; flowers that turn from pink to blue; 5 inches tall; excellent ground cover.

Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)—Huge, rounded leaves through spring and summer; daisylike white flowers are 8 inches tall; a native; self-seeds and spreads rapidly.

Ferns—Many varieties, including maidenhair (*Adiantum* spp.), Goldie's (*Dryopteris Goldiana*), royal (*Osmunda regalis*), Christmas (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) and Japanese painted (*Athyrium niponicum* var. *pictum*); 1 to 4 feet tall; lovely foliage plants.

Daylilies (*Hermerocallis* spp.)—Early-blooming varieties 6 inches to 4 feet tall.

Oriental poppies (*Papaver orientale*)—Hairy lobed leaves; huge white, pink, red or orange flowers, 3 feet tall; dies back in summer.

Peonies (*Paeonia* spp.)—Many varieties; deeply lobed, leathery foliage; white to red single and double flowers; 1 foot to 4 feet tall.

Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*)—Oval leaves die back in summer; flowers start pink and turn blue, on graceful stalks; 1 foot tall.

Common primroses (*Primula vulgaris*)—Crinkled, straplike foliage; pale yellow flowers; 8 inches tall.

Iris Kaempferi and *I. Pseudacorus*—Lance-shaped blue-green leaves; huge flat flowers; three feet tall.

SUMMER

Hostas (*Hosta* spp.)—Many varieties; huge rosettes of oval leaves in many textures and colors, white to lavender bell-like flowers, some fragrant; 6 inches to 4 feet tall.

Daylilies (*Hemerocallis* spp.)—Many varieties; flower colors may be less vivid on shaded plants.

Balloon flowers (*Platycodon grandiflorus*)—Small oval leaves; white, pink or blue single and double flowers on wands; 2 feet to 3 feet tall. Buds look like balloons.

Heliopsis (*Heliopsis* spp.)—Many varieties; nondescript foliage; daisylike yellow to orange flowers; 4 feet tall; among the longest flowering perennials.

Phlox (*Phlox paniculata*)—Nondescript foliage; fragrant white to purple flowers until frost; 3 feet tall; visited by hummingbirds.

Coneflowers (*Rudbeckia* spp.)—Several varieties; nondescript foliage; daisylike pink or white flowers with brown metallic centers; 2 feet to 3 feet tall; a native.

Astilbes (*Astilbe* spp.)—Many varieties; ferny, leathery foliage; flowers in plumes of white, pink, lavender and red; 6 inches to 5 feet tall.

Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum Scalicaria*)—Several varieties; nondescript foliage; wandlike flower clusters in pink to purple; 3 feet to 4 feet tall; invasive.

FALL

Hostas (*Hosta* spp.)—Many varieties; huge rosettes of oval leaves in many textures and colors, white to lavender bell-like flowers, some fragrant; 6 inches to 4 feet tall.

Daylilies (*Hemerocallis* spp.)—Many varieties; flower colors may be less vivid on shaded plants.

Balloon flowers (*Platycodon grandiflorus*)—Small oval leaves; white, pink or blue single and double flowers on wands; 2 feet to 3 feet tall; buds look like balloons.

Blue mist shrub (*Caryopteris x clandonensis*)—Gray-green delicate foliage; blue misty flowers from August on; 3 feet tall.

Asters (*Aster* spp.)—Many varieties; nondescript foliage; daisylike flowers in white, yellow, blue, pink, red and purple; 6 inches to 5 feet tall. Some are natives.

Hardy chrysanthemums (spp.)—Many varieties; much-branched compact plants with daisylike flowers from white to red; 1 foot to 3 feet tall. A good cultivar is *C. x rubellum* 'Clara Curtis'.

Hibiscus (*Hibiscus* spp.)—Several varieties; huge heart-shaped leaves; plate-sized single flowers from white to red; 4 feet to 6 feet tall.

Ferns—Many varieties; attractive foliage; 1 foot to 4 feet tall.

SHADE

SUN

WET SOIL

Perennials are charted in order of flowering or their most attractive season. Chart author Nancy Carney says these species all thrive in crowded gardens. Carney lists plants that are easy to grow and long-blooming, with foliage that stays attractive a long time.

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5 steps to proper garden design

1) Provide a path for the eye. It's "the track the eye rides upon." A path guides the eye through the garden as though the eye were riding on rails. The path must appear to lead somewhere, and the further the better.

2) Build a background, to emphasize the best features of the garden. Fences, walls, shrubs or trees make the best backgrounds; they obscure distracting objects, like telephone poles or tool sheds.

3) Find a focal point. You find it when you follow the path and reach the background. The focal point should be interesting and obvious, such as sculpture, furniture, bird feeders, or a distinctive and colorful plant.

Chrysanthemum variety 'Sophia', new from Yoder Bros., Barberton, Ohio; (216) 745-2143



4) Control color. Divide flowers into two groups: those that are colored red through blue, and those that are yellow through orange. If you plant flowers from only one group, you simplify the color scheme without detracting much from the garden's allure, since the colors in each group generally harmonize.

5) Add texture. Save this for last. Texture includes all the non-flower details: plants, pebbles, rocks, benches, patios. Paving materials should be of the same texture. If the patio's made of brick, so should the wall be brick.

Plants, however, can be of various textures, as long as the most dramatic plants don't overpower the rest of the garden.

—Source: Robert Smaus in *The Best of Fine Gardening: GARDEN DESIGN IDEAS*, published by The Taunton Press (softcover, 96 pages, \$14.95). To order, call The Taunton Press, (800) 888-8286, operator 77.