



Some like it dry!

Drought-tolerant gardening is becoming increasingly popular, partly due to concerns about our limited water resources and associated costs. While many of us do what we can, collecting rain water and mulching garden beds, perhaps its time to consider plants, in particular perennials, that tolerate or thrive in hot dry conditions. To help ensure your success start with a good foundation, water your plants upon planting and mulch your garden. There are only a few plants that do not do well when mulched such as sedums, hens and chicks, grasses and lavender. Go easy with the mulch around these as they can rot.

Now for plant selection, first lets consider the dry shady garden. Yes! There are plants that will thrive in these conditions once established. Brunnera is very hardy with large heart-shaped leaves and lovely blue forget-me-not like flowers. One of the best cultivars is 'Jack Frost' a lovely variegated variety. Contrast with Dicentra (Bleeding heart) with its fern like leaves and dangling pink heart shaped flowers. Consider 'Goldheart' a lovely golden leaf cultivar. Another good companion is Epimedium a vastly underused plant with lovely heart shaped leaves and flower colour that ranges from white to yellow, bronze, red and pink. Euphorbia (spurge) is a succulent plant with blue-green foliage and chartreuse flowers which reflect light. Helleborus (Lenten Rose) blooms in early spring primarily in clusters of purple, rose or white nodding flowers. Carex (Sedge) grow in clumps of narrow arching leaves to 2' (60 cm) high contrasting beautifully with Brunnera and Epimedium. Some of the best variegated cultivars are 'Evergold', 'Gold Fountains' or 'Ice Dance'.

For the dry sunny gardens there are many perennials to choose from, too many to list all of them. Soooo.....some of my favourites.....well Lavendula (Lavender) of course with it's fragrant silvery foliage and lavender blue flowers. Perovskia (Russian Sage) is a shrubby long blooming plant with silvery foliage and blue flowers. Echinacea (Coneflower) now comes in

almost every colour imaginable. No more just pink daisy like flowers, now there are white, coral, orange and yellow varieties, all long blooming. Speaking of which, Leucanthemum (Daisy) can't be beat for their showy white single or double blooms with bright yellow eyes. Another long blooming daisy like flower is Rudbeckia (Black-Eyed Susan). Golden-yellow blooms with brown or green eyes, one of the best is 'Goldsturm'. Sedum is the mainstay of this type of garden coming in an amazing array of heights, colours and textures. Many grasses love these conditions, short, tall, blue, gold or variegated, they combine beautifully with any of the above.

There are many other perennials as there are shrubs and even trees that will thrive in drier conditions. For more information or help planning your plantings, please come in and talk to us.