

## About This Plant

- Perennials are plants that grow and bloom over the spring, summer and into fall, then die back to the ground in winter, returning in the spring from their roots. Most perennials are grown for their flowers, but some offer colorful leaves and interesting seed heads that add interest and brighten the landscape. When planting, plan for a succession of blooms. Combine perennials that have different bloom times so the garden has color all season, but also group varieties with similar times for a spectacular show.

### Using growth habits in the landscape

- When creating a perennial bed with a variety of perennials, tall upright perennials should occupy the center of an island planting or the back of a bed or border that is located against a wall, fence or building. Use medium size mounding plants in the middle and the shortest trailing plants in the front.
- To make a huge visual impact, plant the same variety and color perennial in one area. This is commonly referred to as a mass planting.
- In combination planters, use tall perennials as the centerpiece surrounded by mounding varieties with contrasting flowers and foliage. Then add trailing varieties to cascade over the edge of the planter. Annual flowers can be added to fill in between blooming cycles.

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## How to Plant

- Prepare the area for planting by conditioning the soil. Loosen the soil and incorporate an organic soil conditioner according to directions.
- Dig a hole 2 times the width of the root ball and a depth slightly less than the height of the root ball. Allow the top surface of the root ball to rest 1/2 inch higher than the soil line.
- For container grown plants, carefully remove plant by squeezing container and slowly removing the root ball. Never pull on the plant trunk. Instead let the root ball slide out by tipping the container. If the plant is heavily rooted, loosen roots by gently pulling a few away from the root ball. This encourages stronger root growth. Set root ball in hole making sure the top of the root ball is slightly higher (1/2 inch) than ground level. Place soil mix under root ball if too low. Backfill soil mix around plant to ground level and tamp lightly removing all air pockets.
- For biodegradable pots, follow the directions on the container.
- For bare root plants, trim any broken, twisted or discolored tips. Determine the original soil line by the change in color on the plant trunk. Set the plant in the hole so the soil line is above the surrounding soil. Space the roots evenly. Backfill soil mix around and between the roots and tamp lightly removing all air.
- Water thoroughly to settle the soil around the plant. Add more soil mix around plant if necessary after watering. Apply root stimulator to encourage new root growth and fast establishment.
- If a large plant; build a soil ring around the plant, 6" beyond the edge of the hole, to use as water reservoir to assist in watering until established.
- Add a 2-3" layer of mulch around plant to conserve soil moisture and eliminate future weeds.
- For large shrubs, it may be necessary to secure the trunk by using three stakes placed at equal distances around the plant.

## How to Water

- New plants require more frequent watering than established plants. After planting check for water regularly until fully rooted and established.
  - For large plants; build a soil ring around the plant to use as a water reservoir. This will assist in watering until the plant is established.
  - Always water slowly and deeply making sure the root ball is completely saturated.
  - Don't water at night if possible. Watering in the morning helps prevent disease.
  - If new plant wilts between watering, increase the frequency of watering.
  - Plants in hot, humid or sunny areas need more frequent watering than plants in cool climates.
  - Plants in containers may require more frequent watering than plants in the ground. This will depend on plant variety, pot size and soil.
  - Add a 2-3" layer of organic mulch around plant to maintain and conserve soil moisture. Mulch will reduce watering frequency and speed root establishment.
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## How to Fertilize

- Fertilize just before and during the plants active growing cycle. Fertilization should begin just prior to new growth and end three or four weeks before the first frost.
  - Choose an all-purpose fertilizer recommended for flowering and/or foliage plants. Frequency will depend on the type of fertilizer. Liquid (water soluble) and granular quick release fertilizer, require more frequent application; slow release granular fertilizer requires less.
  - When using granular fertilizer be sure to sprinkle fertilizer pellets away from the plant stems or trunk to prevent possible burning and always water thoroughly after application. This dissolves or releases the fertilizer into the soil. Apply water soluble fertilizer by thoroughly drenching the leaves and soil.
  - Always follow fertilizer package directions.
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## How to Prune

- Perennials are pruned to increase flower production and new growth.
- Perennials that go dormant should be allowed to die back. Prune them in late winter or early spring. This encourages new growth and flowers.
- Perennials that do not die back completely can be selectively pruned in early spring to remove dead and damaged limbs.
- Removing old flowers prevents the plant from setting seed and encourages new blooms.
- Perennials that are root bound or have a decrease in flower production should be divided. Dividing the plant will allow more room for root growth and eventually lead to an increase in blooms.
- Use proper tools such as shears and hand pruners. Make sure all equipment is clean and sharp.
- Fertilize after pruning to help speed new growth.