

Perennials in Your Garden

Perennials are plants that live year after year. Their tops usually die back to the ground each fall, but their root systems remain active. Perennials can be used in combination with other plants, as groundcovers, mixed with annuals, grown in containers, and used as accents or specimen plants. The advantage to perennials is that you don't have to plant them every year. And, with careful planning, your perennial bed will change with the season and you will always have something in bloom. They do require pruning and maintenance to keep them attractive.

- * Since perennials will be in place for many years, it is important to prepare the soil. Dig the bed to a depth of 8 to 10 inches and mix at least 2 inches of organic material, such as Bumper Crop, Leaf Gro, or compost, with the soil
- * Select plants based on their light requirements and the role they will play in your garden. Think about flower color, height, and foliage. Also consider when they bloom and the length of their bloom, as well as the spacing requirements.
- * To maintain your perennials, don't rely on summer rainfall to keep the beds watered. Make sure all the roots are reached when watering. Soaker hoses are excellent for watering beds. The water moves slowly, doesn't disturb the soil, and doesn't splash the leaves and flowers.
- * Mulching gives a neat look to the garden and cuts down on weeding. Mulches also maintain uniform moisture and soil temperatures. As mulch breaks down and disintegrates, it adds nutrients to the soil. Place a 2 inch layer of mulch around your plants, but keep mulch away from the crown.
- * Regular fertilization is necessary. Use an all purpose fertilizer, soluble or granular, beginning in March and repeat at monthly intervals. Spread the fertilizer in small rings around each plant and always water when fertilizing.
- * After perennials have bloomed, spent flowers should be removed. Cut flower stems down to a healthy leaf, or to the ground if there are no more buds. This will keep the beds looking neat and will prevent plants from wasting energy setting seed. Some will even rebloom.
- * In fall, after the perennial foliage has died down, remove dead leaves, stems, and spent flowers. These materials often harbor insects and disease-causing organisms.

WASHINGTON, DC
4200 Wisconsin Ave, NW
at Van Ness St

www.johnsonsfiorists.com
KENSINGTON, MD
10313 Kensington Pkwy
next to the Post Office

OLNEY, MD
5011 Olney-Laytonsville Rd
Rt 108 and Zion Rd

