

The Perennial Border and a Few of Its Best Flowers*

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THE flowers best adapted for use in a perennial border may be divided into groups in several different ways. Although I have prepared a list of what are generally considered the best for our Canadian climate and have divided this list into three sections as follows: "Best low growing flowers for the front of a perennial border," and "Best flowers of medium height for the middle of a perennial border," and "Best tall flowers for the back of a perennial border," and have given the different color, height and time of flowering in each of almost 130 different varieties, I do not intend reading such a list on an occasion like this, but shall content myself with very brief references to several well recognized groups of perennial flowers, discussing each group in its seasonal order.

FOUR FLOWER GROUPS

Early in the year when the eye is greedy for color after the long colorless winter, come radiant tulips stimulating everyone to an awakened interest in Nature. But lest they might shock us with their gay attire, they

bring along as companions the delicate creamy-white narcissi and the yellow daffodils. These heralds of the flower tribes should be always grown. They are inexpensive to purchase and last for several years in a perennial border before they need to be moved or renewed. Most of them come to us from foreign lands, and the tulips are generally called Dutch bulbs. They are not the very first flowers of spring, the snowdrops and crocuses appearing a week or two earlier, but on account of the great display of color which they produce it is well to think of them as forming the first great group of the season's flowers. They blossom from late April till June.

THE ARDENT FLOWERS

A second great group is that of the peonies, the old-fashioned "piney," changed in form, color and fragrance, but essentially the same in that quality of "ardent appeal" which in the old days gave to it its charm. The modern peony is a close rival of the queenly rose. Wonderful flowers are these beautiful named peonies. There are three varieties, one white called Avalanche, a red named Felix Crousse, and a pink named Magnifica, which, if there were no others to rival them, would rank among the im-

mortal flowers of the twentieth century. But about a thousand named varieties of peonies claim our attention and fill our gardens with magnificent masses of color during the month of June. They are ideal flowers for a perennial border.

While the peonies form the second of the great groups, the irises might rightly be given that place, as perhaps they would be by some people, and the peonies shifted up a place to group three. The iris is the "rainbow flower" and has few rivals. I am really sorry to pass it by. There are, however, so many beautiful flowers of this period that it is impossible to do more than just mention it as being worthy of a much longer reference. Of the other flowers, there are the quaint columbines, which are very numerous in variety and color; the sweet low-growing plants as violets, pansies, and forget-me-nots, and the woodsy flowers as the trilliums, spring beauties, spring anemones, Solomon's seal, lilies, lady's slipper, and many others that might be mentioned. The roses, of course, occupy a place by themselves. They come in at the end of June and last through July.

THE SHOWY FLOWERS

The phlox, or third group, I have called the showy flowers, because they come

*Concluding part of a paper on the "Perennial Border" read before the Quebec Pomological Society.



At the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. The New Perennial Border 450 Feet Long, by 12 Feet Wide

Note the great show of color in this picture which was taken August, 1912. The border looked at its best in the months of May and June, when great displays of color were in evidence from groupings of tulips, irises and peonies. Later color effects were produced by many selected plants, together with the beautiful perennial phloxes and fall asters. This border was planted in September and October of 1911.