‘Top’ Spring Flowering Perennial Plants

From Pat Curran
CCE Tompkins County

‘Easy’ defined: relatively long-lived and drought-resistant, don’t need frequent division, disease/pest resistant, staking not essential, winter-hardy, not fussy about soil if well-drained, don’t spread too much, preferably bloom for several weeks, good foliage quality.

**Perennials for Sun**

- Iberis sempervirens ‘Autumn Snow’
- Paeonia ‘Seashell’, peony
- Pulsatilla vulgaris, pasque flower

**Comments**

evergreen candytuft, petite shrub
watch out for botrytis, a fungal disease
flowers & seedheads; needs good drainage

**Perennials for Light Shade**

- Brunnera macrophylla ‘Jack Frost,’ ‘Looking Glass’
- Dicentra eximia, fringed bleeding heart
- Dicentra spectabilis, old-fashioned
- Doronicum orientale, leopard’s bane
- Helleborus x hybridus, Lenten rose
- Lathyrus vernus, spring vetchling
- Primula denticulata, drumstick primrose
- Pulmonaria ‘Trevi Fountain’, lungwort
- Sanguinaria canadensis, bloodroot
- Smilacina racemosa, false Solomon seal

**Comments**

deer-resistant hosta substitute
long-blooming; may spread
bleeding heart showy; goes dormant in August
showy yellow daisy; may go dormant
deer-resistant early bloomer
showy & early; good drainage
prefers moist partial shade
showy; mildew-resistant variegated foliage
durable; single-flower spread by seed; may go dormant Aug
showy flowers and red fruit

**Reference:**

Herbaceous Perennial Plants, Third Edition, by Allan M. Armitage
Perennials for American Gardens by Ruth Rogers Clausen and Nicolas H. Ekstrom
The Well-Tended Perennial Garden: Planting & Pruning Techniques, by Tracy DiSabato-Aust

**Learn more:**

Cornell Bluegrass Lane perennial research:
[http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/cornell_herbaceous/](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/cornell_herbaceous/)
Missouri Botanic Garden Plant Finder (over 6800 plants):

**Garden Guidance**

[www.gardening.cornell.edu](http://www.gardening.cornell.edu)

**Published:** August 2016

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