

Rocky Mountain Penstemon:



At 24" tall x 30" wide at maturity, a native of the foothills and mountains of the southern Rockies, this plant grows easily over a wide range of the western U.S. The tall showy spikes of blue flowers last for over a month in late spring and on into summer. Long-lived and easily grown, this Penstemon thrives in any well-drained soil with full sun. Advantages: Drought tolerant, attracts hummingbirds, bee friendly, rabbit resistant, evergreen.

Russian Sage:



Russian Sage is a vigorous, well-shaped grower with attractive dark-blue flower spikes. Taking the gardening world by storm, it rose from obscurity to enormous popularity in the past decade. Prospering in zones from 4 to 9, plant any time during spring, summer or fall. Russian Sage will grow 3' tall by 3' wide in full sun. Russian Sage's enormous popularity is no doubt due to its ability to thrive in dry, tough conditions. It blooms all summer and grows successfully in any soil, from clay to sand, as well as salty and highly alkaline ones. And if that weren't reason enough to plant it, it is extremely resistant to browsing deer, rabbits, elk and bees love it!

Russian Sage is a low care plant that looks its best when cut back hard (leaving 6" to 12" of stem above ground) in mid-spring. This keeps the plant more compact and encourages more vigorous blooming. This shrub has a tendency to spread by suckering, so it's advisable to dig up the suckers in early spring to keep the plant within bounds.

Yarrow: Gold, White, Pink and Paprika



Yarrow is a beautiful perennial, easily grown and suited to many climates and soil types. With feathery foliage and long-blooming flowers, it attracts bees and butterflies to the garden. 18" tall x 24" wide, it keeps flowering all summer. Only requires deep but infrequent watering after their second growing season. Too much water makes them floppy. Plant in full, hot sun. Cut plants back in spring and deadhead throughout summer to keep blooms coming.

Advantages: Drought resistant, deer and rabbit resistant, makes excellent cut or dried flower arrangements and looks great planted in containers.

Shasta Daisy:

Shasta Daisies create cheerful, pure-white color in the garden . They will prosper in clay, sandy, or loamy soils in moist, well-draining gardens. Growing into beautiful 16"-24" tall bouquets, they can be planted in half shade to full sun. Supplemental water is welcome if less than an inch of rain in two weeks during very hot, dry periods.

Continue planting Shasta daisies yearly for a more abundant display. Staggered yearly plantings ensure that your plants will continue to colonize. An easy-to-grow perennial, they will come back year after year in the spring. Dead-head to keep blooms coming and divide clumps every 3-4 years in early spring.



Gaura (Lindheimer):

Gaura lindheimeri, commonly called gaura, is a clump-forming perennial that is native to Texas and Louisiana. It grows to as much as 4' tall with pinkish buds along wand-like stems. Blossoms open with white flowers which slowly fade to pink.

Best grown in sandy, loamy, well-drained soils in full sun. Good drainage is essential as root rot may occur in soggy soils. A taprooted plant which tolerates heat and some drought. Remove spent flower spikes to prolong bloom period. Thin flower stems tend to become leggy and flop, particularly when grown in rich soils, and plants can benefit from close planting or support from adjacent perennials. Plants may be cut back in late spring by 1/2 to control size. May self-seed if spent flower stems are left in place in the fall. This plant has no serious insect or disease problems. It is effective in sunny borders, in groups, and may be grown in containers.



Day Lilies:

Daylilies are hard to kill, which makes them popular with beginning gardeners and old hands alike! While there are 'best practices' to follow when caring for Daylilies, it takes a lot of effort to do wrong by these vigorous and productive flowers. You can move them when you want, forget to feed and water, and site them incorrectly without risking total failure. But if you follow the instructions below, you should have the best-looking Daylilies on the block!

Daylilies do best where they will receive six or more hours of sun each day. While they will tolerate partial shade, you should expect fewer flowers.

Daylilies thrive in good garden soil so we need to amend our thin soil with compost mulch (see planting guide). Water them regularly during the first season. Established plants only need watering during very dry conditions (June/hot/no rain). To keep your day lilies blooming "daily" deadhead spent blooms. Throughout the season, remove any yellowing leaves. This will stimulate the plant to produce new leaves, which is important for re-blooming varieties.

Daylilies will eventually expand to form large clumps up to three feet in diameter. So, by spacing your new plants two feet or more apart initially, you can avoid having to dig and move them as they grow in. However, if you want added impact in the early years, space your new plants about 18" apart. Then after a few years you can move some of the plants outwards.

Available in a rainbow of colors, shapes and sizes, daylilies bloom from early spring until frost, depending on the variety chosen. Some are cold-hardy; some not, so be careful when making your choice. With lively foliage and flowers in a rainbow of colors, Daylilies show their beautiful blooms from spring, through summer, and with a grand finale of flowers just before fall.



Hostas:

There is no better way to brighten up a shady spot than by planting hostas. Although the plants bear tall spikes of white or lavender flowers in midsummer, hostas are planted primarily for the season-long show of their striking foliage. Few perennials are truly carefree, but hostas come close. They never need dividing. Once established, they shade the ground so thoroughly that they reliably crowd out most weeds. Hostas are not fussy about soils, and many cultivars even do quite well with considerable sun.



Hosta leaves come in a broad range of solid colors, from blue-gray to deep green to light green or gold. Blue hostas often have a soft, waxy bloom (a powdery-looking coating on the leaves, also found on grapes), especially early in the season. Some green varieties have very shiny leaves; others have a matte appearance. Variegation can be white, cream, or yellow and can occur on the edges of the leaves, in the centers, or streaked throughout the leaf. The most common leaf shape is heart-like, but some cultivars have narrow, pointed leaves. The largest hostas are 3-4 feet tall; the smallest are under 8 inches. Mix all these factors together and you get an idea of why plant breeders are having such fun with this group of plants.

Hostas are among the most adaptable perennials. They do well from USDA Zone 3 (-40°F minimum) southward as far as zone 9 (20°F minimum). Hostas do need a period of cold weather. Insufficient winter chill and dry air are the chief limiting factors.



In the garden, one-third shade is ideal. If soil moisture is ample, most hostas can take direct sun, especially in cooler climates and at the northern limit of their range. Gold varieties must have some direct sun for their full color to develop; in shade they become chartreuse. Blue varieties develop best color in shade. When hostas get too much sun or not enough water, the leaf edges become papery and brown.

A little extra TLC will get new hosta plantings off to a strong start. Be sure to water the plants during dry spells, especially during their first growing season. Apply a 2-inch-thick mulch of compost or leaf mold each year to provide nutrients. Hostas growing in the shade of large trees may need supplemental water to help them compete with the tree roots.

The only major pests of hostas are slugs, which thrive in the moist, cool, shady areas that hostas love. Controls include handpicking, traps, and deterrents like a layer of diatomaceous earth or crushed eggshells spread underneath the plants. Unlike many perennials, hostas do not need regular dividing to keep them growing strong. Established hosta plantings have been in place for 30 years and longer with no need for dividing. *Source: The National Garden Assoc.*

Salvia:

What's your favorite color? That's what color salvias come in! *Salvia greggii* is the most commonly grown of the woody salvias. This amazing plant, native to both Mexico and the US, thrives under a wide range of conditions. The flower color of the species ranges from white to red to purple. In warm climates, *Salvia greggii* flowers best in spring, slows in summer, then puts on another superb show in fall.

While many selections of *Salvia greggii* are only hardy in Zone 7, others can tolerate Zone 5 (-15 degrees F) temperatures. When making your selection, read the plant tag and make sure they will survive our Zone 6 winters.

Salvia greggii prefers sunny, well drained sites and are intolerant of poorly drained soils. Usually growing to a 3' x 3' clump, you can prune them back in the spring or summer, or let them grow to a more natural form.



Sweet Potato Vine:

A vigorous, trailing, mounded growth habit, Sweet Potato Vine fits in the Thriller, Filler and Spiller container category. Usually available with dark purple foliage, the leaves provide an interesting contrast to companion plants. In hanging baskets, it pairs well with petunias, verbena and Cali (it trails up to 24") in part sun. Hardy to only 20 degrees F, it is best grown as an annual in window boxes and hanging baskets.

Calibrachoa:

Right along with Sweet Potato Vine, Calibrachoa ("Cali") fills in planters and hanging baskets with a dizzying array of colors—from magenta to white and everything in between. Their blooms resemble tiny petunia flowers from spring well into fall if given good sun, enough water and food. Quite drought tolerant, but to get the best blooms, don't let them dry out repeatedly.



Soil Preparation: Remember that proper soil preparation is the key to healthy, vigorous blooming perennials, especially in the thin, organically-starved soil we have in Pinetop. Whatever you plant, do this:

- Remove the cinders. You can relocate them somewhere else around your property.
- Dig a hole at least twice as wide as your plant and pile the dirt in a container. Those big, black flat plastic rectangular boxes work great. But you can use anything. You can even just mix it in the hole.
- Mix half and half with a good compost mulch. Christopher's sells a product called mushroom compost mulch that will provide the organic material lacking in our native soil.

Planting:

- When to plant: Local nursery stock begins to appear in May, but it can still be very cool for new plantings. By the end of May, weather is warming and getting your plants in the ground early allows time for their roots to get established before the growing season comes to a close in October. At lower elevations, the recommended planting time for larger shrubs and trees is fall because the summer heat makes it very difficult for plants to get established. In Pinetop, the summer temperatures don't create a problem, BUT, all new plants require water and until the monsoon hits in July, new plants must be frequently (and for trees, deeply) watered.
- Where to plant: With very few exceptions, all plants love and need sunlight for survival. A plant growing in too much shade becomes long and spindly and will not bloom as much or as frequently. Read the labels on your new plants and keep in mind that most plants do well with a minimum of six hours sunlight every day. Last, when deciding where to locate your new treasure, read the label and see what their mature size will be, then find the best location where it won't be crowded when it reaches its full size.
- Loosen the root ball: When you take your new plant out of its nursery container you will notice the roots and dirt maintain the perfect circular shape of the pot. Not good. Take a screwdriver or old table knife and pull the roots out and away from the center. The roots grow in a circle in a pot and if you put the plant in the ground that way, the roots will continue to grow in a circle and can eventually choke the plant. Try not to tear the roots, but definitely pull them out and loosen them up. Some dirt will fall off, and some pieces of root will break off, but that's ok. Spread the roots out in a circle and place the plant in the hole. Fill in around the plant with your soil/compost mix. No smashing! Water in the soil around your new plant and it will fill in the empty spaces around the roots.
- Pinch them back: It's hard to cut the blooms off a plant you just brought home from the nursery because of its gorgeous flowers. But to give them a head start, once they are in the ground and watered in, cut off the flowers, maybe the top 2 inches of stem. Why would you do this? The mission of every plant is to grow flowers so they can go to seed and make more plants. They use up a lot of their energy and nutrients in this process, when what you really want the plant to do is use all that energy to grow roots! Cutting them back at planting directs that energy to root growth and you will be rewarded with a stronger plant that will bloom when its roots are able to provide the nutrients.

Watering: In the summer when it's warm and no monsoon (late May/June), water new plantings daily the first week, every other day the second week, and every third day the third week. By the fourth week, you should be able to water 1-2 times a week (if no rain) through September. During the summer keep an eye on your new landscape. Plants will wilt somewhat during the heat of the day, but if they are upright and not limp in the mornings, they are fine. Drought tolerant plants will do fine once established, but even they will appreciate supplemental water when it's 85 degrees!

Trees and plants are dormant during the winter, but still need water to keep the roots alive. Trees need special attention for their entire first year and through the second summer. A new tree needs plenty of water, especially in our fast draining soil. They cannot be allowed to dry out until they've had plenty of time to get their roots established. Give them a good soaking at planting, and keep the soil around them moist throughout their first summer (deep soaking once a week). Cooler temps, rain and snow should keep them stable over the winter. The second summer starting in the spring, soak them deeply once a month through September. After that they should be fine, unless there are extended drought conditions.

Fertilizer: New plants should not need fertilizer. A month after planting, you can give them a feeding. Miracle Gro is a popular product, and the fish emulsion fertilizer sold at Ace, HD and nurseries is an organic variety. Once a month in the summer will keep your plants happy, but hold off in the fall. Fertilizer spurs new growth which will then freeze when the weather turns cold.

Container Planting: Whiskey barrels, terra cotta pots, decorative containers and hanging baskets all help fill in the bare spaces around our homes. It doesn't really matter what you put in your pot, but here is one suggestion from the landscape people: **“Thriller, Filler and Spiller.”** What does it mean? **Thrillers** are the big, bold focal point of your container plant design. This plant provides an eye-catching vertical element. Tall ornamental grasses or spiky blooming plants such as bi-color iris are examples. **Fillers** are mid-size rounded plants that surround and enhance the thriller and fill the space in the planter. You can use just about anything, but some ideas include petunias, verbena, salvia, calibrachoa (“cali” for short) and geraniums. **Spillers** are plants that cascade and tumble over the sides of the container such as sweet potato vine, trailing lobelia, nasturtium or vinca. Spillers should be placed close to the edge of your planter so they can sprawl over the side of the container, softening its edges and falling toward the ground.



Options: There are many more plants you can grow here in Pinetop. These are a few ideas. When I asked the local nurseries if they had a plant list we could use, both In Bloom Nursery and Christopher's Garden Nursery replied, “Anything we sell will grow on the mountain.” We'll take them at their word!

Extended Plant List:

PERENNIALS BY VARIETY

Unique Plants

Achillea (Yarrow)

African Daisy | *Gazania*

Agastache | *Hummingbird Mint*

Aquilegia (Columbine)

Artemisia (Silver Sage)

Asclepias (Milkweed)

Aster

Bearded Iris | *Iris*

Bee Balm | *Monarda*

Black Eyed Susan |
Rudbeckia

Blanket Flower | *Gaillardia*

Blazing Star | *Liatris*

Blue Mist Spirea |
Caryopteris

Buckwheat | *Eriogonum*

Cacti & Succulents

Catmint | *Nepeta*

Columbine | *Aquilegia*

Coneflower | *Echinacea*

Coral Bells | *Heuchera*

Coreopsis (Tickseed)

Culinary Perennial Herbs

Daylilies | *Hemerocallis*

Desert Olive (Privet) |
Forestiera

Desert Willow | *Chilopsis*

Echinacea (Coneflower)

Evening Primrose |
Oenothera

Foxglove | *Digitalis*

Gaillardia (Blanket Flower)

Globe Mallow | *Sphaeralcea*

Globe Thistle | *Echinops*

Goldenrod | *Solidago*

Grass (Ornamental)

Hummingbird Mint |
Agastache

Hummingbird Trumpet |
Zauschneria

Hyssop

Ice Plant | *Delosperma*

Iris (Bearded)

Jupiter's Beard |
Centranthus

Lamb's Ear | *Stachys*

Lavender | *Lavendula*

Lily | *Lilium*

Milkweed | *Asclepias*

Ornamental Grass

Penstemon (Beardtongue)

Phlox

Plumbago | *Ceratostigma*

Poppy | *Papaver*

Prairie Coneflower |
Ratibida

Red Hot Poker | *Kniphofia*

Russian Sage | *Perovskia*

Sage | *Salvia*

Sea Holly | *Eryngium*

Sedum (Stonecrop)

Shrubs & Small Trees

Speedwell | *Veronica*

Spurge | *Euphorbia*

Stonecrop | *Sedum*

Sunflower (Perennial) |
Helianthus

Texas Red Yucca |
Hesperaloe

Tickseed | *Coreopsis*

Thyme | *Thymus*

Veronica (Speedwell)

Vines (Flowering)

Yarrow | *Achillea*

Yucca

An excellent on-line information source is High Country Gardens located in Santa Fe, NM:
<https://www.highcountrygardens.com/>

The Intermountain West – White Mountains – USDA Zone 6

- Much of our soil lacks organic matter.
- At 7,200 feet, the sun is intense, the air has very low humidity (except during the monsoon), and summer highs range in the low 90°s.
- Winters are cold

The range of minimum average temperatures for Zone 6 is between -10F and zero degrees Fahrenheit. When making plant choices, read the labels and make sure the plant will tolerate year-round conditions in our area.