Perennial flowers from seed for colourful summer borders

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PERENNIAL FLOWERS FROM SEED
— for colourful summer borders

By W. DAWSON

IT is just as easy to grow perennial flowers from seed as it is annuals, in some ways it is actually easier.

Perennials need not be sown in glass­houses during the winter like primulas or bi-annuals which need overhead cover, but may be sown outdoors at any time now, preferably however, in a sheltered spot.

Instead of preparing a seed box you should prepare a little nursery plot in an inconspicuous but convenient spot in your garden. Make a fine seed bed and draw shallow furrows about two inches apart, and plant as you would in a seed box.

This little nursery plot should receive special attention.

First, you should see to it that it never lacks moisture during the germinating period. This may involve daily watering if you happen to run into a hot, dry spell. Extra attention should be given to keeping weeds pulled. There will be more of them to contend with here than in a seed box. You should thin out the seedlings to stand at least two inches apart in the row, even in the early stages. More thinning may be needed if the seedlings must wait an unusual length of time before trans­planting.

Transplant the seedlings to their permanent location when they are two inches high. If space becomes available earlier and the plants are of reasonable size they may be moved then. Later transplanting is also successful if you give the plants time to get established before September. Transplanting must be accompanied by watering, and watering the day after transplanting is also necessary.

The favourite perennials grown from seed are aquilegia (columbine) Shasta daisy, carnation, delphiniums, perennial gaillardia (there is also an annual gaillardia, so be sure to read the description), perennial sweet pea, pyrethrum or painted daisy, strawflower, gloriosa daisy, canna, queen poppy, polyanthus, statice, aurora daisy and dahlias.

Almost as popular, and certainly worth considering are Allyssum saxatile, candy­tuft, sempervirens, coreopsis, geum, perennial baby's breath, perennial lupin, pen­stemon, blue salvia (Salvia farinacea), perennial scabiosa and gazania.

With all these flowers to choose from, and also gladiolus and iris grown from bulbs, red hot pokers and agapanthus from roots, and others like chrysanthemums grown from cuttings, you can have a pure perennial border with a wide assortment of varieties.

Perennials tend to provide the most bloom in early or mid-summer (except chrysanthemum), and to give the longest blooming period and the greatest variety of flowers it is best to make space in your perennial border plan for interspersing annuals like marigolds, zinnias and petunias. These keep the border attractive in late summer and autumn.
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If you’ve got a truck that continues to overheat even though you’ve checked out all the likely causes (slipping fan belt, leaks in pressure cap or radiator core), take a close look for a loose cylinder head joint. An opening here would be too small for coolant to leak into the engine, but plenty big enough to admit high-pressure exhaust gas into the coolant. Exhaust gas would push out a lot of coolant through the overflow pipe, and also contaminate whatever water remains. This contaminated water might become acid enough to do some real damage. A crack in the head or block would have the same effect.

**Watch out for bumps and grinds in gear boxes!**

When the enclosed gears in your plant start making noises like an overloaded washing machine, it’s likely to cost your company some money. That’s because you’re probably listening to severe wear on gear teeth.

Make a quick check of the alignment and the clearance between the gear teeth. Then check the bath level of the oil. If it’s too low, the gears will just "slap" into it. What you want is a paddlewheel action that will keep the gears covered with the lubricant.

If there’s still noise after your check, it will pay you to call in a Caltex Fuel and Lube Engineer.

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Washed lubrication fittings are easier to find and clear away when you want to use the pressure gun. Your grease will force water out from bearings and ball sockets. And you can spot and clear away water accidentally squirted into spark plug depressions, etc.

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Dirt and water in diesel fuel can ruin a fuel injector in no time. Even if you keep the fuel clean during storage, there’s still a chance that temperature changes will create enough condensate in the fuel tank on your rig to start rusting in the injector. Several operators have pretty well solved this problem by partially draining the fuel tank once or twice a week. Simply draw off about a gallon of fluid through the drain valve at the bottom of the fuel tank. You lose some fuel this way, but you also get the accumulated water and other contaminants clear out of the fuel system. The cost of the fuel you drain off is a small loss compared to the repair bills on the fuel injector.

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