

THREE SEASONS OF CAREFREE COLOR

by Doreen G. Howard

Imagine a gorgeous garden drenched with color from early spring to the first frost of autumn. A daydream, you say? Not anymore. This landscape fills the wish list of amateur and expert gardeners alike, with . . .

CONSTANT COLOR: Spring flowers and foliage in burgundy, pink, and blue give way to yellow, orange, blue, and ebony for summer and autumn.

EFFORTLESS IMPACT: This plot is almost maintenance-free. For at least five years, it will need no staking, dividing, or pruning—only fertilizing, feeding, and maybe a bit of weeding.

EASY ADAPTABILITY: The plot size can be reduced or expanded

THREE IN A ROW

Spring Color

- 'Black Lace' elderberry
- Rozanne cranesbill
- 'Foxtrot' tulip
- 'King of Hearts' dicentra
- 'Obsidian' heuchera
- Wine & Roses weigela

Summer Color

- 'Black Lace' elderberry (foliage)
- 'Connecticut Yankee' delphinium
- Rozanne cranesbill
- 'Goldsturm' rudbeckia
- 'Obsidian' heuchera (foliage)
- 'Mardi Gras' helenium
- 'May Night' salvia
- 'Mönch' aster
- 'Summer Sun' heliopsis
- Wine & Roses weigela (foliage)

Fall Color

- 'Arendsii' monkshood
- 'Black Lace' elderberry (foliage)
- Rozanne cranesbill
- 'Goldsturm' rudbeckia
- 'Mardi Gras' helenium
- 'May Night' salvia
- 'Mönch' hardy aster
- 'Obsidian' heuchera (foliage)
- 'Summer Sun' heliopsis
- Wine & Roses weigela (foliage)

SPRING
SUMMER
FALL



to suit your space (and time), and these plants tolerate most climates, whether the first freeze occurs on September 10 or November 15.

(Because most of these perennials need winter chill, this garden is not appropriate for subtropical climates such as southern Florida and southern California.)

THIS GARDEN'S GROUND RULES

The bed is 16 feet long and 6 feet wide, and requires at least six hours of sunlight a day. The 13 plant varieties are massed in numbers of each for maximum color and instant curb appeal. The plan is customizable to your best advantage, as a border or an island:

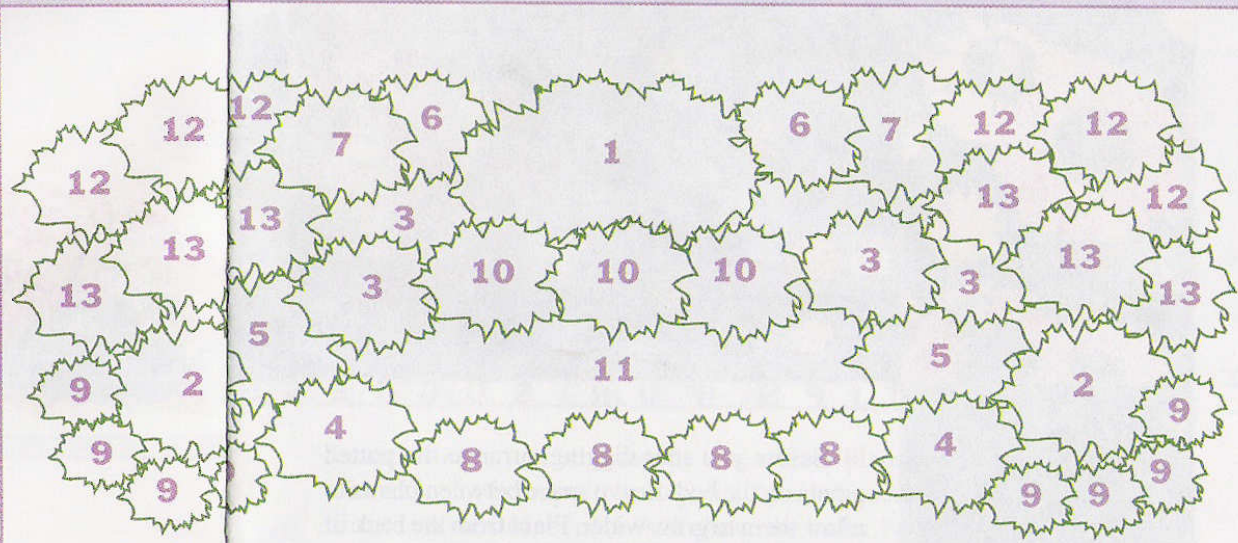
■ To create larger beds, double or triple the number of plants.

■ If space (or time) is at a premium, cut the length of the bed to 8 feet, reduce the number of plants accordingly, and forgo the large 'Black Lace' elderberry shrub.

■ For a centerpiece in the middle of a lawn, place the elderberry and taller perennials in the middle and surround them with plants of shorter stature, ending with Rozanne geranium and 'Obsidian' heuchera at the edge of the bed.



PLANTING DIAGRAM



➔ Garden dimensions: 16x6 feet

www.provenwinners.com

www.springmeadownursery.com

Park Seed Company

Park Seed Company

W. Allee Burpee & Co.

www.bluestoneperennials.com

A three-season garden requires three essential ingredients . . .

- perennials that bloom copiously year after year
- small shrubs with color-saturated foliage all season long
- plants that do not spread aggressively

These characteristics are found in all of the following:

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| <p>1 Elderberry (<i>Sambucus nigra</i> 'Black Lace')
1 plant</p> <p>2 Weigela (<i>Weigela</i> Wine & Roses)
2 plants</p> <p>3 Bleeding heart (<i>Dicentra</i> 'King of Hearts')
4 plants</p> <p>4 Heuchera (<i>Heuchera</i> 'Obsidian')
2 plants</p> | <p>5 Black-eyed Susan (<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i> var. <i>sullivantii</i> 'Goldsturm')
2 plants</p> <p>6 Ox eye (<i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i> var. <i>scabra</i> 'Sommersonne', aka 'Summer Sun')
2 plants</p> <p>7 Sneezeweed (<i>Helenium</i> 'Mardi Gras')
2 plants</p> <p>8 Salvia (<i>Salvia x sylvestris</i> 'Mainacht', aka 'May Night')
4 plants</p> | <p>9 Cranesbill (<i>Geranium</i> 'Gerwat', aka Rozanne)
8 plants</p> <p>10 Aster (<i>Aster x frikartii</i> 'Mönch')
3 plants</p> <p>11 Tulip (<i>Tulipa</i> 'Foxtrot')
40 bulbs</p> <p>12 Monkshood (<i>Aconitum carmichaelli</i> 'Arendsii')
6 plants</p> <p>13 Delphinium (<i>Delphinium</i> 'Connecticut Yankee' series)
6 plants</p> |
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(continued)

-Blooms of Bressingham



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-www.provenwinners.com



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-Brent Heath/Brent and Becky's Bulbs



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-www.penlanperennials.co.uk



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-www.bluestoneperennials.com



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PLAN, THEN PLANT

For more advice and ideas on garden design, go to Almanac.com/garden.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS EVERY SEASON



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-W. Atlee Burpee & Co.

■ Before you start digging, arrange the potted plants on the bed. Leave space between plants to allow them to grow wider. Plant from the back of the bed to the front. Set shrubs and perennials at the same depth as they are in containers.

■ For a lush look, plant tulip bulbs thickly, about five per square foot of bed. After they bloom, remove dead flowers so that the bulbs put their energy into storing nutrients for the next season rather than into setting seeds. Remove tulip leaves after they brown. Don't worry about appearances; nearby perennials will cover up the aging leaves.

■ Fertilize if you want these plants to thrive.

Scrape away any mulch from the base of each plant in early spring and spread with an inch of compost. In July, lightly mix bonemeal or a slow-release fertilizer into the surface of the soil above the bulbs. Note: Bonemeal may attract rodents that will dig for bones.

■ Spread 3 inches of mulch over the bed. It will help to retain moisture and suppress weeds. Use an organic material such as shredded bark or leaf mold, which adds nutrients to the soil as it decays. Cedar bark mulch is an excellent choice, because resins in it repel many insects and thwart fungal diseases.

■ To increase perennials' bloom production, remove fading flowers. Shrubs drop their old flowers and will bloom again if conditions are right.

■ Do not remove brown foliage on perennials until early spring when new green growth appears. The dead material insulates plant roots from the temperature extremes of winter. □ □



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-Wayside Gardens

Once your three-season plot is planted, be patient. Perennials reach their full size and beauty by the second season. Shrubs grow more slowly, reaching their mature size three to five years after planting. If you must prune, do so after the shrubs flower, not in early spring.

SOURCES

- Bluestone Perennials
- Brent and Becky's Bulbs
- W. Atlee Burpee & Co.
- Fieldstone Gardens

- Klehm's Song Sparrow Farm & Nursery
- Park Seed Company
- Wayside Gardens

For more information about these companies, consult the Sources List on pages 124–125.

Doreen G. Howard edits special-interest gardening magazines and writes regularly for the American Horticultural Society. She has gardened in nearly every climate zone in the United States.