

A gardeners fun filled guide to planting blossoms

By Sharon Williams
Copley News Service

Some gardeners have all the luck.

Their roses win prizes, and their flower beds are always filled with color and heady fragrance, giving the neighborhood spring fever all year round.

They easily rattle off the names of 20 new varieties they just ordered from the seed catalogs, and have already mapped out their floral yard show for next season with color-coded precision.

You, on the other hand, are struggling to keep your one-and-only petunia plant perky.

What's their secret?

Any great gardener will tell you it's all in the timing. A lot of planning goes into creating a harmony of flowers that blossom at just the right time. That symphony, they'll say, can begin only after the novice understands the gardener's basic three: perennials, annuals and bulbs.

Perennials are to a garden as a classic blazer is to a wardrobe — they are mainstays that appear year after year. Sprouting from permanent roots in early spring and flowering the late spring, summer or autumn, perennials lie dormant for most of the winter,

only to bloom again the next season.

In most cases, bulbs fall into the perennial category, but what sets them apart is the "packaging." Rather than sprouting from seed, a bulb's bud lies in the heart of its swollen, underground stem and is surrounded by a food supply and a protective coating. It lies dormant through the winter months, blossoming in spring, summer and, in a few cases, fall.

Annuals, on the other hand, are much more fleeting, spending most of their short lives in bloom. Sprouting from seed, they bloom rapidly for several months, then die.

To keep blossoms going year-round, the best gardeners perform a delicate juggling act with their flowers, supplementing and replacing their perennials with annuals in borders for a non-stop kaleidoscope of color.

Of course, all three types of blossoms can stand on their own.

Known for their knock-'em-out colors, bulbs such as tulips and daffodils, for instance, often stand in the spotlight in rock gardens and containers.

Most gardeners choose early spring to late summer annuals and perennials, with their "second" season for winter annuals

and perennials running from August through October.

Spring-flowering bulbs, meanwhile, go in the ground during early fall, and summer-flowering varieties from mid- to late spring.

But there's more than seasonal succession involved in good gardening. It also takes an eye for placing the right flower in the right spot.

Some, for instance, thrive in sunlight, while others require shade. Many tolerate dry locations, but their counterparts demand heavy watering.

There also are those varieties that must be planted in hanging baskets, containers or alongside the tomatoes in the vegetable patch. And, in every situation, sizes and shapes must be combined with artistic, imaginative flair.

But details notwithstanding, flower gardening is more popular than ever, according to a recent Gallup survey, especially with those varieties that boast beauty, yet are easy to care for.

Following are a few foolproof flowers to sink your spade into:

to 30-inch range.

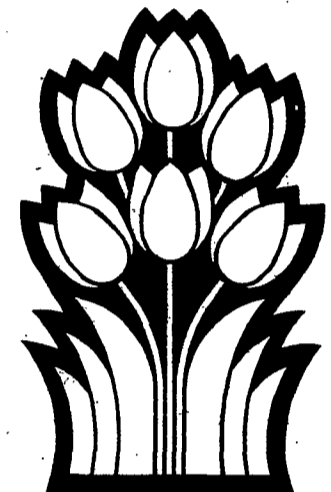
Daylily: A new flower opens every morning through this blossom's blooming period. These perennials are undemanding, reliable and almost indestructible.

Phlox: This perennial is cherished for its fragrance and long-lasting color, which can be white, pink, red, lavender or purple.

Salvia: The red spikes of this annual create a striking contrast with its dark green leaves.

Cosmos: Lacelike foliage and daisylike blossoms make this summer- and fall-blooming plant showy.

Lavender: Known for its fragrant purple flowers, lavender also offers attractive gray or grayish-green foliage.



Coreopsis: This daisylike flower is easy to grow in almost any garden. Most varieties fall in the 20-

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