

# PERENNIALS

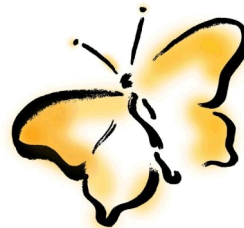
Campbell's

CULTIVATING IDEAS

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Perennials are plants that live more than two years. This long life of the perennials presents the gardener with some outstanding advantages. Their continued presence in the garden saves the time, labor, and expense of replanting every year.

## PLANNING THE PERENNIAL BED OR BORDER

There are basically five (5) steps to designing the perennial garden:

1. Determine the point from which the garden most often will be viewed.
2. Consider the shape and topography of your yard and which plants are there that are immovable or that you want to keep.
3. Decide whether you want a formal or informal design.
4. Decide whether you want beds or borders.
5. Choose the plants you want within the beds or borders.

## CHOOSING YOUR PLANTS

The first step in planning your garden should be to determine from what angle or location it will most often be viewed. If you plan to view it primarily from inside the house, make sure to locate it so that you can see it comfortably through a favorite window. If you plan to spend a lot of time on a deck or patios, be careful to lay out the garden with that spot in mind. Once you know where to place the garden, the next step is to consider the shape and topography of your yard. It will in turn help you to decide whether to have a formal or informal design. If your yard is irregular, with slopes, hills, or rock out-croppings; or if there are mature trees or specimen plants that you wish to leave standing, you'll find it difficult to carry out a formal design. On the other hand, if your yard is flat with no outstanding natural features, you'll be free to choose whichever style you wish. Once you have decided on the garden location and on a formal or informal plan, you want next to decide whether to plant beds or borders, or both.

Beds have a number of important advantages: First, because they are accessible from all sides, they are easier to maintain than standard borders; Second, they admit more sunlight and air circulation, which benefits plants; and third, because they can be viewed from all sides, they hold more possibilities for the attractive arrangement of plants.

The greatest advantage of the border over the beds is that it allows more open space. If your yard is limited to the standard urban or suburban dimension, there are good reasons for leaving the center open to create the feeling of as much space as possible, to provide a "quiet" space to serve as contrast to whatever visual activity you may have on the perimeter of the yard: trees, shrubs, or the flower border itself. In addition to allowing more open space, bor-

ders serve the unique purpose in any garden of softening the edges of buildings, fences, walkways, and lawns. For the border to be attractive, plants should be arranged in stairstep fashion so short plants are in front and taller varieties at the back. Flowers should be planted in groups because single rows will not achieve the visual effect desired.

Once you have gone through the previous steps in designing your garden, you're ready for the part of gardening that most people find the most fun of all: choosing your own plants. As you begin to make those choices, you may find it helpful to ask yourself these important questions:

1. Are there any favorite plants that you "MUST HAVE" or colors that you should not plant because they would clash with or be overwhelmed by the color of a background wall, fence, or planting?
2. Do you want one color scheme blooming all at once, or do you want a changing garden, with one wave of flowers giving way to the next?
3. Do you want a diversity of plant and flower forms, or plants that are more or less similar in appearance?
4. Does your space limit you to smaller plants, or can you accommodate some of the larger ones?

In designing the garden, there are several specific characteristics of perennials that you need to know in order to make the best choices. Obviously, the cultural requirements of the plant must match the soil, light, and climatic conditions of your garden. In addition, you need to note each plant's color, height, spread, form, texture, and bloom season.