

## GARDENMAKING

Inspiring & informing home gardeners



### THREE-SEASON PLANTING PLAN

# BLOOMS ● ALL SEASON LONG

The garden bed design on the following pages is intended to show perennial plants transitioning in and out of bloom through three seasons. The plan is structured with six perennials and a woody specimen for each season (you could use fewer, still with good results). Factoring in the additional overlapping bloom or multi-season foliage from high-performance plants, you'll have abundant flowers and a beautiful border from spring through fall. —JUDITH ADAM



# THREE-SEASON PLANTING PLAN

# SPRING



The spring season can be expected to last for 10 weeks, and it makes sense to include early bulbs like crocus, windflowers, narcissus and species tulips to augment the coldest weeks of the season. The first wave of spring blooms begins with 'Excalibur' lungwort, quickly growing into a clump of silver-spotted leaves with wands of rosy-purple flowers. (As it's the earliest to rise, it would be worthwhile planting 'Excalibur' in more than one location.)

'Pink Dragon' bergenia will also be stirring early, plumping its fleshy leaves and sending up bold spikes of coral-pink flowers, contrasting with the more delicate lungwort blooms. The Siberian crabapple holds its branches in starkly vertical posture, and covers its branches with sweet, white apple

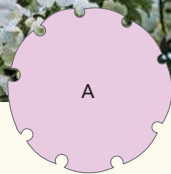
blossoms (later turning to small, red-flushed yellow fruit).

The second phase of spring flowering begins after danger of night frost is past, and includes 'Gold Heart' bleeding heart, which is expanding its chartreuse-yellow foliage and pink lockets, and the spidery amethyst purple flowers of 'Amethyst Dream' perennial cornflower. Finally, the pink 'Sarah Bernhardt' peony is opening perfumed double flowers. The peony's large, lush blooms make a striking contrast against the delicate 'McKana's Improved Giants' columbines, continually in motion like butterflies on the wing.

The silver-spotted foliage of 'Excalibur' lungwort can be cut back after blooming to generate fresh leaves that will last all summer.

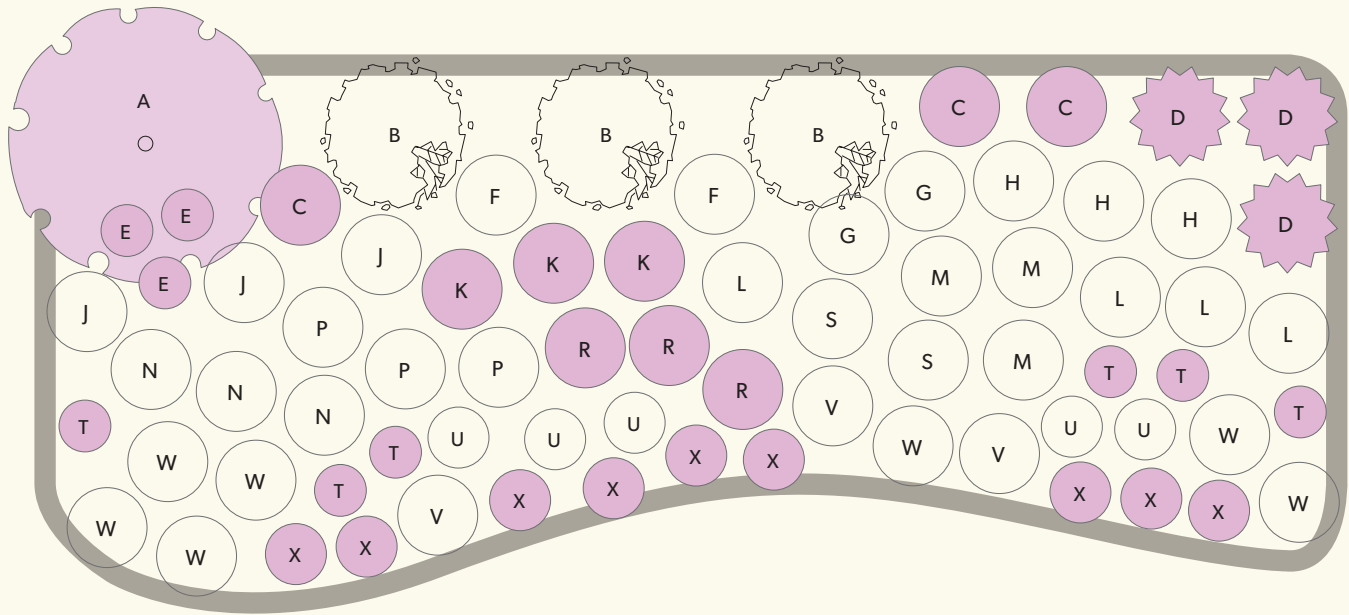


Columnar Siberian crabapple



'Sarah Bernhardt' peony





Columbine

E



'Gold Heart' bleeding heart

K



'Pink Dragonfly' bergenia

T

### SPRING PLANTS

Plants and # used

- A Crabapple 1
- C Peony 3
- D Cedar 3
- E Columbine 3
- K Bleeding heart 3
- R Cornflower 3
- T Bergenia 6
- X Lungwort 9

### FEATURE PLAYERS FOR SPRING

A Columnar Siberian crabapple (*Malus baccata* 'Columnaris'): white flowers with yellow-red fruit, 26 x 6 ft. (8 x 2 m), Zone 4

C 'Sarah Bernhardt' peony (*Paeonia lactiflora* 'Sarah Bernhardt'): apple blossom-pink, exceptional fragrance, 36 x 36 in. (90 x 90 cm), Zone 3

D 'Degroot's Spire' pyramidal cedar (*Thuja occidentalis* 'Degroot's Spire'): bright green, slow-growing conifer, 26 x 4 ft. (8 x 1.25 m), Zone 4

E 'McKana's Improved Giants' columbines (*Aquilegia* [McKana Group] 'McKana's Improved Giants'): red, pink, blue, yellow bicolors, 30 x 10 in. (75 x 25 cm), Zone 3

K 'Gold Heart' bleeding heart (*Lamprocapnos spectabilis* 'Gold Heart'): pink-and-white flowers with gold-chartreuse leaves, 24 x 24 in. (60 x 60 cm), Zone 3

R 'Amethyst Dream' perennial cornflower (*Centaurea montana* 'Amethyst Dream'): amethyst purple, 18 x 18 in. (45 x 45 cm), Zone 4

T 'Pink Dragonfly' bergenia (*Bergenia* 'Pink Dragonfly'): coral pink, 12 x 16 in. (30 x 40 cm), Zone 4

X 'Excalibur' lungwort (*Pulmonaria* 'Excalibur'): rosy-purple flowers, silver-and-green leaves, 8 x 18 in. (20 x 45 cm), Zone 4

Photos, left to right: Laura Berman; Jonathan Buckley/Gap; William Clevitt-GWI/Age

# THREE-SEASON PLANTING PLAN

# SUMMER

Early to midsummer lasts for about eight weeks, with the beginning marked by the generous production of the clear pink flowers and burgundy-purple foliage of Wine and Roses weigela. The purple leaves are a strong colour asset in the border, and if space allows, using two or three weigelas would be a worthwhile design feature that lasts through autumn. A season-long contrast can be made with the apricot yellow blooms of 'Sunset Returns' dwarf daylily, with these two plants keeping up the happy association right until frost.

Three hot plants for midsummer all have deeply saturated hues in the red to purple range, vividly amplifying the more

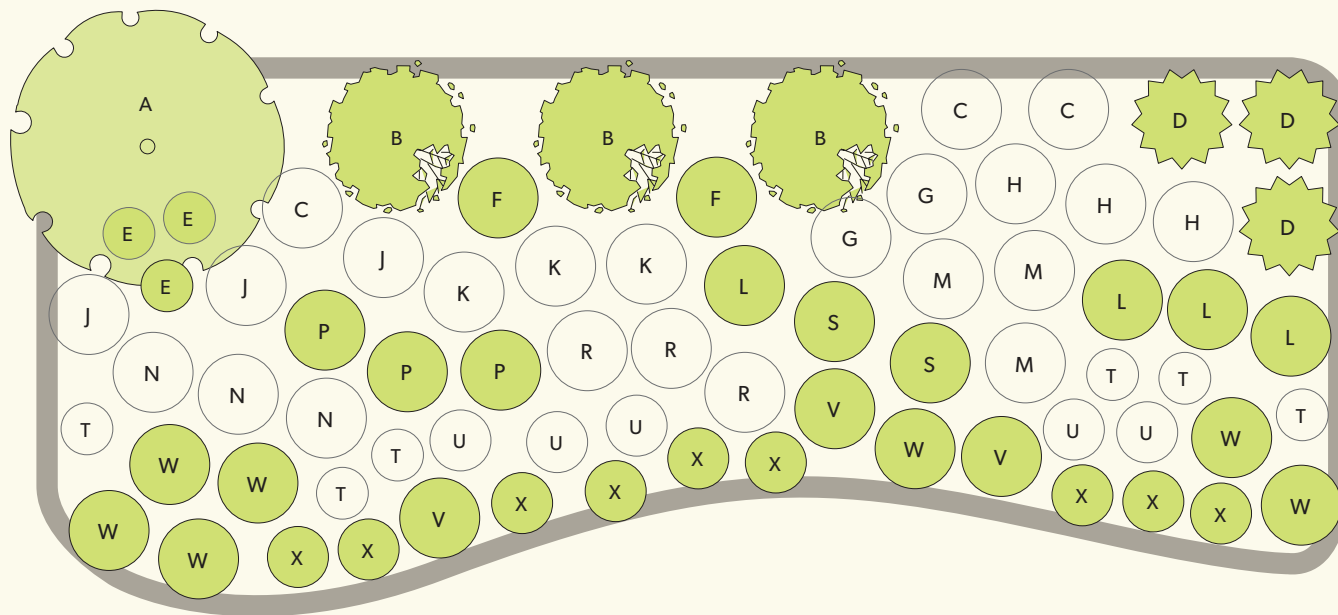
subdued burgundy-purple weigela leaves. Rose-magenta 'Prairie Splendor' coneflower, magenta-purple 'Kobold' blazing star and scarlet-red 'Fried Green Tomatoes' cardinal flower cause the border to nearly throb with red-spectrum heat. This incendiary composition is nicely cooled down and tempered by the bright blue flowers of 'Dropmore Hybrid' catmint and the elegant lavender-blue flower spikes of 'Filigran' Russian sage, both with cooling grey-green foliage. The 'Sunset Returns' daylily and 'Filigran' Russian sage will continue blooming into late summer.



Blazing star



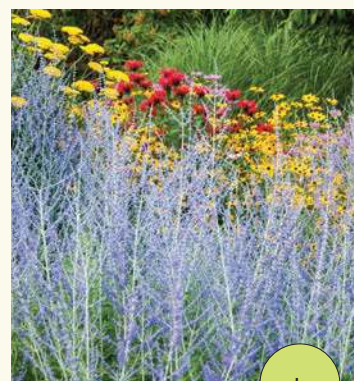
'Prairie Splendor' purple coneflower



Wine and Roses weigela



Cardinal flower



Russian sage

### SUMMER PLANTS

Plants and # used

<b>A</b> Crabapple	1	<b>P</b> Coneflower	3
<b>B</b> Weigela	3	<b>S</b> Blazing star	2
<b>D</b> Cedar	3	<b>V</b> Catmint	3
<b>F</b> Cardinal flower	2	<b>W</b> Daylily	7
<b>L</b> Russian sage	4	<b>X</b> Lungwort	9

### FEATURE PLAYERS FOR SUMMER

**B** Wine and Roses weigela (*Weigela florida* 'Alexandra'): pink flowers, burgundy-purple leaves, 5 x 5 ft. (1.5 x 1.5 m), Zone 5

**F** 'Fried Green Tomatoes' cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis* 'Fried Green Tomatoes'): scarlet red, 30 x 18 in. (75 x 45 cm), Zone 5

**L** 'Filigran' Russian sage (*Perovskia* 'Fili-

gran'): lavender-blue flowers, grey-green leaves, 24 x 18 in. (60 x 45 cm), Zone 5

**P** 'Prairie Splendor' purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea* 'Prairie Splendor'): rose magenta, 18 x 18 in. (45 x 45 cm), Zone 4

**S** 'Kobold' blazing star (*Liatris spicata* 'Kobold'): magenta purple, 18 x 18 in. (45 x

45 cm), Zone 3

**V** 'Dropmore Hybrid' catmint (*Nepeta* 'Dropmore Hybrid'): blue flowers, grey-green leaves, 12 x 18 in. (30 x 45 cm), Zone 3

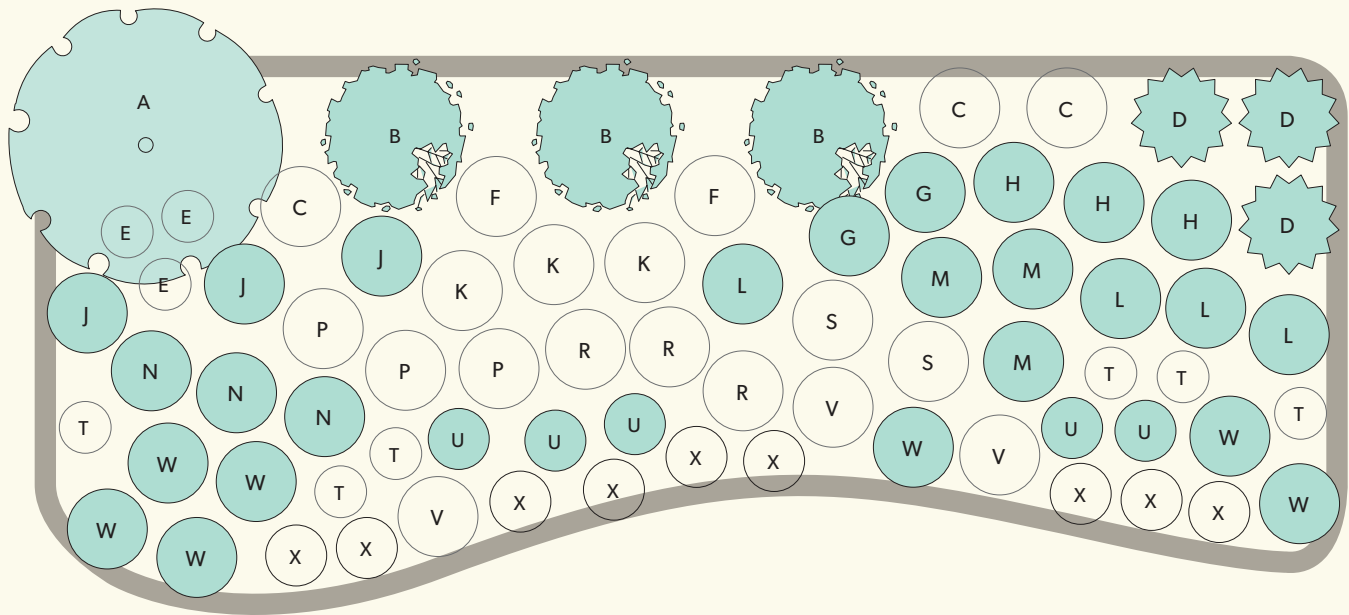
**W** 'Sunset Returns' daylily (*Heemerocallis* 'Sunset Returns'): apricot yellow, everblooming, 12 x 18 in. (30 x 45 cm),

Photos, left to right: MAP/Nicole et Patrick/Age; Walters Gardens; Laura Berman



# THREE-SEASON PLANTING PLAN

# LATE SUMMER TO AUTUMN



## LATE-SUMMER TO AUTUMN PLANTS

Plants used and # used

- A Crabapple 1
- B Weigela 3
- D Cedar 3
- G Helenium 2
- H Bugbane 3
- J Obedient plant 3
- L Russian sage 4
- M Phlox 3
- N Michaelmas daisy 3
- U Stonecrop 5
- W Daylily 7

## FEATURE PLAYERS FOR LATE SUMMER TO AUTUMN

- G 'Double Trouble' helenium (*Helenium 'Double Trouble'*): double yellow flowers, 30 x 18 in. (75 x 45 cm), Zone 5
- I 'Summer Snow' obedient plant (*Physostegia virginian 'Summer Snow'*): white, 30 x 24 in. (75 x 60 cm), Zone 3
- N Peter III Michaelmas daisy (*Symphotrichum novi-belgii Peter III*): lavender-blue, 18 x 24 in. (45 x 60 cm), Zone 5
- H 'White Pearl' bugbane (*Actaea matsumurae 'White Pearl'*): white, 36 x 24 in. (90 x 60 cm), Zone 4
- M 'Bright Eyes' phlox (*Phlox paniculata 'Bright Eyes'*): pink with darker pink eye, 24 x 18 in. (60 x 45 cm), Zone 4
- U 'Brilliant' stonecrop (*Sedum spectabile [Brilliant Group] 'Brilliant'*): mauve-pink, 18 x 18 in. (45 x 45 cm), Zone 5

**GARDENMAKING**  
Inspiring & informing home gardeners

## THREE-SEASON PLANTING PLAN: LATE SUMMER TO AUTUMN

The border in late summer has much to offer. The apricot-yellow 'Sunset Returns' daylilies are overlapping into this late phase and will continue for several more weeks, extending the lush feeling of summer. 'Bright Eyes' phlox (light pink with a darker pink eye) is already blooming and will last until early autumn. Also flowering during this time is 'Summer Snow' obedient plant, with its clear white flower spikes making busy punctuation points.

Chrome-yellow 'Double Trouble' fall helenium is in character with the developing hues of red and gold fall tree foliage, and cooled slightly by the broad heads of deep mauve-lavender 'Brilliant' sedum.

Last to bloom in chilled air are the soft lavender-blue Peter III Michaelmas daisy and the honey-scented bottlebrush spikes of cream-coloured autumn bugbane. These two are good partners, and joined with the apricot-yellow daylily, last right up to the first frost. The tall and narrow 'Degroot's Spire' cedars are strong accent plants, providing a dramatic green profile and permanent form into winter.



M

Phlox



G

Helenium



U

Sedum



H

Bugbane

### THE GARDEN BED IN WINTER

Frost might bring a temporary end to the gardener's labour, but the pleasures of a well-planned perennial bed continue on through winter. With a thick layer of snow on the ground, woody plants with ornamental bark, buds and berries have an important role. The vertical form of our Siberian crabapple tree and its red-flushed yellow berries are compelling features. The narrow, compact cedars are dramatic profiles against white snow, and the small thicket of weigela stems provides shelter for

chickadees and finches, and their amusing antics. The dried blossoms of coneflower and sedum stems can be left standing to catch intriguing snowcaps.

Architectural objects provide character to the perennial bed in both summer and winter. A birdbath draws lively attention in the warm months and is a graceful profile in winter. Free-standing plant supports like an obelisk are perfect for sweet pea and morning glory vines, and make useful focal points in cold months. With enough plant and architectural features, the perennial bed will continue to hold interest through winter and into the following spring.

Photos, clockwise from top: Walters Gardens; Visions Botanical/Age (3)

**GARDENMAKING**  
Inspiring & informing home gardeners