



PLAN NEXT SUMMER'S GARDEN NOW!

By: Jacki Hein, CCNP

Ok, it's winter, but now is the perfect time for planning what you'll do in your gardens next summer!

Most garden centers carry a nice line of books suited to gardening in Colorado. In particular, the Rocky Mountain Plant Guide or Annual & Perennial Plant Guide, available at your local independent nursery or greenhouse, are full of great suggestions on plants that do well in our state. Another great resource is the Colorado State University Cooperative Extension service; they create dozens of helpful publications. Search them out online at www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/pubs.html.

Now let's talk gardens... perennials are the flowering plants that return year after year. Although you only plant them once, few perennials bloom all season. Annuals are the ones that will give you color from spring to fall, but do need to be replanted annually. In a flower garden, you could have a selection of different perennials that bloom at different times throughout the season, adding annuals here and there for continuous color.

Consider, too, ornamental grasses. There are grasses of every size from the diminutive 6" Blue Fescue to the mighty 10-12' Hardy Pampas Grass. They add a natural grace and, if left standing, will add interest to the winter landscape as well.

Bear in mind the planting zone recommended for whatever plants you're considering. Colorado varies between zones 4 and 5. Generally, plants recommended for zone 4 can survive to temperatures of -30; those suited to zone 5 may only survive to -20. It's usually best to stay with selections that can handle colder temperatures - unless you're willing to take the chance!

Keep an eye on your garden areas now so you'll know how much sun they get. Remember that our sun is strong - plants that grew in full sun in other parts of the country might fry if planted in full sun in Colorado!