G91-1015 Perennials

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Perennials

This NebGuide describes perennial flowers that will withstand Nebraska's winters outdoors and that will bloom within the growing season.

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Anne M. Streich, Extension Horticulturist-Outreach Programs

Herbaceous perennials normally live for many years under local growing conditions, dying back to the ground each winter. They vary in height, leaf texture and flower color, and are the backbone of the flower garden for many home gardeners.

The following is a list of perennials best adapted to Nebraska's broad range of growing conditions. No single list of plant materials is suitable for every garden, however, and deciding which plants to use depends on personal taste.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMON NAME</th>
<th>BOTANICAL NAME</th>
<th>SITE</th>
<th>HEIGHT &amp; FORM</th>
<th>FLOWER COLOR</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anemone, Japanese</td>
<td>Anemone vitifolia 'Robustissima'</td>
<td>Sun, partial shade</td>
<td>30 in. high</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Fall blooming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artemisia</td>
<td>Artemisia spp.</td>
<td>Sun; tolerates dry conditions; low nitrogen soils</td>
<td>Rhizomatous; 6 to 12 in. high; spreads to 12 or more inches</td>
<td>Flowers are not ornamental</td>
<td>Silvery-gray, finely cut foliage. Foliage used in fresh flower arrangements. Several other native species. Many cultivars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aster, Fendler's</td>
<td>Aster fendleri</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>4 - 12 in.</td>
<td>Lavender</td>
<td>Native plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astilbe</td>
<td>Astilbe spp.</td>
<td>Part shade; prefers cool, moist</td>
<td>6 in. - 3 ft.</td>
<td>White, pink, red</td>
<td>Many fine cultivars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Name</td>
<td>Scientific Name</td>
<td>Conditions</td>
<td>Height/Size</td>
<td>Flower Color</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby's Breath</td>
<td><em>Gypsophila paniculata</em></td>
<td>Sun; moist soil</td>
<td>Fine textured; 1 1/2 - 3 ft. high, 4 ft. across; has stout rhizomes.</td>
<td>White, pink</td>
<td>Fresh and dried flower arrangements. Double flowering forms are usually grafted; place graft union 1 in. under soil. Takes two years to become established. Many useful cultivars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balloon Flower</td>
<td><em>Platycodon grandiflorus</em> cv. 'Mariesii' cv. 'Shell pink'</td>
<td>Sun; partial shade; light; moist, well-drained soil with high organic matter</td>
<td>2 - 3 ft. high, 2 ft. wide</td>
<td>Blue, white, pink</td>
<td>Double flowering forms available. Late to emerge in spring; mark location to avoid injury from cultivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basket-of-Gold</td>
<td><em>Aurinia saxatilis</em></td>
<td>Sun; partial shade; dry soil, best in low nitrogen soils</td>
<td>6 - 12 in., prostrate</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Silvery-gray foliage. Early spring flowering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bearded Iris</td>
<td><em>Iris</em> spp.</td>
<td>Sun; average soil</td>
<td>2 - 3 ft. high</td>
<td>Broad color range</td>
<td>Many cultivars available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee Balm</td>
<td><em>Monarda didyma</em></td>
<td>Sun; partial shade; somewhat moist, well-drained, high organic soil</td>
<td>3 - 4 ft. high</td>
<td>Purple, red and pink combinations, salmon</td>
<td>Minty fragrance. Can become invasive in moist sites. Many cultivars; grow cultivars rather than species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellflower</td>
<td>Campanula persicifolia</td>
<td>Sun to semi-shade; fertile soil</td>
<td>Erect, leafy clump; 2 ft.</td>
<td>Deep blue to white</td>
<td>Many useful species and cultivars. Flowers for fresh arrangements. Many useful cultivars available.</td>
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<tr>
<td>--Peach-leaved</td>
<td>Campanula glomerata</td>
<td>Sun to semi-shade; moderate fertility</td>
<td>Spreads by rhizomes; 1 - 3 ft.; coarse erect growth</td>
<td>Deep blue to white</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Clustered</td>
<td>Bergenia cordifolia</td>
<td>Sun to shade</td>
<td>12 in. high</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Glossy green foliage; burgundy winter color. Best in winter shade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bergenia</td>
<td>Belamcanda chinensis</td>
<td>Sun; fertile, sandy soil</td>
<td>Clump forming rhizomes; 2 - 3 ft. high; long narrow foliage-resembles German Iris.</td>
<td>Deep orange, red dotted</td>
<td>Fresh flower arrangements; seed clusters dried for flower arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackberry Lily</td>
<td>Gaillardia x grandiflora</td>
<td>Sun; requires good air circulation; light soil; avoid high nitrogen soil</td>
<td>6 in. - 3 ft. high; high; erect or sprawling branches.</td>
<td>Yellow or red</td>
<td>Easy to grow. Generally short-lived.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket Flower</td>
<td>Liatris spicata</td>
<td>Sun to partial shade; sandy fertile soil</td>
<td>2 - 3 ft. high; stiff, erect growth form</td>
<td>Rosy purple</td>
<td>Fresh flower arrangements. Color accent in perennial borders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Name</td>
<td>Scientific Name</td>
<td>Sunlight Required</td>
<td>Flowering Season</td>
<td>Height/Clump Size</td>
<td>Flower Color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bleeding Heart</td>
<td><em>Dicentra eximia</em></td>
<td>Partial shade to sun</td>
<td>All seasons</td>
<td>12 - 15 in. high clump</td>
<td>Pink, purple or white; gray-blue foliage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue False Indigo</td>
<td><em>Baptisia australis</em></td>
<td>Sun; partial shade</td>
<td>All seasons</td>
<td>Erect, forms large clumps; 3 - 4 ft. high, 2 - 3 ft. wide</td>
<td>Indigo blue, blue-green foliage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boltonia</td>
<td><em>Boltonia asteroides</em></td>
<td>Sun, partial shade</td>
<td>All seasons</td>
<td>Up to 4 ft. high</td>
<td>White, pink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfly Milkweed</td>
<td><em>Asclepias tuberosa</em></td>
<td>Sun; sandy loam; dry location</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Broadly domed bushy clump; 1 1/2 - 3 ft. high</td>
<td>Bright orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbine</td>
<td><em>Aquilegia spp.</em></td>
<td>Sun or light shade; cool, moist soil</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>1 1/2 - 3 ft.; large clumps; delicate lacy foliage</td>
<td>Broad color range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Species</td>
<td>Scientific Name</td>
<td>Sunlight</td>
<td>Height</td>
<td>Flower Color</td>
<td>Description</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coneflower, Grayhead Prairie</td>
<td><em>Ratibida pinnata</em></td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>4 - 5 ft., 2 ft. wide</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Drooping petals; native plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coneflower, Purple Prairie</td>
<td><em>Echinacea purpurea</em></td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>2 - 3 ft. high</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Coarse texture; native plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coral Bells</td>
<td><em>Heuchera sanguinea</em></td>
<td>Full sun to filtered shade; fertile soil high in organic matter</td>
<td>8 - 10 in.; flower scapes to 24 in.</td>
<td>White, red and shades of red</td>
<td>Fillers in bouquets. Susceptible to crown rot. Remove dried flowers to reduce infection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coreopsis</td>
<td><em>Coreopsis lanceolata</em></td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>2 - 3 ft.</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Cultivars: 'Early Sunrise', 'Sunray'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crane's Bill</td>
<td><em>Geranium spp.</em></td>
<td>Sun to partial shade; tolerates dry, less fertile soil</td>
<td>12 - 18 in. high; thick ascending stems</td>
<td>Lilac, blue, magenta, white, purple</td>
<td>Nearly indestructible; spreads excessively on high nitrogen soils. Several ornamental species and cultivars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daylily</td>
<td><em>Hemerocallis spp.</em></td>
<td>Sun to partial shade in afternoon; medium heavy loam</td>
<td>Forms large clumps; clumps; 18 in. to 5 ft. high</td>
<td>Broad color range</td>
<td>Tolerates neglect. Several species; hundreds of useful cultivars.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dianthus</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dianthus spp.</strong></td>
<td>Sun; rich, slightly alkaline soil requires good air circulation</td>
<td>Densely tufted; 6 - 15 in. high; trailing growth habit; creeping rhizomes</td>
<td>Deep pink, rarely white or red</td>
<td>Fragrant flowers; many cultivars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>False Sun Flower</strong></td>
<td><strong>Heliopsis helianthoides</strong></td>
<td>Sun or partial shade; high organic matter</td>
<td>3 - 5 ft. high; erect stems; clump former</td>
<td>Yellow-orange</td>
<td>Many available cultivars that are useful in dry sites. Easy to grow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gaura</strong></td>
<td><strong>Gaura lindheimeri</strong></td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>3 ft., 2 ft. wide</td>
<td>White, pink, rose</td>
<td>Flowers open white, deepen to rose; native plant; may need stakes; Cultivars: 'Siskiyou Pink', 'Corrie's Gold'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goatsbeard</strong></td>
<td><strong>Aruncus dioicus</strong></td>
<td>Shade</td>
<td>2 - 4 ft. high</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Showy white panicles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hardy Chrysanthemum</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chrysanthemum morifolium</strong></td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>9 in. to 3 ft. or more in height</td>
<td>Broad color range</td>
<td>Highly variable in height, plant and flower form. Can readily transplant in full flower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Name</td>
<td>Scientific Name</td>
<td>Light Requirements</td>
<td>Height</td>
<td>Flower Color</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hardy Ice Plant</td>
<td><em>Delosperma congestum</em></td>
<td>Sun, afternoon shade</td>
<td>2 in., spreads 30 in.</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Succulent leaves turn bright red in winter; Cultivar: 'Gold Nugget'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosta</td>
<td><em>Hosta</em></td>
<td>Partial shade to shade</td>
<td>6 in. to 3 ft. high</td>
<td>White, lavender</td>
<td>Many cultivars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lady's Mantle</td>
<td><em>Alchemilla mollis</em></td>
<td>Part shade; tolerates sun with moist conditions</td>
<td>12 in. high; rounded form</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Beautiful foliage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead Plant</td>
<td><em>Amorpha canescens</em></td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>3 ft., dense</td>
<td>Lavender-blue</td>
<td>Dense, white hairy leaflets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri Primrose</td>
<td><em>Oenothera missouriensis</em></td>
<td>Sun; tolerates dry conditions</td>
<td>12 in. high</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Large flowers, native plant, sprawling growth habit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Aster</td>
<td><em>Aster novi-belgii</em></td>
<td>Sun; moist, fertile soil</td>
<td>Rhizomatous; varies from small and slender to large and stout 1 1/2 - 3 ft.</td>
<td>Broad color range</td>
<td>Requires division each year; subject to rust, Aster yellows and mildew. Hundreds of cultivars and several other useful species and hybrids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Name</td>
<td>Scientific Name</td>
<td>Sunlight Requirements</td>
<td>Soil Conditions</td>
<td>Height</td>
<td>Flower Color</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriental Poppy</td>
<td><em>Papaver orientale</em></td>
<td>Sun; fertile, well-drained soil</td>
<td>3 - 4 ft.</td>
<td>Orange, pink, salmon, white</td>
<td>Foliage dies back during summer. Numerous cultivars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painted Daisy</td>
<td><em>Chrysanthemum coccineum</em></td>
<td>Sun; soil with organic matter; fertile soil</td>
<td>2 - 3 ft.; upright, long stems</td>
<td>Pink, red or white; single or double</td>
<td>Aphids may be a problem. Excellent cut flowers. Many useful cultivars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penstemon</td>
<td><em>Penstemon spp.</em></td>
<td>Sun; prefers well drained conditions</td>
<td>1 1/2 - 3 ft.</td>
<td>Broad color range</td>
<td>Neat foliage, often glossy, somewhat evergreen. Cultivars: 'Husker Red', 'Prairie Splendor'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peony</td>
<td><em>Paeonia lactiflora</em></td>
<td>Sun to partial shade; deep, rich, drained soil; high organic matter; protect from wind</td>
<td>2 - 3 ft. high; rhizomatous</td>
<td>Broad color range</td>
<td>Hundreds of cultivars; many flower forms from singles to doubles. Very popular perennial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perennial Flax</td>
<td><em>Linum perenne</em></td>
<td>Sun; light, well-drained, moist and fertile soil</td>
<td>1 - 2 1/2 ft. high; gracefully arching stems</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Not suitable for cut flowers. Other species of Linum make valuable garden plants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitcher's Sage</td>
<td><em>Salvia azurea</em></td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>3 - 4 ft., 2 ft. wide</td>
<td>Blue-violet</td>
<td>Native plant; Cultivar: 'Nekan', 'Grandiflora'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Ragwort</td>
<td><em>Senecio plattenensis</em></td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>16 - 18 in.</td>
<td>Yellow, orange center</td>
<td>Basal leaves have maroon undersides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple Poppy-mallow</td>
<td><em>Callirhoe involucrata</em></td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>18 in.</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Native groundcover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Name</td>
<td>Scientific Name</td>
<td>Sun/Light Requirements</td>
<td>Height</td>
<td>Flower Color</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rudbeckia, Goldstrum</td>
<td><em>Rudbeckia fulgida</em> 'Goldsturm'</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>24 in. high</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Compact, long-blooming form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Sage</td>
<td><em>Perovskia atriplicifolia</em></td>
<td>Sun; tolerates dry conditions</td>
<td>3 - 5 ft. high</td>
<td>Lavender</td>
<td>Sub-shrub form with silver gray foliage; no pests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedum</td>
<td><em>Sedum</em> spp.</td>
<td>Sun to light shade; drought tolerant</td>
<td>4 - 24 in. high</td>
<td>Pink, white, red, yellow</td>
<td>Good cut flower. Cultivars bearing different flower colors available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shasta Daisy</td>
<td><em>Chrysanthemum maximum</em></td>
<td>Sun to partial shade for double flowering forms</td>
<td>2 - 4 ft. high from a rosette</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Good cut flower; many cultivars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snakeroot, Black</td>
<td><em>Cimicifuga racemosa</em></td>
<td>Partial shade to shade</td>
<td>2 - 3 ft. high</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Handsome, broad leaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sneezeweed</td>
<td><em>Helenium autumnale</em></td>
<td>Sun; moist soil; moderate fertility; high organic matter</td>
<td>2 - 4 ft. high; rank growth</td>
<td>Yellow, reddish-brown, crimson</td>
<td>Late summer bloom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiderwort</td>
<td><em>Tradescantia</em> spp.</td>
<td>Shade or sun</td>
<td>1 1/2 - 2 ft. high</td>
<td>White, blue or rose</td>
<td>Easy to grow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statice, German</td>
<td><em>Goniolimon tatarica</em></td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>18 in. high</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>For dried arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statice, Sea Lavendar</td>
<td><em>Limonium latifolium</em></td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>18 - 30 in. high; rounded form</td>
<td>Lavender</td>
<td>Open, light texture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threadleaf Coreopsis</td>
<td><em>Coreopsis</em></td>
<td>Sun; moist,</td>
<td>Clump</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Popular.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Name</td>
<td>Scientific Name</td>
<td>Sunlight Requirement</td>
<td>Soil Type</td>
<td>Height</td>
<td>Flower Colors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veronica, Speedwell</td>
<td><em>Veronica</em> spp.</td>
<td>Sun to partial shade</td>
<td>Fertile soil</td>
<td>2 - 4 ft. high</td>
<td>Blue, white, red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarrow</td>
<td><em>Achillea millefolium</em></td>
<td>Sun; dry soil</td>
<td>Best in low nitrogen soils</td>
<td>18 - 30 in. high; stiff erect stems</td>
<td>Red, cream, yellow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>