

How to have a FABBY GARDEN PART VII

Relax - They BLOOM FOREVER!

Do you ever get the blues at the end of Spring? A few weeks ago you were basking in the most perfect, bloom-at-the-same-time floragasmic Spring peak you've ever witnessed in your garden. As a garden artist or garden planner, you've arrived! Your poppies, corncockles, Delphiniums and Veronicas were amazing. You got the colors, textures, heights and most importantly – the timing – just right! Gardening was awesome and so were you! I know, it's an incredible feeling. And now, as you walk around your garden, you're feeling kind of dismayed, all those glorious bloom-togethers are now, well, fading together. Kripes! What now? No more flowers until July? Or worse, not until next Spring?



Is it now time to live by tasteful foliage alone? We've seen all those magazine articles and garden design books touting the superiority of architectural form, foliar color and texture and seriously downplaying the need for flowers. Brrrr – I say no! Sorry famous garden designers – most of us home gardeners need flowers and lots of them!

The easiest way to handle this common garden malady otherwise known as PSD or Post Spring Dismay, is to include a few long time bloomers in your garden – flowering workhorses that will breezily carry you between Spring and Summer, if not all season long. Of course, you'll want to have Summer and Fall bloomers in your garden as well, but we coastal Californians enjoy an incredibly long season – there can be quite the floral void between peak of Spring, peak of Summer and peak of Fall.

The 4 plants you see on the opposite page are just a few of the exceptionally long bloomers I use here in our demonstration garden and at home. No matter how faded (or neglected) my garden gets, these almost inexhaustible hunky bloomers make everything all better – there's always something blooming for me, the bees and the butterflies to enjoy. With a few of these long flowering perennials to grab your attention away from those less than perfect areas, you'll be able to snap those gardening suspenders in cool, collected confidence and crow "Hey, my garden looks good!"

Annie

P.S. For more fun and useful garden tips - read *How To Have a Fabby Garden parts I-VI* on our website!

A word of advice...

Now, just because they're ever-blooming doesn't mean they can live on your admiration alone. You want to make sure they get what they need to live long, happy super-bloomy lives. Provide good soil and treat them to a layer of good compost at least once a year. Deadhead! Go out in the morning for a few minutes and snip off at least a few spent flowers. It's a peaceful way to start your day and

if you can do it at least once a week, you'll double the bloom time of your plants. Cut them back if they ever seem bloomed out. They'll bounce right back for another long round of bloom and do especially well if you treat them with a new 1" layer of compost. Very importantly, cut them back in Winter. This makes them put out fresh new growth from the base next year so they'll look better than ever.



Geum magellanicum

Straight from a seed collector in Chile, **this mucho-tough, long-lived, low-maintenance perennial will win you over.** Endearing scarlet-orange flowers may be 1" small, but are mighty in number and *just keep coming Spring thru mid-Summer,* especially with deadheading. 30" x 30" with a tidy low mound of rich green foliage. Best in well-drained soil with some compost added. Sun. Avg./Low water. Perennial USDA zones 7-11. #3023 \$6.95



Geranium pyrenaicum 'Bill Wallis'

I bet we get more positive feedback for this most floriferous of Geraniums than any other plant we grow! Delightful, purple-blue blooms present a **cloud of color**, 15" tall x 20" across **Spring thru Fall.** Fast, tough and EASY, it won't fade away if you forget to water. Reliably perennial, it self-sows to fill in bare spots with its ever-present color. When the flowers are spent, cut back to 1" and it'll burst right back into bloom. Rich soil. Sun/Part sun. Avg./Low water. Perennial USDA zones 5-11, annual elsewhere. #440 \$7.95



Verbena lilacina 'De La Mina'

Love bloomiferous perennials but don't want to water? *Now you can have your cake and eat it, too!* Exploding into a cloud of rich lavender-blue flower clusters in Spring, this SUPER EASY, SUPER TOUGH **native blooms year around,** especially with an occasional drink in Summer. Valuable for both cottagey and dry gardens or large pots, it makes a dense 3' x 3' mound. Butterflies and bees! Thanks to horticulturalist Carol Bornstein for discovering this selection! **Deer resistant!** Sun/Part sun (inland). Avg./Low water. Perennial USDA zones 7-10. #3398 \$7.95



Scabiosa ochroleuca

DROUGHT & DEER RESISTANT, bringer of bees and butterflies, practically **everblooming** and a good strong perennial, you can't go wrong with this Mediterranean "pincushion." To 3' x 3', it blooms its heart out with hundreds of go-with-everything, 1.5" soft primrose blooms on a mass of multi-branching stems. Excellent as a front and center, always-in-bloom mainstay of your garden. Good drainage, cut back to 1" in Winter. Give 1" of compost in Spring and dead-head for continuous bloom. Self-sows! Sun. Avg./Low water. Perennial USDA zones 4-10. #960 \$7.95