

Flowers

HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS

No flower garden is complete without perennials. Even though the plot of ground be small, some of the space should be devoted to this useful and varied class of plants. Few flowers require as little care as hardy herbaceous perennials, if given the proper conditions to start with.

The soil should be a good loam which will not bake, and should be well drained, for thorough drainage is very essential.

When planted, most perennials should be left undisturbed for a long time, hence the soil should be well prepared in the beginning by trenching and digging under a liberal supply of well-rotted stable manure.

Most perennials thrive best in full sunlight, and, where possible, they should be planted where they will get the most favored conditions. A southern aspect is the most suitable, and where there is protection from the cold winds the plants do best.

Planting may be done either in spring or autumn, but spring planting is best for most kinds.

In making and planting a border it is most important to plant those kinds which will give a continuity of bloom from early in the spring until late in the autumn, and to arrange them so that they will be most effective. The dates of blooming, heights of the plants and colors of the flowers should be given very careful consideration by those who desire to make the most of their materials. In large borders the best effects are obtained by massing several plants of one color, or several varieties of one species, and also arranging for a continuity of bloom, but in smaller borders and where the number of plants is limited it is often not possible to get this, and sometimes one part of the border will be without bloom.

During the growing season the surface soil should be kept loose and free from weeds, and, in the summer, the taller growing plants will need staking, as fine specimens are liable to be broken by storms if this is neglected.

When the plants have ceased blooming the old stalks should be cut off near the ground. Just before permanent frost sets in, the border or bed should be given a dressing of about four inches of strawy manure or leaves. This will form a good mulch for the protection of the plants in winter and at the same time enrich the soil. The mulch should not be removed too soon in the spring, as often most of the damage done to perennials is done at the season of the year when much thawing and freezing takes place. After raking off the coarse material in the spring, the shorter manure may be dug in to enrich the soil.