

BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER

OF THE VIRGINIA WILDFLOWER PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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Perennials

by Frieda Toler

When the words perennial flowers are mentioned, most gardeners envision masses of flowers that bloom for a long time year after year. They may bloom year after year but many only bloom a week or two. In order to have constant bloom, the home gardener must have a large variety of flowers.



There are a few long flowering perennials that are a real joy to have in the garden. Beginning in early spring, Rue-anemone *Anemonella thalictroides* is nice to have in a sunny spot along a walkway. They bloom several months in the proper place. Green &

Gold *Chrysogonum virginianum* is another early winner. Bright yellow flowers appear in April and May, then sporadic flowers through summer. Both are low growing, seldom more than six inches high.

These are followed by a real favorite, bleeding heart *Dicentra eximia*. It will bloom from April until frost. It grows well in poor soil, withstands drought and is disease resistant. Clumps should be divided about every three years.

April and May dazzle us with azaleas, rhododendron, iris, oriental poppies and peonies. After those flowers fade penstemon, bergamot, coreopsis, butterfly weed, early asters come into their own. They are compatible in the same soil and all require plenty of sun but will thrive in partial shade.

Purple coneflower *Echinacea purpurea* must be mentioned separately. It is a truly great summer star, blooming from July until October. As blooms fade, clip them to encourage further growth. It is a good idea to let some of the seed mature so they can be scattered for new plants. It is a nice background plant, reaching a height of about 36 inches.

September and October bloomers include the asters and goldenrods. The only limitation to these long flowering perennials is the preference of the grower. They range from twelve to fifteen inches to five to six feet and come in a wide variety of colors.

A few hardy bloomers not usually included in the wildflower gardens are considered pests. These include Bouncing Bet *Saponaria officinalis*, Feverfew *Chrysanthemum parthenium* and Ageratum. These are aliens, bloom profusely all summer and

produce many seeds. In order to enjoy their blooms and colors simply remove the seed heads as they form to prevent them from multiplying.



Only two of the lobelias are mentioned because they are fairly easy to grow. Cardinal Flower *Lobelia cardinalis* and Great Blue Lobelia *Lobelia siphilitica*. Blue Lobelias tolerate a dryer soil than Cardinal Flowers which prefer a moist area. The blue & red combine for a pleasing display of color.

These flowers mentioned will enable the wildflower gardener to have color from March through October or November. A garden for long flowering bloom.

SPECIAL EDITION

This **Special Edition** was printed to replace one issue of the Quarterly Newsletter. Perhaps it will answer some questions, provide help, give encouragement, generate interest in growing your own wildflowers.

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PETERSON PAGE NO.	COMMON NAME	DURATION	BLOOM TIME	COLOR	HEIGHT	SOIL	EXPOSURE	REMARKS
376	Alum Root	Perennial	May/June	Greenish or White	Ground cover flower 1-2 ft.	Average garden soil	Full to filtered	Attractive rosettes in winter.
112	Black-eyed Susan	Biennial shortlived	June/July	Yellow	1-2 ft.	Average well drained	Full Sun	A good source of cut flowers.
290	Bleeding Heart	Perennial	Apr./Sept.	Pink	1 1/2-2 feet	Dry to Moist	Light Shade	A must for wildflower gardens.
22	Blood Root	Perennial	Mar./Apr.	White	1 ft.	Well drained Soil	Shade	Every garden should have some.
322	Blue Bells	Perennial	April	Blue	1-1 1/2 ft.	Rich moist soil	Light Shade	A favorite plant - early bloomer.
366	Blue Cohosh	Perennial	April	Greenish Yellow	2 ft.	Rich moist soil	Full to filtered	Attractive large blue berries in Fall
326	Blue-eyed grass	Shortlived Perennial	dMay	Blue	1-1 1/2 ft.	Average garden soil	Full to filtered	Small light blue star-shaped flowers
28	Bowman's Root	Perennial	May	White	3 ft.	Dry or moist	Full to filtered	Makes a nice show with several plants.
216	Columbine (red)	Perennial	Apr./May	Red	1-3 ft.	Light well drained	Full to Light shade	Humming birds like. One of the earliest to bloom.
N.A.	Creeping Phlox	Perennial	Apr./May	Pink	Ground cover F. stalk 6 In.	Dry to moist	Filtered shade	An evergreen ground cover.
26	Cross Vine	Perennial	May	Red or Orange	Climbing Vine	Average garden soil	Full sun	Attractive high climbing evergreen vine.
84	Cut-leaved Toothwort	Perennial	Apr./May	White	1/2 1 ft.	Rich moist soil	Shade	Nice early spring flower.
314	Dwarf Crested Iris	Perennial	April	Blue, Violet	Ground cover	Rich well drained	Full Sun to	Attractive throughout the growing season.
64	Devil's-bit or Fairy Wand	Perennial	May/June	White	Flower stalk 4-18 Inches	Rich moist soil	Filtered shade	The plants are of two sexes.
226	False Dragonhead	Perennial	June/Sept	Rose or White	3 feet	Average garden soil	Full Sun	Spreads easily.
68	Foamflower	Perennial	Apr./May	White	6-12 Inches	Rich moist-soil	Shade	A favorite ground cover.
62	Galax	Perennial	June	White	Ground cover F. stalk 8-18In.	Acid moist soil	Shade	Evergreen ground cover.
218	Geranium, Wild	Perennial	May	Rose	1-2 ft.	Rich moist soil	Light shade	Requires little maintenance.
112	Green & Gold	Perennial	Apr./Oct.	Yellow	Ground cover	Fertile well-drained	Full to filtered	Outstanding and long blooming.
N.A.	Goats Beard	Perennial	June/July	White	5 ft.	Rich moist soil	Light shade	Beautiful large plant.
368	Jack-in-the-pulpit	Perennial	Apr./May	Green or Maroon	1-3 ft.	Rich moist or wet	Shade	Can change sex.
322	Jacob's ladder	Perennial	Apr./May	White or Blue	1 ft.	Average soil	Light shade	Nice foliage all summer.
182	Large flowered Bellwort	Perennial	Apr./May	Lemon Yellow	10-15 Inches	Humus-rich soil	Filtered Sun	Give ample room as plant becomes clump.
224	Liatris	Perennial	July/Sept	Lavender	8-30 Inches	Average well drained	Full Sun	Flowers bloom from top to bottom. Hardy and easy to cultivate.
288	Lilly, Blackberry	Perennial	July/Sept	Yellow or Orange	2-3 ft.	Average garden	Full Sun	Dried seed pods are nice in floral arrangements.
216	Lobelia, Cardinal	Perennial	Aug/Sept	Red	2-5 ft.	Average moist soil	Full sun to shade	Bright red, blooms for 1 month or longer.
342	Lobelia, Great	Perennial	Aug/Sept	Blue	2-5 ft.	Average moist soil	Full sun to shade	Nice grown with the Cardinal flower.
66	Mayflower, Canada	Perennial	May/July	White	2-6 Inches ground cover	Acid soil	Full sun to shade	Fruit a speckled red berry.
68	Miterwort, Bishop's Cap	Perennial	Apr/May	White	10-18 Inches	Rich soil	Shade	A charming, dainty plant.
N.A.	Nine bark	Shrub	June	White	4-10 ft.	Moist soil	Full sun Light shade	Shrub with beautiful bark.
N.A.	Penstemon	Shortlived Perennial	May/June	Purple	1 1/2 - 2 ft.	Light, well drained	Full sun to Partial shade	Reseeds readily - A lovely plant
188	Ragwort, Golden	Perennial	Apr/June	Yellow	1-2 ft.	Average garden soil	Full sun to Partial shade	Spreads freely but easy to control.
220	Shooting star	Perennial	Apr/May	White-Lavender	1 ft.	Average garden soil	Light shade	An unusually interesting native plant.
346	Skullcap	Perennial	May/June	Violet - blue	2 ft.	Slightly acid soil	Full sun to partial shade	Should be better known and grown.
182	Solomon's-seal	Perennial	Apr/May	Greenish white	1-3 ft.	Average to moist soil	Light-deep shade	Nice dark blue berries in the fall.
340	Southern hairbell	Perennial	July/Sept	Pale blue	1-3 ft.	Average to dry soil	Full sun	Covered with tiny blue bells.
314	Spiderwort	Perennial	May/June	Blue-Lavender	1-2 ft.	Average garden soil	Full sun to Light shade	One of most versatile & reliable plants.
116	Star Grass, Yellow	Perennial	June/Sept	Bright Yellow	6 inches	Dry acid soil	Full sun to Light shade	Star-like flowers June to Sept.
336	Summer Hustonia	Perennial	May/July	Light purple	20 Inches	Sandy to average soil	Full sun	A nice addition to wildflower garden.
18	Trillium	Perennial	Apr/May	White or red	1-1 1/2 ft.	Rich well drained	Shade	May be T. grandiflorum or T. erectum.
128	Trumpet Honeysuckle	Per-Vine	Apr/Sept	Yellow & Red	Climbing vine	Average garden soil	Full sun	Vine, hummingbirds love. Non-spreading.
336	Violet, Birdfoot	Perennial	Apr/May	Violet-Lavender	2/6 Inches	Sandy well drained	Full sun to filtered shade	A favorite among gardeners.
54	White Baneberry	Perennial	May/June	White	2 feet	Rich soil	Shade	Large china-white berries, purple spot.
240	Wild ginger	Perennial	Apr/May	Maroon	Ground cover	Rich moist soil	Shade	Deciduous, fast spreading ground cover.
138	Wood poppy	Perennial	Apr/June	Yellow	1 foot	Average garden soil	Full sun to Partial shade	A showy, deep yellow flower..

This Plant Guide was compiled for the June 14, 1986 BRC Plant Sale. It is included in this **Special Edition** for those who have asked for copies and for BRC Members who could not attend the sale.

SEEDS AND SEEDLINGS

THE EXCHANGE

Q. Could you offer some recommended media and handling techniques for the cultivation of native plant species?

A. RECOMMENDED MEDIUM FOR POTTING WILDFLOWER SEEDLINGS (from **North Carolina Wildflower Association Newsletter**).

- 4 parts Peat
- 2 parts Horticultural Grade Pine Bark
- 1 part Vermiculite
- 1 part Sand (be sure not to use sand from a beach area)

SEED FLAT MIXTURE FOR STARTING SEEDS OF WILDFLOWERS (from source listed above).

Equal parts of peat, sand and vermiculite. (Be certain that beach sand is not used.)

A light sifting of milled sphagnum moss is helpful in retarding damping off.

Collected rainwater (no salts) is best for both potted seedlings and seed flats.

TRANSPLANTING SEEDLINGS

1. Seedlings are ready to be transplanted when the second set of true leaves has developed.
2. When removing a seedling from the flat, avoid contact with the stem and roots. Grasp a leaf with one hand and with the other hand, pry under the seedling with a wooden label or popsickle stick. Loosen the roots and remove the plant. A thorough watering prior to transplanting will ease removal.
3. Generally, a 3-inch container is the next step for the seedling. Set the seedling into a hole large enough to accommodate the roots and at the same level at which the plant was growing in the seed flat. Gently firm the soil at the base of the seedling.
4. Tall, thin seedlings can be planted slightly deeper for stability.
5. Plants with 'fuzzy leaves', such as the Black-eyed Susan and Maryland Golden Aster, require a slight modification. Because the fine hair on the leaves can trap water and lead to leaf rot, seedlings should be slightly mounded to avoid contact with water and soil.
6. Seedlings will benefit from a weekly application of a general purpose fertilizer; applied at half-strength for several weeks after transplanting.
7. Seedlings are ready to be moved into the garden when a vigorous root system has developed and danger of frost is past.

TRANSPLANTING AND ESTABLISHING NEW PLANTS IN THE HOME GARDEN

1. Select the proper location for new plants. Consult the cultivation instructions for specifics.
2. Container material is best transplanted on a cloudy day or late in the afternoon on a clear day.
3. If transplanting cannot be carried out soon, protect plants from the sun and keep watered.
4. Transplants should go directly into prepared garden soil. This can consist of equal parts of soil and compost or leafmold.
5. A transplant should be planted at the same level as it was growing in the pot.
6. Many of the plants may be potbound. It is important to break up the root mass in order to allow the roots freedom to grow into their new environment.
7. Firm the soil around the plant, water thoroughly and mulch.
8. It is always a good idea to clip back some of the foliage to assist the plant in getting established.

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SEED & PLANT SOURCES

Several members of the BRC have ordered from the following nurseries and have been pleased with plants and seeds.

Park Seed (plants & seeds), Greenwood,
S.C. 29647-0001

Passiflora (seeds), Rt. 1, Box 190-A, Ger-
manton, N.C. 27019

The Country Garden (plants & seeds), Rt.
2, Crivitz, WI 54114

Clyde Robin Seed Co., Inc., P.O. Box 2855,
Castro Valley, CA 94546

Prairie Moon Nursery (plants & seeds), Rt.
3, Box 163, Winona, MN 55987

Natural Gardens (plants & seeds), 113
Jasper Lane, Oak Ridge, TN 37860

Thompson & Morgan (seeds), P.O. Box
1308, Jackson, N.J. 08527

The Little Valley Farm (plants & seeds),
RR1, Box 287, Richland Center, WI 53581

Orchid Gardens (plants), 6700 Splithand
Rd., Grand Rapids, MN 55747

Forest Farm, 990 Tetheran Rd., Williams,
OR 97544

Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery (plants), 2825
Cummings Rd., Medford, OR 97501

Prairie Nursery (plants), P.O. Box 365,
Westfield, WI 53964

Wildginger Woodlands, P.O. Box 1091,
Webster, N.Y. 14580

Woodlanders, Inc. (plants), 1128 Colleton
Ave., Aiken, S.C. 29801

We-Du Nurseries (plants), Rt. 5, Box 724,
Marion, N.C. 28752

McLaughlin's Seeds (seeds), P.O. Box 550,
Mead, WA 99021

Recommended Reading For Wildflowers

The following book list offers a few suggestions in 7 different groups of books. There are many more fine books for the choosing.

BOOKS ON GROWING WILDFLOWERS

The New Wildflowers and How to Grow Them: *Edwin Steffek*, Conservation guidelines, cultivation and identification of over 550 species.

Growing and Propagating Wildflowers: *Harry R. Phillips*, Excellent, well written - discusses easier plants to propagate.

The Wild Garden: *Violet Stevenson*, Color photos, excellent text.

Growing Woodland Plants: *Clarence & Eleanor Birdseye*, Easy to understand how-to-grow information.

North Carolina Native Plant Propagation Handbook: *North Carolina Wildflower Preservation Society*, How to gather and store seed, plant and cultivate.

Growing Wildflowers: A Gardner's Guide: *Marie Sperka*, Discusses all phases of wildflower growing.

Handbook of Wildflower Cultivation: *Kathryn Taylor and Stephen Hamblin*, Good easy to follow instructions.

Pioneering with Wild Flowers: *George D. Aiken*

Ferns to Know & Grow: *Gordon Foster*

Plant Propagation in Pictures: *Montague Free*

Landscaping with Wildflowers & Native Plants: *Ortho Books*, Good landscaping tips.

Wildflower Gardening: *Time Life Books*

IDENTIFICATION AND FIELD GUIDES

Field Guide to Wildflowers: *Roger Tory Peterson and Margaret McKenny*, Arranged by color form and detail to identify wildflowers.

Newcomb's Wildflower Guide: *Lawrence Newcomb*, Key system for identification of wildflowers, flowering shrubs and vines.

Flora of West Virginia: *P.D. Strausbaugh and Earl L. Care*, 4 volumes or buy 1 large all-in-one volume. A real must for reference.

An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada: *Nathaniel Lord Britton and Hon. Addison Brown*, Line drawings, excellent text.

Mushrooms of North America: *Orson K. Miller, Jr.*, Color photos, good text.

Fern Finder: *Anne C. & Barbara G. Hallowell*, Pocket size.

Ferns of Northeastern United States: *Farida A. Wiley*, Pocket size.

GOOD READING FOR WILDFLOWER ENTHUSIASTS

Gray's Lessons and Manual of Botany - The Elements of Botany for Beginners and for Schools: *Asa Gray*, Out of print but can be found in used book stores.

Wildflowers of Eastern America: *John E. Klimas & James A. Cunningham*, Color photos & short description.

Wildflowers of the Southeastern United States: *Wilbur H. Duncan & Leonard E. Foote*, Color photos with facts about growing habits, bloom period, folklore, medicinal uses & edibility.

FOR ORCHID LOVERS

Field Guide to Orchids of North America: *John G. Williams and Andrew E. Williams*, Color drawings with good descriptions.

Missouri Orchids: *Bill Summers*, Color photos & drawings. Lists Botanical names and variation of names, common name, bloom time, and description.

The native Orchids of the United States and Canada Excluding Florida: *Carlyle A. Luer*, A must for orchid identification.

FOR WINTER IDENTIFICATION

Weeds in Winter: *Lauren Brown*, Line drawings and description.

Pods: Wildflowers and Weeds in Thier Final Beauty: *Jane Embertson*, Color photos of plants from flower, to pod, to dried arrangements.

FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN POLLINATION

Bumblebee Economics: *Bernd Heinrich*, Studies energy, nest, flight and other aspects of life of the bumblebee.

How Plants are Pollinated: *Joan Elma Rahn*, Appreciate how insects, wind and rain pollinate and understand the wonders of plant growth.

Bees: Their Vision, Chemical Senses and Language: *Karl von Frisch*, Discusses sensory capacities and behavior patterns.

COFFEE TABLE WILDFLOWER BOOKS

Wildflowers: *Mary Ferguson & Richard Saunders*

A Countryman's Flowers: *Hal Borland*

The MacMillan Wild Flower Book: *Clarence Hylander*

All Color Book of Flowers: *Maira Savonius*

The Color Nature Library Wildflowers: *Jacqueline Seymour*