

Summer is over and it's time to think about next year while the season is still fresh in your mind. What plants fared the best, which ones did you enjoy the most? And, if you're thinking that far ahead, what plants are on your "must-have" list for next year?

Favorite plants depend greatly on perspective and goal. Are you looking for curb appeal? A place for entertaining? A yard that will attract birds and butterflies? Views from indoors? A yard for kids to enjoy?

What gardeners want is usually pretty simple—interest and color, and a lot of it, for a long time, and without a lot of effort and expense. In a greenhouse or garden, we're likely to point to whatever is in bloom and say, "I want that."

The average perennial blooms for about three weeks, but many of them will bloom for one, two, even three months or more. Bloom time is one of the primary considerations in many plant selection trials, so this is one instance in which a particular cultivar can make a lot of difference (detailed information on cultivars for this region can be found at [springaffair.unl.edu](http://springaffair.unl.edu) by selecting "Full plant list").

Every garden space is slightly different in terms of soil, sun, moisture, surroundings and microclimate so results will vary, but listed below are some perennials that offer several months of bloom:

- Agastache 'Blue Fortune' and Agastache aurantiaca Coronado
  
- Aster x frikartii 'Monch' and 'Wunder von StÑfa'
  
- \*Bleeding heart, Dicentra eximia and D. formosa 'Aurora' and 'Luxuriant'

- \*Campanula carpatica 'Blaue Clips' and 'Pearl Deep Blue'
- Catmint or Nepeta
- Coneflower or Echinacea
- Coreopsis auriculata, lanceolata, rosea and verticillata
- \*Corydalis lutea
- Gaillardia
- Garden phlox. Many cultivars of Phlox paniculata will bloom from June or July into September, including: 'Andre', 'Aureole', 'Becky Towe', Coral Flame, 'Crème de Menthe', 'Laura' and 'Robert Poore'; and Phlox Coral Flame
- Black eyed Susan, Rudbeckia fulgida 'Goldsturm' and others
- Gaura
- \*Geranium 'Rozanne' and 'Jolly Bee' are some of the longest-blooming perennial geraniums
- Pin cushion flower or Scabiosa

- Russian Sage or Perovskia

- Sage, *Salvia greggi* 'Furman's Red', 'Wild Thing', and 'Cherry Queen' bloom from June into October

- Yarrow cultivars for long bloom include *Achillea millefolium* 'Strawberry Seduction', 'Fire King' and 'Summer Pastels' and *Achillea* 'Coronation Gold'

\* Denotes plants for part shade; most of the preceding perennials prefer full sun.