

# Perennials



## Prince Edward County

### A Little Background

There are too many to list here. The things you should know about your piece of "Heaven on Earth" is the climate zone, the type of soil you are trying to plant, the amount of light it receives, the amount of moisture you can expect to fall from the sky, and how much time and effort you

wish to expend.

Perennial plants come back year after year. Sometimes they expire after 4 or 5 years and sometimes they will be there for generations. We will consider just the ones that have soft stems and die back when they have bloomed and reproduced. To increase your supply of perennials the best

procedure is division. Look for offshoots around the perimeter of the plant. Sever with a sharp knife. Seeds may not come true to the plants you have. It is recommended that you buy fresh seeds and start them indoors on top of the refrigerator. Plant outside after frost danger has past in the spring.

### Climate Zone & Soil Type

If you live in the County, consider your garden Zone 5 in Canada. There may be places on your property that are sheltered and warm, thus creating a microclimate that will accept more delicate specimens from Zone 6 or the

wind from the lake may dictate a colder Zone 4. Zone 5 is usually safe.

In towns the soil will have been amended, farmed, tilled over many years. Go ahead. Till a bit, amend a bit with manure or compost, fertilize a bit or not, and plant anything you like. On country

property find out what the farmers have planted--they know from experience. If it is hay assume that the subsoil is clay or bedrock. You will need to amend the soil or build raised beds. If you live on a sand dune you must select drought tolerant plants no matter how much water you are willing to share.

### Light & Moisture

Most perennials prefer some shade during the day. Some thrive on it and can be planted

under deciduous trees and at the edge of woodlots. Remember there is little air pollution in the

County, so the sun is strong.

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### Light & Moisture con't

Except for periods of a month or more with no rain you should not have to water an ESTABLISHED

perennial bed. New plants with shallow roots should be watched for drooping. Add

water from a rain barrel if possible since well water is usually too cold. If you have a water softener, do not use tap water as it can contain too much salt.

### A Little Time & Effort

Perennials need some care. You should cultivate a little around each plant in the spring, pull out weeds and intruders, remove dead material to be composted or hauled off, and mulch to conserve moisture.

Perennials will only bloom for about 2 weeks each year. Some spectaculars will bloom for up to 6 weeks but don't count on this happening. The flowers are often amazing for size, or scent, or attraction of

birds and butterflies. With this in mind plant for succession of blooming periods and foliage attractiveness.

*—submitted by Joyce Young*

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