

Perennial flowers, or perennials, grow for more than two years, die back over winter, and in the next spring grow back from the existing roots.

- Plants requiring full sun need at least six hours of unfiltered, direct sun per day.
- Most, if not all perennials prefer amended soil. This means adding 1-3" of compost to the planting area (depending on original soil structure).
- Group plants together that require the same kind of light, water and soil.
- It is common to plant perennials in odd numbers (at least three), though not required. Your garden is your own work of art and learning experience!
- Perennials generally take one to two full years to establish.
- Dig a hole that's a little wider but no deeper than the pot your new perennial came in. Loosen the roots and spread them out. Then firm the soil in around the roots and water well.
- Water your perennials well after you plant them. Then lay a 1- to 2-inch-deep layer of mulch over the soil around your new plants. The mulch will help the soil hold moisture and prevent weeds from growing.
- Some kinds of perennials, including asters, chrysanthemums, phlox and salvias, benefit from being pinched back, creating a bushier plant that produces more blooms. Pinch back the growing tips once or twice during late spring.

WHY PLANT NATIVES?

By definition, a native Delaware plant is one that grew here before the European settlers arrived, as opposed to exotic plants that came from other countries after that time period. **Natives have many advantages.** Because they evolved here, they are well adapted to our climate and are generally easy to care for once they are established. Many native perennials like less fertile soil and require the addition of little or no fertilizer. Perhaps the most compelling reason to choose natives is to preserve Delaware's biodiversity. Development is rapidly reducing natural areas that shelter a wealth of our native plants; the landscapes that replace the natural areas consist mostly of lawns and exotic plants. Recent research from our Dr. Doug Tallamy of the University of Delaware has determined that 90 percent of our native insects are specialists that feed on three or fewer families of plants. The insects rely on native plant hosts and cannot eat the exotic plants that have become common in our yards. A reduction of native insects means that birds have fewer insects to feed to their young, and that will lead to a reduction of bird species. **In the next fifty years, what we plant in our yards will determine the kind of wildlife that can live in Delaware. By planting natives, gardeners can help retain our natural history and the beauty and diversity of our coast.**

Inland Bays Garden Center

Gardening to make a difference

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SUN PERENNIALS



Fill that sunny spot in your garden with flowers for the sun that thrive in long days of bright light. Full-sun perennials need six to eight hours of direct sun per day. They tend to produce lots of blooms, so they'll add flower power to your yard or garden. Here's a list of flowering perennials for sun that will bring zing to summer.

DRY TO AVERAGE SOIL

- **Sea Thrift (Armeria)**. 8" tall by 8" wide. Fine texture. Bright pink or fuchsia flowers May-June. Good massed or as an edger.
- **Artemisia Silver Mound**. 12" tall by 18" wide. Very fine, soft texture with silver leaves. Yellow July-Aug. Good edging plant.
- **Coneflowers**. NATIVE. Heat- and drought-tolerant with cheerful, daisy-like flowers. Purple, white, orange and yellow flowers. Different heights.
- **Black-Eyed Susan**. NATIVE. Blooms like crazy from early summer to frost. Drought-tolerant flowers and poor soil ok. Pinch off spent blooms for more flowers. 12 - 24" tall.
- **Smooth White Beardtongue (Penstemon)**. NATIVE. Also known as foxglove beardtongue. Beautiful addition to pollinator garden or perennial border. Long blooming period in early summer. "Husker Red" is popular cultivar with dark red leaves.
- **Coreopsis**. NATIVE. Easy-to-grow, thrives in dry, sunny locations. It blooms all summer. Butter yellow, or bright yellow, or pink flowers. 10 - 24" depending on variety.
- **Yarrow**. This sun-lover produces clusters of flat-topped clusters of flowers in red, yellow or pink atop ferny, silver-gray or green foliage. Yarrow is drought and heat tolerant and is a good choice for a spot that's hot and dry. Beautiful even when not blooming.
- **Butterfly Weed**. NATIVE. With weed in its name, you might think this is a garden nuisance, but butterfly weed is one of the hardiest flowers for sun, and it's actually well behaved. Its clusters of bright, orange-yellow flowers attract monarch and other butterflies.

AVERAGE SOIL MOISTURE

- **Catmint**. Blooms Late Spring – summer. Rugged, easy-to-grow, salt tolerant and long blooming. To promote continued blooms, shear flower spikes after initial flowering. Pollinators love it.
- **False Indigo**. Baptisia. Spectacular! Eventually large (3 – 4' by 3 – 4'), but slow growing blue, white, purple or yellow flowers in the sun. Its blue-green foliage makes plants lovely after the flowers are gone. Deep, extensive root system.
- **Bee Balm (Monarda)** is an old-fashioned favorite perennial. Bee Balm is deer resistant, easy to grow and will attract pollinators like bees, butterflies and especially hummingbirds to your garden. Different types can be anywhere from 1' to 4' tall.
- **Salvia**. Perennial sage. Gorgeous! Loved by hummingbirds, butterflies and pollinators. Pink, blue, purple. Love hot weather, disease resistant. From 18' – 36' depending on variety.
- **Aster**. Blooming Late Summer – fall. Important, reliable fall color and butterfly food. Comes in many heights from 2' to 6'! In blues, pinks and purples. Pinch back in early summer to promote bushiness and flowers.

MOIST TO WET SOIL

- Hardy **Hibiscus**. 2' – 5' tall. Huge flowers in white, red or pink or a combination. Very tropical looking and easy to grow. They leaf out late, with beautiful foliage, too.
- **Joe Pye Weed**. Not a weed! Medium to very tall (3' – 8'), pink to purple flowers. A butterfly favorite! Easy to grow in full sun, with a little extra compost. Many different varieties.
- **Swamp Milkweed**. Monarch butterflies love this! 4 – 5'tall, mid to late summer pink blooms. Late to come up in spring, but very reliable wet soil performer.
- **Obedient Plant**. Ask us why it's called that! Bright pink or white flowers in mid to late summer. 1 – 3 tall, depending on variety.