

Beginners Guide Ten Heroic Plants

There are some plants that may not be the showiest or the most exciting but they sure do a great job in our gardens. They tolerated the heat dome, they held on through the atmospheric rivers, they just grew and made us smile with their toughness! These plants are so common that you can find them in everyone's garden. For beginners, these are the foundation plants that will be successful and make you forget your other garden fails. Where to find them? In our community, there are lots of driveway garden stalls, community fairs with plant stalls, and of course, the Mill Bay/ Cobble Hill Garden Show on May 28th. Facebook has a local group called the Cowichan Garden Traders that shows many local plant sources.

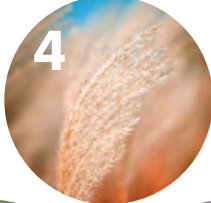
1. Heather: It's hard to kill a heather plant. These guys live in the thankless exposed hillsides of Scotland with no cultivation at all. They will do a fine job in your garden. There are summer-blooming heathers and winter-blooming heathers. They have a few preferences. They don't like being soggy and they do like lots of sun.

2. Crocosmia: Crocosmia will grow and divide itself and fill a space very well. They have lovely flowers in a range of reds to yellows. The deer will eat the flowers but leave the leaves.

3. Iris: Iris comes in a huge range of flowers and many different varieties. Elaine, one of the Mill Bay Garden Club goddesses tells us that people do not grow enough irises. There are so many different types and they are super easy to grow.

4. Grasses: Oh the glorious decorative grasses will thrill you. There are all types of colors and sizes. They are not picky and they look so good. Remember the trending plant of the 1960s - the pampas grass? They are popular again and they grow with enthusiasm!

5. Corsican Hellebores: Yes, I know this is a bit less common but is such a good plant. They are dead easy to grow from seed. If you are suffering from deer then make absolutely certain you have selected Corsican Hellebores. The deer chew on some of the others.



6. Oregon Grape

(Mahonia): This is a native plant that has beautiful yellow flowers and dark purple berries. It grows quickly and makes a good small hedge with its leathery holly-like leaves. They will tolerate a lot of drought once they are established. The berries make good jam!

7. Lavender: It smells great, is easy to grow, looks wonderful what else can I say?

8. Sage: Sage's scientific name is Salvia. They are a huge group of plants that have wonderful flowers and nice bushy shapes. The culinary varieties look just as nice as the decorative ones.

9. Catmint: This is from the genus Nepeta which includes catnip. This plant is not catnip, it's a tough blue flowering perennial that you will love. It's bombproof and so pretty! And the bees adore it!

10. Yucca: I love Yucca as they are just so hard to kill. They grow from a big banana-shaped tuber to form a big sheaf of spiky leaves. There are some very cool colour variations including a yellow, red, and green striped Yucca. They are excellent foundation plants for any garden bed.

If you are a beginner, or are new to this area, rip this out and take it with you to plant sales and build a good base of plants for a starter garden.

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