

Massachusetts Master Gardener Association

FACT SHEET



Have Gardening Questions? The **Master Gardener Help Line Hours** are 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. on Fridays (all year) as well as Wednesdays (March-November) and Mondays (April-October).
Phone: 617-933-4929 Email: mghelpline@masshort.org.

(Nearly) Indestructible Perennials

More love of gardens than time for gardening? Try these easy to grow old reliables.

HOSTAS are grown primarily for their beautiful foliage. Leaves range from smaller than the end of your thumb to several feet wide and may be smooth or ruffled, flat or curled. Hostas may be a single solid color or variegated in different combinations of blue, green, white, and gold. They are easy to grow, and, depending on the variety, can flourish in any light from full shade to full sun. Hostas also grow well in containers, allowing you to create interesting combinations with flowers.

FERNS may look tropical but include many hardy varieties. They can add height to a ground cover area or give an architectural form to a border. Available in colors from a pale gray to yellow to deep greens as well as multicolor varieties, they can light up a shady area or add texture to a perennial bed. Different varieties grow in areas from sun to shade, dry to wet.

SEDUMS have plump, waxy leaves that may be yellow, green, red, or even black with fascinating flowers. The varieties vary in height from barely an inch to three feet tall. Some bloom in late spring, others in summer and fall, and can be left standing for winter interest. As a rule they all prefer poor, dry soil, but there are varieties for full sun, partial sun, and even partial shade. Also they are another great, low-maintenance container plant.

RUDBECKIAS (Black-eyed Susans) are beautiful, yellow, daisy-like flowers that add beauty and splashes of color to the summer garden for weeks at a time. They are adaptable to almost any type of soil but should be grown in full sun to achieve the best flowering performance. Caution: they are prolific self-seeders and also spread by runners. Unchecked, they will take over from less vigorous plants.

ECHINACEA (Purple Coneflowers) produce large, fragrant flowers from midsummer through fall. The three to five foot flower stalks make them an excellent background planting for your landscape or in a butterfly garden. Keep them smaller and postpone the blooms by cutting them back in mid June. The shorter plant will bloom two to three weeks later. They grow best

when planted in full sun in moist, well-drained garden soil but will tolerate drier soil in partial sun.

HEMEROCALLIS (Daylilies) offer an amazing breadth of color from near white through yellow, orange, red, and purple, to near black. Some are tall, some short, some repeat bloomers, some fragrant. They can be used in flower borders, but they also make a low maintenance ground cover. They survive both cold winters and hot summers and are nearly pest and disease resistant. Daylilies grow quickly and have various bloom times, so they are perfect for the impatient gardener. There's a daylily for almost any soil or light condition.

IRIS SIBIRICA (Siberian irises) are commonly grown as an accent plant for their showy flowers and tidy, erect forms. The colors include rare true blues, and every shade of purple as well as whites and yellows. The plants are often left up during the winter as the seedpods have ornamental interest. They will grow in almost any soil but need sun to flower. Unlike bearded iris, iris borders do not attack them.

COREOPSIS are daisy like flowers that bloom in shades of yellow, orange, or pink with lance-shaped, oval, or threadlike leaves. Height varies with species and cultivar ranging between nine inches and three feet. They are used in formal and informal gardens and in containers. The smaller types work well in hanging baskets and as edging plants. They thrive in almost any well-drained garden soil in full sun.

SALVIA (flowering sage) has spiky white, yellow, orange, bright red, scarlet, blue, or blue-purple flowers borne on bushy fragrant plants. They can blend happily into mixed perennial borders, country style gardens, and rock gardens, or they can be used in large containers. Height varies from 10 inches to 60 inches, with most varieties below 36 inches. Unpalatable to rabbits and deer, salvia encourages the presence of bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds in your garden. They prefer full sun with average moisture but are amazingly drought tolerant once established.

The Massachusetts Master Gardener Association is a non-profit organization whose mission is to share knowledge and experience with the public through outreach programs in education, horticulture and gardening; to provide the Master Gardener Training Program to interested members of the public; and to provide graduates of the Master Gardener Training Program with educational and practical opportunities to extend their knowledge and interests in gardening and related topics. <http://www.massmastergardeners.org/>