

# Favorite Plants

The best of the best perennials, trees and shrubs

## I. The basic elements of "best"

**If it's not the right for the site, it simply cannot be great.**

Given: If it impressed you in photo, description or sight, it's *healthy*.

**Seasonal color: Wonderful to see but it's just one of many landscape features.**

Flower color lasts only 1 to 4 weeks.

Long-blooming species may add 2 - 3 weeks, usually require more care.

A repeat blooming plant's 2nd show is no match for its main season.

Non-plant features can shine, or distract

**So: Grant the flower power but make the leaf chief. Don't stint on other tints!**

All greens are not equal! Their differences are most apparent in combination.

Variegated and colorful-foliage varieties carry the summer show.

Spring leaf-out and fall change of color: As long lasting and predictable as bloom.

Seeds and berries can be spectacular.

Evergreens fill winter, our longest season of interest.

Leaf size and form play an important role in combinations.

**Plant form / habit/ shape: More powerful and enduring than color alone.**

Even at dusk and dawn, the outlines show -- and glow.

Spires/ columns/ pyramidal forms arrest attention.

Don't overdo them.

Mounded, spreading/ vase and carpet forms give flow and stability.

Some forms neat, regular; others more irregular.

If you prune, enhance the natural shape, don't fight it.

Distinct differences in plant height adds drama to a combination of shapes.

Space is often essential for showcasing plant form. Don't crowd!

**Textural combinations give a landscape deep, rich dimension.**

Texture is the visual pattern of light and shadow on the surface and outline of an object. Put on your black-and-white glasses to see texture.

Coarse texture is bold pattern, large distinct light and dark areas. Polka dots!

Fine texture is a close weave, subtle light-dark pattern. Tweed!

Medium texture is somewhere between coarsest and finest companion items.

Texture is always relative. Hosta may be coarse until bigleaf magnolia added.

Texture may differ between leafy and leafless seasons.

**Where to gather ideas, beyond today's presentation:**

Resources that list plants by site or provide detailed info about cultural needs --

*Native Trees, Shrubs & Vines for Urban & Rural America*, Gary Hightshoe

*Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, Michael Dirr

*Landscape Plants for Eastern North America*, Harrison Flint

*Perennials and Their Garden Habitat*, Richard Hansen & Friedrich Stahl

**Favorite Plants, best of the best for your garden**, Page 1

© 2009, Janet Macunovich & Steven Nikkila

248-681-7850, JMaxGarden@aol.com questions or free weekly newsletter

*Perennial Reference Guide*, Karleen Shafer & Nicole Lloyd Stipes Publ. 2007  
The Specialty Growers Catalog!

## II. Building a great combo.

**"Best" plants are under our noses. Start with one suited to the site. Build on that!**

Yew, crabapple, burning bush, dwarf spirea, arborvitae... they're common for good reason! So don't start from scratch, build on existing steady-eddy's.

Step one, fill in the blanks for plant number one (\_\_\_\_\_):

- Get specific about its colors and times of --  
 Bloom \_\_\_\_\_  
 Leaf-out or emergence of new greenery \_\_\_\_\_  
 Summer leaf color \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fall leaf color \_\_\_\_\_  
 Winter leaf color \_\_\_\_\_  
 Berries / seed pods \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bark color \_\_\_\_\_
  
- State its natural or gardener-enforced shape (\_\_\_\_\_)
   
And its size (be realistic!) (ht. \_\_\_\_\_ width \_\_\_\_\_)
  
- Determine its texture, relative to most plants (\_\_\_\_\_)

Step two, pick a companion suited to the same site (\_\_\_\_\_):

Identify its other characteristics (same as for plant #1)

Assess the two plants' compatibilities.

Figure how many of each is necessary for the two to be equal in mass or one to be star, other to be chorus line.

Step three, pick one or two more companions for that site (\_\_\_\_\_):

Identify its/their other characteristics (as for plant #1)

Assess how this/these plants' will impact the 1-2 combination.

Figure how many of each is necessary for these additional plants to be added as chorus line members.

Step four, note the seasonal gaps, if any.

	Win	Mar	Apr	May	Jn	Jl	Aug	Sept	Oct/Nov
Plant 1 _____									
Plant 2 _____									
Plant 3 _____									
Plant 4 _____									

Make it a priority to fill those gaps in your next combo.

### III. Plants and combinations you can try, grouped by site.

(\* = perennial/groundcover)

Sunny, part shady, shady, dry, soggy and sites with specially tough conditions

#### **Sunny, moist, well-drained plants and combinations**

Clarifying terms:

- "Sunny" is a minimum of 6 hours direct sun each growing-season day.
- "Moist, well-drained" is where upper 18 inches of soil can hold moisture for at least several days but all excess water drains away in just 12-20 hours.

Consider these combos (common "starter" plants underlined):

- Sugar maple, red barberry, & dwarf golden ninebark (*Acer saccharum*, *Berberis thunbergii* varieties, *Physocarpus opulifolius* varieties)
- Yellowwood tree, dwarf burning bush, bluestar & \*sea kale (*Cladrastis kentuckea*, *Euonymus a. compacta*, *Amsonia tabernaemontana*, \**Crambe maritima*)
- Seven son shrub, dwarf white pine, bridalwreath spirea and fall stonecrop (*Heptacodium miconioides*, *Pinus strobus nana*, *Spiraea prunifolia*, \**Sedum* 'Autumn Joy')
- Sargent viburnum, dwarf blue Pfitzer juniper & \*cranesbill (*Viburnum sargentii* 'Onondaga', *Juniperus pf. glauca*, *Geranium* 'Rozanne' or \**G. macrorrhizum*)

Look into these individuals to add to your own singlets and one-two combos:

For color beyond flower:

- Katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*; *C. magnificum*)
- Hinoki & Alaska falsecypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa* varieties, *C. nootkatensis*)
- Dwarf *Spiraea x bumalda* varieties ('Gold Flame', 'Gold Mound', 'Crispa')
- Japanese beautyberry (*Callicarpa japonica*)
- \*Husker Red beardtongue (*Penstemon* 'Husker Red')

For great or unusual form:

- Sunkist arborvitae (*Thuja* 'Sunkist')
- Doublefile viburnum (*V. plicatum tomentosum*)
- \*Purple bush clover (*Lespedeza thunbergii*)
- \*Big betony (*Stachys macrantha*)

As textural wonders:

- Japanese aralia tree (*Aralia elata*)
- Bluestar juniper (*J. squamata* 'Blue Star')
- \*Threadleaf amsonia (*Amsonia* spp., esp. *A. ciliata*)
- \*Stonecrop *Sedum* 'Vera Jameson'

## Part-shade, moist, well-drained plants and combinations

Clarifying terms:

"Part shade" (aka "part sun") is between 4 and 6 hours of direct sun each day

Consider these combos:

- Green laceleaf Japanese maple, boxwood, \*bunchberry & \*foamflower  
(*Acer palmatum dissectum* 'Viridis', *Buxus koreana* 'Winter Gem',  
\**Cornus canadensis*, *Tiarella cordifolia*)
- Paperbark maple, dwarf fothergilla & \*Siberian iris (*Acer griseum*,  
*Fothergilla gardenii*, \**Iris sibirica*)
- Beech, spring witchhazel, dwarf Oregon grapeholly, \*Japanese painted fern  
& \*winter aconite (*Fagus* sp., *Hamamelis x mollis* or *H. vernalis*, *Mahonia*  
*aquifolium compactum*, \**Athyrium* g. 'Pictum' & \**Eranthis hyemalis*)
- Ginkgo, Ural false spirea, \*Sugar & Cream hostas and \*English bluebells  
(*Ginkgo biloba*, *Sorbaria sorbifolia*, \*hosta S&C, \**Campanulata hyacinthoides*)

Look into these individuals to add to your own singlets and one-two combos:

- For color beyond flower:
  - Burkwood viburnum (*V. x burkwoodii*)
  - Chokeberry, red and purplefruit (*Aronia arbutifolia* & *A. x prunifolia*)
  - Cornelian cherry (*Cornus mas*)
  - Eastern wahoo (*Euonymus atropurpureus*)
  - Franklinia (*F. alatamaha*)
  - Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.)
  - Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*)
  - Stewartia (*S. pseudocamellia*, *S. ovata*)
  - Summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia*)
  - Three-flower maple (*Acer triflorum*)
  - (\*Variegated) masterwort (*Astrantia* varieties)
  - White fir (*Abies concolor*)
- For great or unusual form:
  - Birdsnest spruce (*Picea abies* 'Nidiformis', other small mounded cultivars)
  - Spring witchhazel (*Hamamelis vernalis* & *H. x mollis*)
  - \*Fringecups (*Tellima grandiflora*)
  - \*Turtlehead (*Chelone* spp.)
- As textural wonders:
  - \*Dwarf goatsbeard (*Aruncus aethusifolius*)
  - Dwarf hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis* cultivars)
  - Elderberry (*Sambucus* spp.)
  - Leatherleaf viburnum (*V. rhytidophylloides*)
  - \*'Painter's Palette' tovara (*Polygonum*-, *Fallopia*-, or *Persicaria* 'P.P')
  - Sweetbay magnolia (*M. virginiana*)

## Shady, moist, well-drained plants and combinations

Clarifying terms:

"Shade" is 2 to 4 hours direct sun each summer day, usually more in winter

Consider these combos:

- Red maple, Ward's yew, oakleaf hydrangea, \*'Ivory Jade' euonymus & \*barrenwort (*Acer rubrum*, *Taxus x media* 'Wardii', *Hydrangea quercifolia*, \**Euonymus fortunei* 'Ivory Jade', \**Epimedium*)
- Sugar maple, bottlebrush buckeye, Deutzia 'Nikko,' \*variegated bigleaf forget-me-not & \*variegated Jacob's ladder (*Acer saccharum*, *Aesculus parviflora*, *Deutzia* 'Nikko', \**Brunnera macrophylla* 'Variegata', \**Polemonium* 'Stairway to Heaven')

Look into these individuals to add to your own singlets and one-two combos:

- For color beyond flower:
  - \*Baneberry (*Actaea rubra*)
  - Fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*)
  - \**Lamium maculatum* varieties
  - Musclewood / blue beech / ironwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*)
  - Scarlet elder (*Sambucus pubens*)
  - Spicebush (*Lindera* spp.)
  - Striped maple (*Acer pensylvanicum*, esp. 'White Tigress')
  - Variegated aralia tree (*Aralia elata* 'Variegata')
- For great or unusual form:
  - American (fall) witchhazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)
  - Balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*)
  - \*Blackjack jack in the pulpit (*Arisaema sikokianum*)
  - Climbing hydrangea (*H. anomala petiolaris*)
  - Flowering- and pagoda dogwood (*Cornus florida* and *C. alternifolia*)
  - \*Japanese waxbell (*Kirengeshoma palmata*)
- As textural wonders:
  - \*Ginger (*Asarum* spp.)
  - \*Variegated lilyturf (*Liriope* varieties)
  - Oregon grapeholly (*Mahonia aquifolium*)
  - \*Fingerflower (*Rodgersia* spp.)
  - Snowball hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens* but not 'Annabelle')
  - \*Solomon's seal: great, variegated & starry false  
(\**Polygonatum* & *Smilacina* spp.)
  - Sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus*)

## Drought-tolerant plants and combinations

Clarifying terms:

- "Drought" -- occasional absence of readily-available water in the soil
- "Tolerance" -- ability to persist in the presence of the stated condition. Growth, flowering and seed set may slow. Generally acquired over time under this influence and is exhibited most strongly by established plants.

Consider these combos:

- Hawthorn, \*fragrant sumac, \*yucca, \*rug juniper and \*evergreen pinks (*Crataegus* spp., \**Rhus aromatica* 'Lo-Gro', \**Juniperus horizontalis*, \**Dianthus gratianopolitanus* 'Bath's Pinks')
- Crabapple, golden spreading juniper, \*leadplant, \*zebra iris (*Malus* variety, *Juniperus chinensis* 'Gold Coast', \**Iris pallida argenteo-variegata*)
- Smoke tree, (golden) bluebeard, \*lambs ear (*Cotinus* spp. esp. native *C. obovata*, *Caryopteris* 'Worcester Gold', \**Stachys lanata*)
- Beautybush, leatherleaf viburnum (pruned each May to maintain at 5'), \*starry false Solomon's seal, \*barren strawberry (*Kolkwitzia amabilis*, *V. rhytidophylloides*, \**Smilacina stellata*, \**Waldestinia fragaria*)

Look into these individuals to add to your own singlets and one-two combos:

- For color beyond flower:
  - Barberry (*Berberis* spp. & varieties)
  - \*Coralberry (*Symphoricarpos x chenaultii*, *S. orbiculatus*)
  - \*Gray leaf speedwell (*Veronica incana*)
  - \*Myrtle euphorbia (*E. myrsinites*)
  - Staghorn-, laceleaf-, and shining sumac (*Rhus typhina*, *R. t. laciniata*, *R. coppolina*)
  - \*Snow in summer (*Cerastium tomentosum*)
- For great or unusual form:
  - Bristlecone pine (*Pinus aristata*)
  - Bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)
  - \*Northern sea oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*)
  - Red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana* upright and blue varieties)
  - Scholar tree (*Sophora japonica*)
- As textural wonders:
  - \*Large flowered comfrey (*Symphytum grandiflorum*)
  - \*Ornamental mullein (*Verbascum* spp. & varieties)
  - \*Prairie dropseed grass (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)
  - \*Thyme (*Thymus* spp. & varieties)

## Soggy conditions plants and combinations

Clarifying terms:

"Soggy" -- at times during the growing season soil pore spaces are nearly full of water; oxygen content is low. Water may or may not stand on the surface.

Consider these combos:

- River birch, summersweet, \*darkleaf white snakeroot and Virginia sweetspire (*Betula nigra*, *Clethra alnifolia*, \**Eupatorium* 'Chocolate', \**Itea virginica*)
- Black gum, elderberry, and meadowsweet\* (*Nyssa sylvatica*, *Sambucus* spp., \**Filipendula hexapetala*)
- Variegated redosier dogwood, \*variegated false sweet flag, \*quamash and \*skunk cabbage (*M virginiana*, *Cornus sericea* 'Silver 'n Gold', *Acorus calamus variegatus*, *Camassia* 'Blue Danube', *Symplocarpus foetidus*)
- Baldcypress, red chokeberry, St. Johnswort, \*globeflower, \*creeping forget-me-not (*Taxodium distichum*, *Aronia arbutifolia*, *Hypericum densiflorum* or *H. kalmianum*, *Trollius ledbourii*, *Myosotis scorpioides*)

Look into these individuals to add to your own singlets and one-two combos:

- For color beyond flower:
  - Blackhaw viburnum (*V. prunifolium*)
  - Black spruce (*Picea mariana*)
  - Cranberrybush viburnum (*V. trilobum*)
  - Dwarf fothergilla (*F. gardenii*)
  - Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)
  - Swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*)
- For great or unusual form:
  - Blazing star (*Liatris spicata*)
  - Hardhack- and meadowsweet spirea (*Spiraea tomentosa*, *S. alba*)
  - Spring witchhazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*; less so its hybrids *H. x mollis*)
  - \*Turtlehead (*Chelone* spp.)
- As textural wonders:
  - American arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis* dwarf and variegated forms)
  - Bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*)
  - Dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*)
  - \*Fingerflower (*Rodgersia* spp.)
  - \*Joe Pye (*Eupatorium purpureum*)
  - \*Prairie dock (*Silphium terebinthinaceum*)
  - \*Swamp mallow (*Hibiscus moscheutos*)

## Trees

Alaska falsecypress (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*)  
Baldcypress (*Taxodium distichum*)  
Balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*)  
Beech (European *Fagus sylvatica*, American *F. grandifolia*)  
Black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*)  
Black spruce (*Picea mariana*)  
Blackhaw viburnum (*V. prunifolium*)  
Bristlecone pine (*Pinus aristata*)  
Bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)  
Cornelian cherry (*Cornus mas*)  
Crabapple, *Malus* varieties 'Baskatong' 'Dolgo' 'Donald Wyman' 'Indian Magic'  
'Louisa' *Malus sargentii* (Sargent crab) *Malus sieboldii* 'Pink Cascade' 'Prairifire'  
'Sugartyme'  
Cranberrybush viburnum (*V. trilobum*)  
Dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*)  
Flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*)  
Franklinia (*F. alatamaha*)  
Fraser fir (*Abies fraseri*)  
Fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*)  
Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba* probably consider male varieties 'Fallgold', 'Sentry' but  
weeping 'Pendula' -- a favorite of mine -- is female)  
Hawthorn, esp. Washington h. *Crataegus phaenopyrum*)  
Japanese aralia tree (*Aralia elata*) and variegated *A. elata variegata*  
Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* varieties: green laceleaf *A. p. dissectum*  
'Viridis';  
Katsura (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*)  
Musclewood/Blue beech/ Ironwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*)  
Pagoda dogwood (*C. alternifolia*)  
Paperbark maple (*Acer griseum*)  
Red maple (*Acer rubrum*)  
River birch (*Betula nigra*) not clump-form  
Scholar tree (*Sophora japonica*)  
Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.)  
Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*)  
Stewartia (*S. pseudocamellia*, *S. ovata*)  
Striped maple/Moosewood (*Acer pensylvanicum*, esp. 'White Tigress')  
Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*)  
Swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*)  
Sweetbay magnolia (*M. virginiana*)  
Three-flower maple (*Acer triflorum*)  
White fir (*Abies concolor*)  
Witchhazel, American/Fall (shrub near tree-size) (*Hamamelis virginiana*)  
Yellowwood (*Cladrastis kentuckea*)

## Shrubs/Bushes

Arborvitae (*Thuja* varieties, esp. 'Sunkist')  
Barberry, esp. red dwarf (*Berberis thunbergii*) Burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*)  
Bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*)  
Beautybush (*Kolkwitzia amabilis*)  
Birdsnest spruce (*Picea abies* 'Nidiformis', other small mounded cultivars)  
Blue mist spirea/Bluebeard (*Caryopteris x clandonensis* standard and gold-leaf varieties including 'Worcester Gold')  
Bottlebrush buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*)  
Boxwood (*Buxus microphylla* and *B. sempervirens* hybrids esp. variety *koreana*)  
Bridalwreath spirea (*Spiraea prunifolia*)  
Burkwood viburnum (*V. x burkwoodii*)  
Chokeberry, red and purplefruit (*Aronia arbutifolia* & *A. x prunifolia*)  
Deutzia (*D. gracilis* forms, esp. 'Nikko')  
Doublefile viburnum (*Viburnum plicatum tomentosum* 'Shasta' dbl., 'Summer Snowflake' repeats - but few/no berries on either)  
Dwarf fothergilla (*Fothergilla gardenii*)  
Dwarf hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis* cultivars, 'Bennett', 'Sargent')  
Dwarf junipers (*J. pfitzeriana glauca*, *J. horizontalis*, *J. squamata* 'Blue Star')  
Dwarf spirea (*Spiraea x bumalda*, *S. japonica*)  
Dwarf white pine (*Pinus strobus* 'Nana')  
Eastern wahoo (*Euonymus atropurpureus*)  
Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*, *S. nigra*, *S. pubens*/*S. racemosa* varieties)  
Evergreen euonymus (*E. fortunei* variegated forms esp. 'Ivory Jade')  
Hardhack- and meadowsweet spirea (*Spiraea tomentosa*, *S. alba*)  
Hinoki falsecypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa* varieties)  
Japanese beautyberry (*Callicarpa japonica*)  
Leatherleaf viburnum (*V. rhytidophylloides*, *V. lantana*, hybrids)  
Ninebark, (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)  
Oakleaf hydrangea (*H. quercifolia*)  
Oregon grapeholly (*Mahonia aquifolium*, dwarf *M. a* 'Compactum')  
Red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana* upright and blue varieties)  
St. Johnswort (*Hypericum densiflorum* or *H. kalmianum*)  
Sargent viburnum (*Viburnum sargentii*)  
Seven son shrub (*Heptacodium miconioides*)  
Smoketree (*Cotinus obovatus*, *C. coggygia* hybrids, 'Grace')  
Snowball hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens* but not 'Annabelle')  
Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*, *L. angustifolia*)  
Staghorn-, laceleaf-, and shining sumac (*Rhus typhina*, *R. t. laciniata*,  
*R. coppolina*)  
Sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus*)  
Summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia*)  
Ural false spirea (*Sorbaria sorbifolia*)  
Variegated redosier dogwood/Redtwig dogwood (*Cornus alba* varieties including 'Elegantissima')  
Witchhazel, spring/ vernal (*Hamamelis mollis* hybrids)  
Yew (*Taxus x media* esp. 'Wardii')

## Groundcovers & Vines

Barren strawberry (*Waldestinia fragaria*)  
Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*)  
Climbing hydrangea (*H. anomala petiolaris*)  
Coralberry (*Symphoricarpos x chenaultii*, *S. orbiculatus*)  
Creeping forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*)  
Dwarf fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica* 'Lo-Gro')  
Lamium/Deadnettle (*L. maculatum* white leaf forms esp. 'White Nancy')  
Large flowered comfrey (*Symphytum grandiflorum*)  
Skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*)  
Snow in summer (*Cerastium tomentosum*)  
Thyme (*Thymus* spp. & varieties)  
Variegated false sweet flag (*Acorus calamus variegatus*)  
Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginica*)

## Perennials & Bulbs

The following plants are those whose good service in our gardens over decades gives them "favored" status. Re: variety name: good new- or never-beaten classics.

Artemisia/Wormwood (*Artemisia*) Clump forming, (rot) disease resistant  
'Lambrook Silver'  
Aster/Michaelmas daisy (*Aster*) Compact, disease resistant (mildew) *Aster alpinus* 'Pinkie.' *A. ericoides* 'Blue cloud.' *A. dumosus* 'Woods Purple'.  
Baneberry & Fairy candle (*Actaea* spp. esp. *A. rubra* and *A. ramosa* formerly *Cimicifuga ramosa*)  
Barrenwort/Fairy wings (*Epimedium* species and varieties)  
Beardtongue (*Penstemon*) Upright, sturdy. 'Husker Red.' *P. barbatus praecox nana* 'Rondo'  
Bee balm (*Monarda*) Disease resistant (mildew). 'Violet Queen.' 'Blue Stocking', 'Coral Reef', 'Peter's Purple'  
Bethlehem sage/Lungwort (*Pulmonaria*) Blue-est flower, best leaf 'Roy Davidson'  
Big Betony (*Stachys micrantha*)  
Bigleaf forget-me-not (*Brunnera*) 'Variegata', 'Jack Frost', 'Dawson's White.'  
Still hoping for stable variegation.  
Blackeye Susan/Coneflower (*Rudbeckia*) *R. nitida* 'Herbstonne.' Looking for (leaf spot) disease resistance.  
Blackjack jack in the pulpit (*Arisaema sikokianum*)  
Blazing star/Gayfeather (*Liatris*) Compact, with maximum wildlife value.  
'Kobold', '*Liatris ligustylis* 'Monarch Strain'.  
Bleeding heart (*Dicentra*) Rich flower color, lasting leaf. 'King of Hearts.'  
Blue globe thistle (*Echinops*) Reblooming old varieties not yet re-introduced.  
Blue star (*Amsonia* spp. esp. *A. ciliata*, *A. tabernaemontana*, *A. hubrechtii*)  
Catmint (*Nepeta*) Long bloom, sterile flowers. 'Walker's Low', 'Souvenir d'Andre Chaudron'  
Clematis (*Clematis*) Wilt resistant *C. alpina*, *C. viticella*, *C. heracleifolia* 'Alan Bloom', *C.* 'Roguchi'.

Coral bell/ Alum root (*Heuchera*, *x Heucherella*) 'Stormy Seas', 'Frosted Violet', 'Caramel'. Hoping for weevil resistance one day.

Cranesbill/Perennial geranium (*Geranium*) 'Rozanne.' *G. macrorrhizum*. Look for (leaf spot) resistance.

Daisy/Shasta daisy (*Leucanthemum*) Sturdy stems, long blooming 'Becky', 'Amelia'.

Daylily (*Hemerocallis*) Reblooming, disease resistant (leaf spots). 'Going Bananas'

English bluebells (bulb) (*Campanulata hyacinthoides* aka *Scilla campanulata*)

False sunflower (*Heliopsis*) Watch for sterile variety.

Fingerflower (*Rodgersia* spp.)

Foamflower (*Tiarella*) Fragrance, long bloom time. 'Spring Symphony', 'Pink Skyrocket', 'Neon Lights'.

Fringecups (*Tellima grandiflora*)

Ginger (*Asarum*) Every one a winner.

Goatsbeard (*Aruncus*) Full size *A. dioicus* and also 12" *A. aethusifolius*, and the mid-size hybrids such as 'Misty Lace'.

Goldenrod (*Solidago*) Compact, clump forming, long blooming. 'Little Lemon'

Grass/Blue Oat (*Helictotrichon sempervirens*)

Grass/Chinese silver-, Maiden- (*Miscanthus*) Compact, great leaf color. 'Super Stripe' 'GoldBar'

Grass/Feather reed grass (*Calamagrostis*) Disease resistance (rust).

Grass/Little bluestem (*Andropogon schizachyrium*) 'Blue Heaven'

Grass/Northern sea oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*)

Grass/Sheep's fescue (*Festuca*) Best blue foliage 'Elijah Blue'.

Grass/Tufted hair grass (*Deschampsia caespitosa*)

Gray leaf speedwell (*Veronica incana*)

Hardy hibiscus/Swamp mallow (*Hibiscus*) Compact, pest resistant (sawfly), dark leaf, good flower color (violets!) 'Summer Storm', 'Plum Crazy'.

Hosta (*Hosta*) Fewer of them?! Slug resistance, browser resistance, disease resistance (blight). 'Sum & Substance', 'Sugar n' Cream'

Iris, Siberian and Iris, zebra (*Iris sibirica*, *I. pallida* variegated types)

Jacob's Ladder (*Polemonium* 'Stairway to Heaven')

Joe Pye & Snakeroot (*Eupatorium*) Compact 'Little Joe', 'Phantom' and dark leaf *E. rugosum* 'Chocolate'

Lambs ear (*Stachys*) Disease resistance (rot/"melting out"). 'Big Ears' no-bloom, dwarf 'Silky Fleece'.

Lenten rose/Hellebore (*Helleborus*) Up-facing flower, disease resistance (leaf spot)

Lilyturf, variegated (*Liriope* varieties)

Masterwort (*Astrantia* varieties, esp. variegated- and pink-flowered forms)

Meadowsweet (*Filipendula hexapetala*, *F. vulgaris*)

Mum (*Chrysanthemum*) 1,000 years of selection - nothing truly new!

Myrtle euphorbia (*E. myrsinites*)

Painted fern (*Athyrium goeringianum/japonicum* 'Pictum')

Peony (*Paeonia*) Sturdy stems, fragrance, disease resistance. Intersectional hybrids.

Perennial sage/salvia (*Salvia*) Pest resistance, long bloom, upright stems. 'Caradonna', 'Rhapsody in Blue'

Phlox (*Phlox*) Disease resistance (mildew), long bloom. 'Orange Perfection', 'Omega', 'Blue Paradise'  
 Pinks (*Dianthus*) Reliably blue foliage. 'Mountain Mist', 'Bath's Pink *D. gratianopolitanus*, *D. neglectus*.  
 Prairie dock (*Silphium terebinthinaceum*)  
 Purple bush clover (*Lespedeza thunbergii*)  
 Purple coneflower (*Echinacea*) Disease resistance (to aster yellows), vigor in new-color varieties. Try ALL the species, let them cross in your own yard to make new colors: *E. pallida*, *E. angustifolia*, *E. paradoxa*.  
 Quamash/ Camas (bulb) (*Camassia* blue-flowered spp. & varieties)  
 Sea kale (*Crambe maritima*)  
 Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum* spp. and starry false S.s. *Smilacina stellata*)  
 Stoncrop/Fall stoncrop (*Sedum telephium*) Great leaf color and winter-strong (tall species). 'Jaws', 'Crazy Ruffles', 'Beka' ('Autumn Delight') also *Sedum* 'Vera Jameson' (*Sedum telephium x caudicola*)  
 Thyme (*Thymus*) Every one a winner. 'Silver Posie'.  
 Tickseed/Coreopsis (*Coreopsis*) soft colors, pest resistance (plant bug). 'Full Moon'.  
 Trillium (*Trillium*) All 15+ of the species  
 Turtlehead (*Chelone* spp.)  
 Waxbell, Japanese w (*Kirengeshoma palmata*)  
 Windflower/ Anemone (*Anemone*) Clump-forming doubles. 'Pamina', 'Whirlwind'  
 Winter aconite (bulb) (*Eranthis hyemalis*)  
 Yarrow (*Achillea*) Long bloom, clump form. (Can't resist plugging dwarf 'King Edward')

## **Perennials: Worthy Seconds** (By common name of species group)

Once you have the best of all the classic perennials from the preceding list in your garden, then it's time to look at these next-best species!

Astilbe	<i>Astilbe</i>
Balloon flower	<i>Platycodon</i>
Bellflower	<i>Campanula</i>
Blackberry lily / Candy lily	<i>Belamcanda, x Pardancanda</i>
Blanket flower	<i>Gaillardia</i>
Bleeding heart	<i>Corydalis</i>
Butterfly weed	<i>Asclepias</i>
Cardinal flower / Lobelia	<i>Lobelia</i>
Checkerbloom / Mini-hollyhock	<i>Sidalcea</i>
Columbine	<i>Aquilegia</i>
Culver's root	<i>Veronicastrum</i>
False indigo	<i>Baptisia</i>
Fern / Painted fern	<i>Athyrium</i>
Gas plant	<i>Dictamnus</i>
Globeflower	<i>Trollius</i>
Inula	<i>Inula</i>
Lady's mantle	<i>Alchemilla</i>
Leadplant	<i>Amorpha canescens</i>
Leopardsbane	<i>Doronicum</i>
Masterwort	<i>Astrantia</i>
Meadow rue	<i>Thalictrum</i>
Meadowsweet	<i>Filipendula</i>
Obedient plant (variegated)	<i>Physostegia</i>
Ornamental mullein	<i>Verbascum</i>
Painter's Palette tovara	<i>Polygonum-, Fallopia-, or Persicaria</i>
Pasqueflower, windflower	<i>Pulsatilla</i>
Pearly Everlasting	<i>Anaphalis</i>
Prairie dock / Compass plant	<i>Silphium</i>
Rock cress	<i>Arabis</i>
Sweet pea	<i>Lathyrus</i>
Toadlily	<i>Tricyrtis</i>
Veronica / Spike speedwell	<i>Veronica</i>

## **Plant sources** (Please note: This is not an exhaustive list.)

### **Retail**

Arrowhead Alpines, P.O. Box 857, 1310 N. Gregory Rd., Fowlerville, MI 48836;  
517-223-3581 [www.arrowheadalpines.com](http://www.arrowheadalpines.com)

Bordine's, Clarkston, Rochester, Royal Oak, Brighton, Holly [www.bordines.com](http://www.bordines.com)  
Brent and Becky's Bulbs, 7900 Daffodil Lane, Gloucester, VA 23061; 877-661-2852  
[www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com](http://www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com)

English Gardens, Ann Arbor, Brighton, Clinton Twp., Dearborn Hts., Eastpointe,  
West Bloomfield [www.englishgardens.com](http://www.englishgardens.com)

Goldner Walsh Nursery, Orchard Lake Rd. east of Telegraph Rd., Pontiac,  
248-332-6430

High Country Gardens, 2902 Rufina St., Santa Fe, NM 87507-2929; 800-925-9387  
[www.highcountrygardens.com](http://www.highcountrygardens.com)

Klehm's Song Sparrow Farm and Nursery, 13101 East Rye Rd., Avalon, WI 53505;  
800-553-3715 [www.songsparrow.com](http://www.songsparrow.com)

McClure and Zimmerman, P.O. Box 368, Friesland, WI 53935; 800-883-6998  
[www.mzbulb.com](http://www.mzbulb.com)

Miller Nurseries, 5060 West Lake Road, Canandaigua, NY 14424-8904; 800-836-  
9630 [www.millernurseries.com](http://www.millernurseries.com)

Musser Forests, Inc., 1880 Route 119 Hwy. N, Indiana, PA 15701-7341; 800-643-  
8319 [www.musserforests.com](http://www.musserforests.com)

Plant Delights Nursery at Juniper Level Botanical Gardens, 9241 Sauls Road,  
Raleigh, NC 27603; 919-772-4794 [www.plantdelights.com](http://www.plantdelights.com)

Plymouth Nursery, Plymouth-Ann Arbor Rd. at Gotfredson, Plymouth Twp.,  
734-453-0155

Ray Hunter's Nursery, 16153 Eureka Rd., Southgate, 734-284-2500

Ray Wiegand's Nursery, Romeo Plank road north of 21 Mile Road, Macomb 586-  
286-3655

Select Seeds, 108 Stickney Hill Rd., Union, CT 06076-4617; 800-684-0395  
[www.selectseeds.com](http://www.selectseeds.com)

Shades of Green, E. Avon Rd. east of Rochester Rd., Rochester, 248-651-1620

Specialty Growers, 4330 Golf Club Road, Howell, MI 48843; 517-546-7742  
[www.specialtygrowers.net](http://www.specialtygrowers.net) (no mail order)

Telly's Greenhouse, John R North of Big Beaver, Troy, 248-689-8735

Thompson & Morgan, 220 Faraday Ave., Jackson, NJ 08527-5073; 800-274-7333  
[www.tfmseeds.com](http://www.tfmseeds.com)

White Flower Farm, P.O. Box 50, Litchfield, CT 06759-0050; 800-503-9624  
[www.whiteflowerfarm.com](http://www.whiteflowerfarm.com)

