



‘Top’ Spring Flowering Perennial Plants

From Pat Curran
CCE Tompkins County

‘Easy’ defined: relatively long-lived and drought-resistant, don’t need frequent division, disease/pest resistant, staking not essential, winter-hardy, not fussy about soil if well-drained, don’t spread too much, preferably bloom for several weeks, good foliage quality.

Perennials for Sun

- | | <u>Comments</u> |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| • Iberis sempervirens ‘Autumn Snow’ | evergreen candytuft, petite shrub |
| • Paeonia ‘Seashell’, peony | watch out for botrytis, a fungal disease |
| • Pulsatilla vulgaris, pasque flower | flowers & seedheads; needs good drainage |

Perennials for Light Shade

- | | <u>Comments</u> |
|--|---|
| • Brunnera macrophylla ‘Jack Frost,’ ‘Looking Glass’ | deer-resistant hosta substitute |
| • Dicentra eximia, fringed bleeding heart | long-blooming; may spread |
| • Dicentra spectabilis, old-fashioned bleeding heart | showy; goes dormant in August |
| • Doronicum orientale, leopard’s bane | showy yellow daisy; may go dormant |
| • Helleborus x hybridus, Lenten rose | deer-resistant early bloomer |
| • Lathyrus vernus, spring vetchling | showy & early; good drainage |
| • Primula denticulata, drumstick primrose | prefers moist partial shade |
| • Pulmonaria ‘Trevi Fountain’, lungwort | showy; mildew-resistant variegated foliage |
| • Sanguinaria canadensis, bloodroot | durable; single-flower spread by seed; may go dormant Aug |
| • Smilacina racemosa, false Solomon seal | showy flowers and red fruit |

Reference:

Herbaceous Perennial Plants, Third Edition, by Allan M. Armitage
Perennials for American Gardens by Ruth Rogers Clausen and Nicolas H. Ekstrom
The Well-Tended Perennial Garden: Planting & Pruning Techniques, by Tracy DiSabato-Aust

Learn more:

Cornell Bluegrass Lane perennial research:
http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/cornell_herbaceous/
Missouri Botanic Garden Plant Finder (over 6800 plants):
<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/plantfinder/plantfindersearch.aspx>
Garden Guidance
www.gardening.cornell.edu

Published: August 2016

Author: Pat Curran – Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County