

Big blooms can last all year



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Question: I love the colorful, abundant flowers of summer, but they never seem to last long enough for me. Is there a way to prolong this beautiful and colorful time of the year?

AnsWER: I agree that this time of year is not long enough! And, yes, there is a way to prolong it.

I am talking not only about prolonging the blooms on each individual plant but planning your garden in such a way as to have blooms from late winter into and including fall from a wide variety of trees, shrubs, bulbs, tubers and flowers.

There are several ways to prolong blooming in your garden. First and foremost is the planning. This is key if your dream is to enjoy flowers for the longest possible time every year. The second is the proper care of the individual plants.

Make your plan! What kind of blooms do you want, what care level, what color? Decide when you want your first blooms and what will follow.

Blooms in late winter? No problem. With crocus, you can begin enjoying some blooms even in late winter! Some crocus even bloom while there is still snow on the ground.

Other early bloomers are snowdrops, iris, daffodils, tulips, bleeding heart (*Dicentra spectabilis*), hellebore, creeping phlox (*Phlox subulata*), heart-leaved brunnera, winter aconite, witch hazel, camellia and pansies, to name just a few.

Head into early spring with forsythia, scilla and iris reticulata.

Mid-spring blooms include rhododendrons and azaleas, muscari, redbud trees, dogwood, magnolia, ornamental cherry and crabapple trees, hyacinths, primrose, wood anemone, allium, spirea, lilacs and more.

July and August bring an amazing selection of lilies, along with carpenteria (bush anemone), St. Johns Wort, poppies, butterfly bush, dahlias,



PHOTOS COURTESY BONNIE COURTER

Hydrangeas are September bloomers that bloom and grow well in morning sun and afternoon shade.



Snowdrops are early bloomers, usually one of the first of all spring flowers to bloom.

fuchsia, agapanthus, etc.

The September bloomers include hydrangea, crape myrtle, daisies, sedum and more.

October bloomers include: agapanthus, asters, Japanese anemone, chrysanthemum, sedum, cyclamen and carnations.

November bloomers include the asiatic lily, celosia, some dahlias, calla lily, chrysanthemums, purple alstroemeria and more.

The hardest part? Choosing from the amazing selections and knowing that I have only given you a sampling. Hard to

believe that there are more!

After selecting your plants, they will need proper care. Make sure that the plants you select are right for the area in which you plan to place them. Half the battle is choosing the correct plants for your garden conditions.

Remember, in selecting blooms for your garden, that some are perennial (they come back every year) and some are annuals (will last only one season without reseeding).

For perennials, select healthy plants, plant in well-drained



St. Johns Wort is low-maintenance perennial that blooms in July and August.

soil in an appropriate area for that plant, water and feed well, deadheading promptly, when indicated.

Feed with a water-soluble fertilizer every three to six weeks. As a rule of thumb, prune flowering shrubs and trees right after they bloom. This will ensure more blooms for the following year.

When selecting annuals, look for healthy, young, bushy plants without flowers. You do not want any that have been in the pot long enough to become root-bound or that are going to seed.

Once planted, water well and

feed often (every three to six weeks). Regular watering is important as annuals do not have a deep root system. Mulching will help retain moisture, but will inhibit reseeding.

Remove dead leaves and any spent flowers promptly. This encourages new blooms and growth.

Do you have a gardening question? Contact the Douglas County Master Gardeners via email at douglasmg@oregonstate.edu, by phone at 541-672-4461 or visit 1134 SE Douglas Ave., Roseburg.