

# New perennials ADD VARIETY

by STEPHANIE COHEN

Landscape contractors, designers and architects are always looking for 'the perfect perennial,' which they expect to excel in the following categories:

- ▶ long season of bloom;
- ▶ very little insect or disease problems;
- ▶ adaptable to a wide variety of soil types and climates;
- ▶ low maintenance, little dead-heading, staking, fertilizing and dividing;
- ▶ great looking foliage from spring to fall;
- ▶ more than one season of interest.

This miraculous plant in reality doesn't exist unless your materials are made of plastic! However, for both commercial and residential sites there are some perennials that come close to these high expectations. Please remember that the following sug-

gestions are my preferences, and each person in the field is very likely to give you a different list. Perennial people are a very feisty and opinionated group.

Most of the perennials listed below can fulfill the requirements mentioned before. Commercial landscape designers must also consider drought tolerance, since many plantings have no sprinkler systems and are not generally watered. For either commercial or residential work, plant in rather large drifts for maximum effect with those plants that have a long season of bloom.

## Shade plant favorites

One of the areas that I feel is now exploding is shade plants. There are now many new cultivars of Heucheras ('Velvet Knight', 'Chocolate Ruffles', Raspberry Regal'), Heucherellas ('Rosalie', 'Bridget



Veronica 'Icicle'



Ajuga and tiarella

Bloom'), Lamiums ('White Nancy', 'Shell Pink', Elizabeth de Haas'), and Pulmonarias ('Pierre's Pure Pink'). These provide good foliage color and interesting flowers.

There are always new Hostas, but 'Patriot' seems to be high on the list of what has been selling.

As far as sun plants, there are always great new daylilies on the market, particularly rebloomers:

- ▶ 'Stella de Oro' and her siblings
- ▶ 'Joan Senior'
- ▶ 'Stephanie's Dream'
- ▶ 'Fairy Tale Pink'
- ▶ 'Barbara Mitchell'
- ▶ 'Happy Returns'

Dr. Darrel Apps and Centerton Nursery are selecting and selling daylilies with a high bud count of 30 or 40 buds which they call "Trophy Taker" daylilies. This is a change from the old-fashioned kind that barely bloomed two or three weeks.

There are now many more cultivars of our sun-loving native herbaceous flowering plants and grasses. Many of those listed are natives because they are easy care plants once they are established. Certain cultivars

## SUGGESTIONS FOR 'PERFECT' PERENNIALS

<i>Coreopsis verticillata</i>	'Moonbeam' or 'Zagreb'	Threadleaf Coreopsis
<i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>	'Butterfly Blue' or 'Pink Mist'	Pincushion Flower
<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i>	'Goldsturm'	Black Eyed Susan
<i>Kalimeris pinnatifida</i>	'Hortensis'	Japanese Aster
<i>Achillea</i>	'Apple Blossom'	Yarrow
<i>Calamintha pepeta</i>	'White Cloud'	Calamint
<i>Leucanthemum maximum</i>	'Becky'	Shasta Daisy
<i>Eupatorium maculatum</i>	'Gateway'	Joe Pye Weed
<i>Gaura lindheimeri</i>	'Whirling Butterflies'	Wand Flower
<i>Heliopsis x helianthoides</i>	'Summer Sun'	
<i>Monarda x</i>	'Marshall's Delight' or 'Jacob Cline'	False Sunflower
<i>Phlox paniculata</i> 'David'	'Shortwood'	Garden Phlox
<i>Lamium maculatum</i>	'Shell Pink'	Dead Nettle
<i>Dicentra eximia</i>	'Luxuriant'	Fringed Bleeding Heart
<i>Corydalis lutea</i>		Yellow Bleeding Heart
<i>Geranium</i>	'Max Frei'	Cranesbill
<i>Iberis sempervirens</i>	'Autumn Beauty' (reblooms in fall)	Candytuft
<i>Nepeta cultivars</i>		Catmint
<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	'Zebrina'	Rose Mallow
<i>Veronica</i>	'Goodness Grows', 'Icicle', 'Sunny Border Blue'	Speedwell
<i>Hemerocallis</i>	'Trophy Taker' daylilies	



Rudbeckia and miscanthus dominate this residential site.



Variegated grasses with daylily.

are better because—in the case of *Phlox* or *Monarda*, they get little or no mildew.

The biggest opportunity for the green industry is to combine perennials and annuals in commercial settings.

If your clients can be educated to see the beauty, diversity, ease of maintenance, and eventually lower long run cost, our landscapes would be more colorful and ecologically diverse.

Think of ways to build landscapes that clients will accept and that will result in bigger sales for the contractor and designer. **LM**

*The author is an instructor in herbaceous plants at Temple University, and education director for Waterloo Gardens, Devon/Exton, Pa.*

## Perennial sources

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Greenleaf Enterprises<br>17 W. Main St.<br>Leola, PA 17540<br>(717) 656-2606         | Kurt Bluemel, Inc.<br>2740 Greene Lane<br>Baldwin, MD 21003<br>(410) 557-7229                          |
| Dunvegan Nursery<br>1001 S. New St.<br>West Chester, PA<br>19382<br>(610) 344-7566   | J. Van Hoorn & Co.<br>P.O. Box 814, 27617<br>Rt. 176<br>Island Lake, IL 60042<br>(708) 526-1811        |
| Northcreek Nursery<br>RR#2, Box 33<br>Landenberg, PA 19350<br>(610) 255-0100         | American Ornamental<br>Perennials<br>29977 S.E. Wentz Lane<br>Eagle Creek, OR 97022<br>(503) 637-33095 |
| Babikow Greenhouse<br>7838 Babikow Rd.<br>Baltimore, MD<br>2122337<br>(800) 835-7617 | Terra Nova Nursery<br>4309 S.W. Cullen Blvd.<br>Portland, OR 97221<br>(503) 2245-9543                  |
| Bluemont Nursery<br>2103 Blue Mount Rd.<br>Monkton, MD 21111<br>(410) 329-6226       | Centerton Nursery<br>R.D. 5, Box 44498 B<br>Bridgeton, NJ 08320<br>(609) 455-0926                      |

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