

# PERENNIALS FOR DIFFICULT SITES

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Often we want to include perennial flowers on a site with difficult growing conditions. There is usually at least one plant that will tolerate even the most difficult conditions.

Many perennials prefer a sunny location and a deep, well drained but moisture retentive soil supplemented with organic matter, but this is not always available. The following is a list of some perennial flowering plants for less than ideal conditions. Cross-referencing will give plants that are tolerant of more than one difficult location, such as dry shade or hot and wet. Most plants have a special tolerance, such as drought tolerance, only after they have recovered from transplanting and are well established. Check reliable references (books, Master Gardener Helplines, internet) for the plant characteristics and site requirements of each of the individual perennials.

NOTE: The genus, (*italicized name*) but not species, is given for each of the listed plants. Because there are often many plants in a given genus, check references under both the common and botanical names.

## DRY AREAS

*Achillea*-yarrow  
*Agastache* sp – anise hyssop  
*Amsonia*-blue-star  
*Anthemis*-golden marguerite  
*Armeria*-sea pink  
*Artemisia*-wormwood  
*Asclepias*-butterfly weed  
*Aubretia*-purple rock cress  
*Aurinia*-basket of gold  
*Baptisia*-blue false indigo  
*Belamcanda*-blackberry lily  
*Bergenia*-leatherleaf bergenia  
*Boltonia*-boltonia  
*Calamintha* - calamint  
*Catananche*-Cupid's dart  
*Centranthus*-Jupiter's beard  
*Cerastium*-snow-in-summer  
*Coreopsis*-tickseed  
*Dianthus*-pinks  
*Echinacea*-purple coneflower  
*Echinops*-globethistle  
*Eryngium*-sea holly  
*Euphorbia*-cushion spurge  
*Gaillardia*-blanketflower  
*Geranium*-crane's bill  
*Hemerocallis*-daylily  
*Hosta*-plantainlily, hosta  
*Iris*-German bearded iris, rooftop iris  
*Kniphofia*-red hot poker  
*Liatris*-blazing star  
*Limonium*-sea lavender  
*Oenothera*-sundrops  
*Penstemon*-beard tongue  
*Perovskia*-Russian sage  
*Polygonum*-Solomon's seal  
*Rudbeckia*-black eyed Susan  
*Sedum*-stonecrop  
*Solidago*-goldenrod  
*Stachys*-lamb's ear  
*Veronica*-spike speedwell  
*Yucca*-Adam's needle

## WET AREAS

*Acorus calamus*-sweet flag  
*Angelica* - angelica  
*Arisaema*-Jack-in-the-pulpit  
*Aruncus*-goatsbeard  
*Asclepias* – swamp milkweed  
*Asarum*-wild ginger  
*Aster*-New England aster  
*Astilbe*-false spirea  
*Astilboides* - astilboides  
*Astrantia* - masterwort  
*Brunnera*-Siberian bugloss  
*Caltha*-marshmarigold  
*Chelone*-turtlehead  
*Cimicifuga*-bugbane  
*Eupatorium*-Joe Pye weed  
*Filipendula*-queen-of-prairie  
*Galium*-sweet woodruff  
*Helenium*-sneezeweed  
*Hibiscus*-rose mallow  
*Hosta*-plantainlily, hosta  
*Iris*-Japanese iris  
*Iris*-yellowflag iris  
*Iris* – blue flag iris  
*Ligularia* – big-leaved ligularia  
*Lobelia*-cardinal flower  
*Lobelia* – great blue lobelia  
*Lysimachia*-loosestrife  
*Mertensia*-Virginia bluebells  
*Monarda* –beebalm  
*Petasites japonica* - fuki  
*Physostegia*-obedient plant  
*Primula*-primrose  
*Tradescantia*-spiderwort  
*Trillium*-wake robin  
*Trollius*-globeflower

## UNSTABLE SLOPES

*Coronilla*-crown vetch  
*Hemerocallis*-daylily  
*Vinca*-periwinkle, myrtle

## SHADE AREAS

*Alchemilla*-lady's mantle  
*Anemone*-anemone  
*Aquilegia*-columbine  
*Aruncus*-goatsbeard  
*Asperula*-sweet woodruff  
*Astilbe*-false spirea  
*Bergenia*-leatherleaf Bergenia  
*Brunnera*-Siberian bugloss  
*Caltha*-marshmarigold  
*Campanula*-bellflower  
*Ceratostigma*-blue plumbago  
*Chrysogonum*-goldenstar  
*Cimicifuga*-bugbane  
*Convallaria*-lily-of-the-valley  
*Dicentra*-bleeding heart  
*Dicentra*-Dutchman's breeches  
*Digitalis*-foxglove  
*Dictamnus*-gasplant  
*Filipendula*-queen-of-prairie  
*Helleborus*-Lenten rose  
*Heuchera*-coral bells  
*Hosta*-plantainlily, hosta  
*Iris*-Siberian iris  
*Ligularia*-ligularia  
*Lirope*-lilyturf  
*Lobelia*-cardinal flower  
*Lysimachia*-loosestrife  
*Mertensia*-Virginia bluebells  
*Polygonatum*-Solomon's seal  
*Primula*-primrose  
*Pulmonaria*-lungwort  
*Trillium*-wake robin  
*Trollius*-globeflower

### HOT AREAS

*Achillea*-yarrow  
*Amsonia*-bluestar  
*Artemisia*-artemisia  
*Aruncus*-goatsbeard  
*Asclepias*-butterfly weed  
*Aubretia*-purple rockcress  
*Aurinia*-basket of gold  
*Baptisia*-false indigo  
*Brunnera*-Siberian bugloss  
*Catananche*-Cupid's dart  
*Centranthus*-Jupiter's beard  
*Cerastium*-snow-in-summer  
*Chrysanthemum*-mums  
*Cimicifuga*-bugbane  
*Coreopsis*-tickseed  
*Echinacea*-purple coneflower  
*Echinops*-globe thistle  
*Eryngium*-sea holly  
*Euphorbia*-spurge  
*Filipendula*-queen-of-prairie  
*Gaillardia*-blanket flower  
*Gypsophila*-baby's breath  
*Hemerocallis*-daylily  
*Hibiscus*-rose mallow  
*Hosta*-plantainlily, hosta  
*Liatris*-gayfeather  
*Lychnis*-campion  
*Monarda*-beebalm  
*Oenothera*-sundrops  
*Perovskia*-Russian sage  
*Platycodon*-balloon flower  
*Rudbeckia*-black-eyed Susan  
*Salvia*-sage  
*Sedum*-stonecrop  
*Solidago*-goldenrod  
*Stachys*-lamb's ear  
*Stokesia*-Stoke's aster  
*Yucca*-Adam's needle

### DEER PROBLEM AREAS (low to

medium herd pressure, but a  
starving deer will eat nearly  
anything.)

*Achillea* -yarrow  
*Aconitum* -monkshood  
*Allium* -onion, garlic, chives  
*Alyssum*-basket of gold  
*Amsonia*-amsonia  
*Anaphalis* -pearly everlasting  
*Anchusa* -bugloss  
*Anemone* -Japanese anemone  
*Angelica*-angelica  
*Anthemis* -marguerite  
*Aquilegia*-columbine  
*Armeria*-sea thrift  
*Artemisia* -wormwood  
*Aruncus* -goatsbeard  
*Asclepias*-butterflyweed  
*Astilbe*-false spirea  
*Aubretia* -rock cress  
*Baptisia* -false indigo  
*Bergenia* -leatherleaf bergenia  
*Begonia* -begonia  
*Boltonia*-boltonia  
*Cactaceae*-cactus  
*Calluna* -heather  
*Campanula*-tussock bellflower  
*Canna*-canna  
*Centaurea*-mountain bluet  
*Chelone*-turtlehead  
*Cimicifuga* -bugbane  
*Comptonia*-sweet fern  
*Convallaria* -lily-of-the-valley  
*Chrysanthemum*-painted daisy, Shasta  
daisy, feverfew  
*Coreopsis* -tickseed  
*Delphinium* -larkspur  
*Dianthus* -pinks, sweet William  
*Dicentra*-bleeding heart  
*Dictamnus*-gas plant  
*Digitalis* -foxglove  
*Echinacea* -purple coneflower  
*Echinops* -globe thistle  
*Erica* -heath  
*Erigeron* -fleabane  
*Euphorbia* -spurge  
*Geranium* -crane's-bill  
*Gypsophila* -baby's breath  
*Helleborus*-Lenten rose  
*Hypericum* -St. John's wort  
*Imperata*-Japanese blood grass

*Iris* -iris (will eat buds)  
*Kniphofia*-red hot poker  
*Lavandula*-lavender  
*Liatris*-blazing star  
*Lilium*-tiger lily  
*Limonium*-statice  
*Linum*-blue flax  
*Lupinus* -lupines  
*Lychnis*-Maltese cross  
*Melissa*-lemon balm  
*Mentha* -mints  
*Mertensia*-Virginia bluebells  
*Monarda*-beebalm  
*Myosotis* -forget-me-nots  
*Myrrhis*-sweet cicely  
*Oenothera*-sundrops, evening primrose  
*Origanum* -marjoram  
*Paeonia* -peonies (will eat buds)  
*Papaver*-oriental poppy  
*Perovskia*-Russian sage  
*Phalaris*-ribbon grass  
*Phyllostachys*-golden bamboo  
*Physostegia*-obedient plant  
*Polemonium*-Jacob's ladder  
*Potentilla* -cinquefoil  
*Primula* -primroses  
*Pulmonaria*-lungwort  
*Ranunculus* -buttercup, exc. *R. asiaticus*  
*Rosemarinus* -rosemary  
*Rudbeckia* -black-eyed Susan,  
*Salvia* -sage, salvia  
*Saponaria* -soapwort  
*Santolina*-lavender cotton  
*Senecio*-dusty miller  
*Stachys* -lamb's ear  
*Stokesia*-Stoke's aster  
*Tanacetum* -tansy  
*Thalictrum* -meadow rue  
*Thymus* -thyme  
*Tradescantia*-spiderwort  
*Trillium* -trillium  
*Trollius* -globeflower  
*Valeriana* -valerian  
*Veronica*-Hungarian speedwell  
*Viola* -violets  
*Yucca*-Spanish bayonet