



Southern Living
ANNUALS &
PERENNIALS

Flowers in the Landscape



A classic border often follows a color theme, such as that of pastels. However, the look of the border will change from season to season as flowers reach their seasonal peaks and give way to other plants. These midspring blooms include foxgloves, poppies, sweet William, and begonias.

Perennials. Large perennial beds and the mix of flowers within them define a classic English treatment called a *border*. For an effective border, be sure to provide a strong background to help the plants stand out. Plan a color theme such as pastels, bright colors, or all white. Choose plants with as much seasonal variety as possible, and the border will show off year-round color. Annuals can bloom for months; use them to fill color gaps between the waxing and waning of perennials. Then the border will always have something to offer during each season.

Make your border at least 6 feet deep (10 feet is even better) to allow plenty of room for combining annuals and perennials successfully. The border can be as long as your space, time, and money allow. The classic border treatment also involves a fair amount of shoveling, as you may change the initial placement of plants when you experiment with what looks good in your landscape.

A few perennials are sturdy enough to use as *ground covers*. Many of these spread to blanket the ground with handsome evergreen foliage so that the plants look good even when not in bloom. Evergreen

daylilies and hellebores are excellent choices. Perennials used in this manner require a bit more maintenance than do typical ground covers; you may need to divide them to rejuvenate the planting.

Use color to control space. Warm-colored blooms attract your eye and stand out against the background. They are more noticeable and tend to come forward in the landscape. They shrink the space between the plant and your eye, making a large garden feel smaller and more intimate. On the other hand, the cool colors—especially blue and violet—tend to recede, creating the perception of depth. And just as light-colored walls open up a space, so do pale blooms.

Use color to unify. Repeat one shade of blooms, such as white or pale lavender, to unify an assortment of brightly colored flowers.

Use white for nighttime enjoyment. White is not only striking but also clearly visible under moonlight or outdoor lighting. The most effective white flowers are flat blooms, such as those of moonflower and single peonies. Light-colored foliage, such as the large leaves of white caladiums or chartreuse hostas, also shows up well after dark. Because nighttime is often the only opportunity you have to enjoy a deck or patio, always consider white flowers for at least one spot in your garden.

Use blue liberally for various effects. Create excitement by pairing color-wheel opposites, such as blue with orange or yellow. For a quieter mood, combine blue with white, silver, or violet; these shades emphasize the coolness of blue.

A spot of yellow pansies and deep pink tulips adds color to a quiet combination of white azaleas, woodland phlox, and purple pansies.

