

Essentials For A Beautiful Flower Bed

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Having a beautiful flower garden is something I have always thrived to have, seems like every time I get my garden looking good I move. I am hoping these plant “Essentials For A Beautiful Flower Bed,” will aid you in having the flower garden you desire.

To get started the decision of having annuals or perennials flowers needs to be made.

The Pros of Annuals:

- Annuals are easy plants for beginner gardening.
- Are widely available and easy to grow, just follow the simple planting & growing instructions.
- They are great bloomers, they do bloom their heads off all season.
- Annuals are great for where you want a lot of flowers.
- Annuals aid you in changing the look of your garden every year.
- Annuals are good for containers.
- Want flowers now? Annuals bloom right away.

The Cons of Annuals:

- They generally need more watering and fertilizing.
- And planting them every year can be a chore.

The Pros of Perennials:

- They come back year after year.
- They tend to need less care than annuals.
- They bloom for weeks
- Root system stays alive for years, even decades.

The Cons of Perennials

- They have a shorter bloom time.
- They may take a year or more to get established.
- May take a year or more to get established.



PLANT ESSENTIALS:

Plants are like people they have their own unique personality and like different things, water, sunlight and soil. Some plants like it hot and sunny and some like it cool and shady.

It is all an experiment, a trial and error, so relax and have fun with your flower garden. How much time do you want to spend gardening? Plants require care, so the size of your garden will determine how much time you want to be willing to work on producing those beautiful flowers, starting small and increasing the size as you go. So if you want to have those flowers you so enjoy use the, "Essentials For A Beautiful Flower Bed."

SUN : Like anything, humans, plants, animals they all take energy and sun is the great source of energy. Because plants need sun to grow, which many of them need 6 to 8 hours of sunlight, what plant you are planting where. Of course there are those plants that thrive in the shade, shade and part-shade plants will do best where they don't get hot afternoon sun.

TIP: Don't know how much sun you get in your yard, try this, one day spend time watching how much sun your chosen flower

space gets.

LOCATION: Of course location has much to do about the sun/shade element and which plants you pick to plant. Consider if you are planting in a pot or in an actual flower bed, both annuals and perennials can be planted in either. Perennials do very well in the flower bed as their roots continue to stay alive in the ground and especially in very cold climate, of course with the right care.

Zone: Know your planting ZONE, it is critical for some plants. <https://garden.org/nga/zipzone/> Your seed packets generally provide the zone planting information. I live in Zone 4, the winters can get very cold, sometimes down to 30 below zero, some perennials would not survive in those temperatures.

WATERING: Another essential for having a beautiful flower garden. You may need to water your plants regularly to keep those plants healthy and blooming! Watering your plants that are in container is critical because they dry out faster. How often to water? It depends, hotter and/or air pulls the moisture out of plants and soil quicker, so more watering is required.

AN EASY TEST: Put your finger in the soil, does it feel moist 2 to 3 inches down, then you are good! For container plants I always use those under the pot saucers, keeping them full then your plant can drink when it is thirsty!

Also depends on how often it rains and how humid the climate is. If your plants are looking wilted obviously they need a drink! Water slowly and deeply, watering in the early morning hours or in the cool of the evening.

NUTRIENTS: Plants need nutrients just like we do, to keep growing and stay healthy. Plants need nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, if the soil doesn't have enough of these needed nutrients you may need to add some manually. There are fertilizers you can buy that will add the needed nutrients to your plants. I have some common household products to enhance my plants, epsom salt and used coffee grounds add nutrients to any garden, flower or vegetable. Mulches help to keep weeds out and water in! There are all kinds of mulch, pine needles to bark chips. For perennials a long lasting mulch like bark chips is the best.

A FEW GOODIES:

- In northern climates annuals are best for color in containers, although there are annuals like zinnas, marigolds or nasturtium I have found work beautifully planted right in the garden.
- Spring is a good time to begin growing.
- Start planning before the snow melts.
- Fall is a good time to plant trees, shrubs, bulbs and some perennials.



Plant Ideas

PLANT IDEAS:

Shade Plants:

Annuals:

- Fushia
- Lobelia
- Impatients
- Coleus
- Begonia

Perennials:

- Astilbe
- Hosta
- Bleeding Hearts
- Foxgloves
- Columbine

Sunlight Plants:

Annuals:

- Cosmos
- Marigolds
- Petunia
- Geraniums
- Sunflowers
- Morning Glories

Perennials:

- Russian Sage
- Lamb's Ears
- Black-eyed Susans
- Phlox
- Pansies
- Daylillies

Ta-da you are set for enjoying a beautiful
flower garden!!

Why, When and How to Divide Flower Plants

Why, When and How to Divide Flower Plants



Why, When and How to Divide Flower Plants

I don't know about you but I love a beautiful flower garden, I really don't have a green thumb but I have found that following advice from those that do have that green thumb can aid you in having that beautiful flower garden. The "Why, When and How to Divide Flower Plants," hopefully will help you in producing a beautiful flower garden.

One reward about having a perennial flower garden is that most plants increase in size over the years, so after time some of your perennials will benefit being divided. Also you can save money by keeping your perennials healthy by dividing them.

One thing I have thought would be a great benefit is every one that had those perennial flower beds would share their divided plants with others, could surely give your community a beautiful face lift.



Roots, clumps and planting

The Why's to dividing your perennials:

- Keep them healthy. Dividing the large clumps every 3 to 4 years will prevent the plant from becoming unhealthy, clumps when they get large tend to die out in the middle. Clumps can become congested or roots get old and woody.
- Nutrients in your soil can become exhausted, therefore stunting growth, yellowish leaves or lack of bloom.
- Protect your perennials from fungal diseases and insect infestations.
- Overcrowded perennials often times have fewer or smaller flowers, so dividing the plants and giving them some space is like giving them a fresh breath of air.

Rejuvenate your aging plants and extend their life by dividing them.

- Some perennials are aggressive and can crowd out other plants, dividing these plants will keep them from becoming overwhelming to their neighbors.
- Plus one other great benefit is that dividing your plants will give you more flowers to plant in other places or to share with your family, friends or neighbors.

When to divide your perennials:

- You can divide most perennials any time from spring to fall, those are the best times.
- Dividing perennials can be stressful on your plants but they will recover better from the shock in cool, moist conditions. If you have to divide in the summer make sure they have plenty of moisture.
- One rule of thumb: perennials that flower between early spring and mid June are best divided in early fall. Perennials that flower after mid-June are best divided in the spring.
- Spring is the best time to divide your ornamental grasses, especially the fall flowering types.
- Daylilies can be divided any time but spring is the most suitable time.

How to divide those perennials:

- Dividing perennials can be a bit overwhelming, but follow a few general rules and you should do fine, making sure the plant roots are moist and cool.
- Dividing your plants with large enough clumps, too small clumps might not have the stamina to withstand the division process.
- When your plant shows signs of growth in the spring (inch or two of new shoots), dig up a large clump, as many as thick roots as possible.

- Dig all the way around, then pry the clump out of the ground, try to knock off any loose soil.
- Part the shoots, either by cutting them apart or some perennials can just be sort of pulled apart easily. Look closely at your clumps, seeing if they have a natural point where the clump can be easily separated. You may be able to divide your clumps in 3 or 4 sections, trying to keep them the diameter of your fist or larger.
- Each new division needs to have 2 or 3 new shoots and a good segment of healthy roots.

What to do once you have the divided roots:

- Plant the new divisions at the same depth that the old plant was growing.
- Water them well and keep the soil adequately moist for several weeks.

Now that you have learned the basics “Why, When and How to Divide Flower Plants,” return for the next post about dividing 4 of my favorite flower plants and some additions tips on what plants to divide and which not to divide and frequency of dividing plants.

Links to dividing flower plants:

<http://www.perennials.com/content/dividing-perennials-in-the-spring/>

<https://garden.org/learn/articles/view/1649/>

Want Beautiful Dahlias

Who doesn't want Beautiful Dahlias? Follow the steps below and you should have Beautiful Dahlias .

Dahlias what a beautiful flower, I never realized how many different types of Dahlias there are,

so many gorgeous ones, shapes and sizes. I surely want beautiful dahlias. Last year I purchased a Dahlia plant from my local greenhouse <http://blessingsgreenhouse.com> where I buy most of my vegetable and flower plants.



I did not realize what a dazzling flower dahlias are, I also did not know

that you can take the tuber from the plant and use it for next year's garden.

My Dahlia grew to be such a delightful plant, so I figured I would try another one this year, it had even

prettier flowers than last year's Dahlia.



This year's Dahlia

This year's Dahlia didn't get as big as last years but I really like the flowers on this year's Dahlia then last years.

They still both graced my front flower bed with Dahlia elegance, I can't wait until next spring when I can plant more beautiful dahlias.

Now I want to share a number of tips on how to plant, care and winter storage for Dahlias. We can look forward to some beautiful flowers again in the next flowering season.

Dahlia are colorful spiky flowers the normally bloom midsummer to first frost. They range in different colors and sizes, there are Dahlias that are as large as 10 inches in diameter and most of the Dahia plants grow to be 4 to 5 feet tall.

Planting:

- Don't plant your dahlias before the ground has warmed up to 55-60 degrees, about the same time you would plant your tomato plants.
- Plant your dahlias where they will receive full sun, they bloom better when they have 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight, morning sunlight is a delight to these gorgeous flowers. In warmer climates morning sun and afternoon shade works well for dahlias.
- Space your dahlias 18" – 24" apart, this spacing will give a fuller, more grown look together.
- Plant in well-drained soil, with a PH level 6.5 to 7.0,

slightly acidic and if you have a heavy soil you can add some sand or peat moss, gives it better drainage. If you have just had a heavy rain wait to plant your dahlias, they don't like soggy soil. If your soil seems depleted it would be good to either till in some compost or add compost to the planting hole.

- The planting hole should be a little larger than the root ball/tubers. You can add some peat moss or bonemeal to the hole when planting.
- **Don't** plant tubers that look wrinkled or rotten. Plant with the points or eyes facing up, 6 to 8 inches deep, crowns just above the soil level.
- **Do not** water your tubers when you plant them, wait until you see sprouts appear. After the dahlias are established you can give them a deep watering 2 to 3 times a week.
- **Do not** cover the new plantings with mulch or bark, will keep the soil too moist.

Care:

- Dahlias may need extra support. Tall and large dahlias can be supported with stakes 5 to 6 feet tall around the plants as they grow.
- Fertilize your plants after sprouting, they will bloom from mid-summer until early Autumn. Dahlias require low nitrogen fertilizers, so using a 5-10-10 ratio or 10-20-20. Don't over fertilize otherwise you will risk having small blooms or no blooms at all.
- Pinch the center shoot just above the 3rd set of leaves on the larger dahlias, but on the smaller varieties, pinch above the 4th or 5th set of leaves (height of 12-18" in height). The pinching will give you a bushier dahlia, stronger and more blooms.
- Cutting your flowers, the more you cut the more they bloom. You can enjoy these beauties indoors too, cut a long stem even if it means having 2 buds in your cut

stem and once promotes healthier growth, a more manageable plant and more blooms.

Now that we know how to plant and care for Dahlias so we have a beautiful show of flowers in our flower bed, we can wait for that healthy plant to reveal the blooms, which can take 90 days for the small/medium size and up to 120 days for the larger dahlias to bloom, that is for tubers. Of course if you buy your smaller plants at a greenhouse or nursery as I did they will bloom within a short time and you will enjoy them most of the summer, (the pictures of the plants above are from the greenhouse).

I wanted to share a couple of pictures of Dahlias that my niece had grown this summer, aren't they just gorgeous, gave me inspiration to plant more of dahlias next year. After doing all the research I have done on planting and care for dahlias I am looking forward to have some very beautiful healthy plants.



The following link will give instructions on how to store your dahlia tubers for winter.

GardeningStepbyStep: <http://gardeningstepbystep.com/taking-care-of-dahlias/>

