

INTRODUCTION



C'mon, folks—what would you give for a garden that gets better year after year, with less and less work on your end? No, I'm not pullin' your leg—it's absolutely possible, with my perfect perennials! When you fill your yard with these fun and flower-full plants, you'll not only create a landscape that's the envy of your neighbors; with my help and some great advice from my gardening mentor, my Grandma Putt, you'll also do it for less cash and in less time than you ever imagined.

In this book, I've gathered together hundreds of my best time-tested tips, tricks, and tonics for all aspects of planning, planting, and enjoying the best perennial garden possible! Here's a sneak preview of what you'll find:

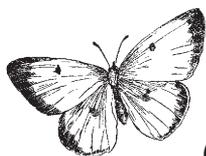
Part 1: “Down and Dirty: Getting Started” covers everything you need to know in order to choose the right site, pick the right plants, and get them off to a rip-roaring start. Not artistic? Don't worry! I've included lots of tips for creating a great planting plan, with no special drawing skills required. Hate planning *anything* on paper? I've got you covered, too—learn how to set out a great-looking garden with whatever perennials you already have on hand!

Part 2: “Let's Get Growing!” is the place to turn to for the nitty-gritty on keeping your perennials (and bulbs, too) hearty, healthy, and looking their very best. Once you've

seen how terrific your first perennial planting turns out, you'll want to fill your yard with these fabulous flowers. But you don't need to cash in your retirement account to afford more perennials—just follow my simple tips for increasing your collection with the plants that are already growing in your yard.

Part 3: “Perennial Possibilities” explores the pretty and practical ways perennials can light up your landscape—from sprucing up shady spots to attracting beautiful birds and butterflies. You'll also get the lowdown on all the traditional garden favorites, as well as some new and exciting selections for you more adventurous gardeners to try.

Part 4: “Light Up Your Life with Bulbs!” is your source for the basics on growing and enjoying bulbs, corms, rhizomes, tubers, and more. Check out the bulbs for every reason and season, and every spot in your yard. I've included dozens of tips for top-notch tulips, delightful daffodils, and other garden classics, as well as some lesser-known bulbs that add an exciting touch to all kinds of perennial beds and borders.



Throughout this book, look for the special repeating features like “Jerry’s Gems” (some of my very best tips), “Making Cents” (money-saving hints), “Mixers & Elixirs” (recipes for homemade pest controls and fertilizers), and “Grandma Putt’s Wisdom” (time-tested tips that’ll help you avoid time- and money-wasting mistakes). You’ll also find illustrated perennials arranged alphabetically (and with handy growing tips) throughout the book, starting on this page.

So there’s no more excuses! It’s time to bring some old-fashioned charm and beauty to your 21st-century backyard. Read on, my friends, and welcome to the wonderful world of perfect perennials!



Achimenes
Achimenes hybrid

A beautiful bulb perfectly suited for pots and hanging baskets