

## 5 Beautiful, Easy-Care Perennials

### 1 Colorful Garden Island



Illustration by Carlie Hamilton  
for Garden Gate

An easy-to-grow low-maintenance 5-plant perennial garden bed for busy people, weekend gardeners, and beginners.

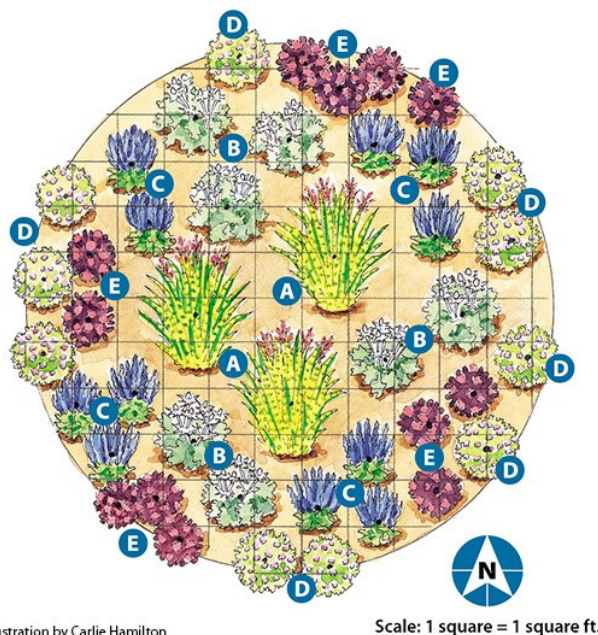
[An easy 4-plant garden in pink can be found on this page.](#)

Garden Gate magazine came up with a very easy perennial garden plan that's great for the newbie gardener to create as a single or multiple island bed design. You can use this design idea to create additional square or rectangular matching gardens by outlining the gardens with annuals and potted plants to create rectangle and square-shaped beds. This garden can grow as you do.

If you wish to add some colorful annuals to pop in between the plants, it's easy to just place potted annuals or your own suitable houseplants among the perennials and add some more eye candy to your garden. Potted annuals means you can control their spread, and you can move them around or remove them as the perennials grow. Some annuals are suitable houseplants. Most of your houseplants would love to spend a summer outdoors under proper conditions, and you'd be surprised at their growth and good health.

Below, you will find the planting diagram and a list of suggested perennials from Garden Gate magazine. You can choose any annuals you wish to fill in gaps or to outline your garden bed. My alternative plant list is included below. Add birdbaths and birdfeeder, and you have a lovely little bird habitat.

Perennials listed come in all kinds of varieties. If you wish to switch some out with a more personalized pick or color, just choose another with the same growth and care attributes and needs, and be sure they will grow in your garden's hardiness zone. The plant label will tell you what zones that plant will thrive in. To find your plant hardiness zone, just check the USDA Cold Hardiness Zone Map.



## Planting Key

### A. Maiden grass 'Gold Bar'

Upright habit with horizontal gold stripes on leaves; copper-pink late summer to fall flower heads

Full sun

**Size** 3 to 5 ft. tall, 2 to 3 ft. wide

Cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 9

**Number to plant** 3

### B. Sea holly 'Sapphire Blue'

A beautiful and unique-looking plant. I've grown them, and they look awesome as accent or focal point plants in any garden design. They are beautiful in large purple pots. Spiny blue flowers in mid- to late summer with spiky foliage. Awesome as a cut flower.

Full sun

24 to 30 in. tall, 18 to 24 in. wide

\*\*This plant is not happy being transplanted, and has a long taproot, so be sure you plant it where you ultimately want to keep it.

Cold-hardy in USDA zones 5 to 9

**Number to plant** 7

### C. Salvia 'May Night'

Dark Lavender-blue flowers open in early to midsummer that will bloom for two months

Full sun

**Size** 18 to 24 in. tall, 15 to 18 in. wide

**Hardiness** Cold-hardy in USDA zones 4 to 9

**Number to plant** 11

**Note: Salvia comes in many colors and sizes - feel free to choose one or more types or colors.**

**You can mix it up with lavender of the same height, or Veronica, which also comes in several colors and similar heights.**

### D. Cranesbill (Perennial Geranium)

Light pink flowers in late spring, reblooms

Full sun to part shade

**Size** 6 to 9 in. tall, 12 to 18 in. wide

**Hardiness** Cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 8

**Number to plant** 10

### My choice as an alternative: Snow in Summer (cerastium)

This is a beautiful, mounding groundcover plant covered in pretty little white flowers spring til fall.

It spreads out like a low mat of foliage and flowers. Keep trimmed if you don't want the 12" spread. I just let mine grow unless it grows outside it's boundary. It looks very pretty all year. Leaves are soft to the touch, and blue-green. The foliage adds texture to the garden.

Snow in Summer also looks beautiful growing over or between rocks, tumbling over the base of a potted plant, and as a filler for any garden spot that needs a little something between plants. Trim as you wish to keep it growing in a particular way. Mine blooms intermittently beginning in late spring and all through summer. The foliage is ornamental even when the plant is not blooming. I plant this at the base of my potted honeysuckle as a filler and spiller.

Grows in Full Sun and Partial Shade

**Number to Plant 10*****E. Sedum - 'Lynda Windsor'***

Sedum is a succulent and needs very little attention.

Dark burgundy leaves and stems on a compact plant

2- to 3-in.-wide clusters of ruby flowers in late summer to fall

Full sun

**Size** 12 to 18 in. tall, 12 to 16 in. wide

**Hardiness** Cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 9

**Number to plant** 12

**Alternative:**

I grow several varieties of sedum in similar sizes and in a variety of colors of bloom and foliage. Choose one in the color that you like best.

Sedum is one of the easiest plants you can grow. Easily transplanted to other parts of your garden and landscape. It likes to wander a little, so I give away a lot of divisions. Grows well in-ground, and is beautiful in pots, as well. I have several growing in shallow succulent planters set into my gardens, and I grow some in-ground. Sedum is also very pretty as part of a planting of succulents and growing among cactus plants. "Autumn Joy" has big pink and ruby-colored flower heads.

I grow some to fill in the bare areas of soil at the bottoms of potted trees. Choose sedum that is less than the 18" tall suggested above - The fat, succulent stems will tend to flop over if too tall when it flowers. Mine average 10 inches tall. Somewhere between a ground cover and small plant. Needs no trimming, and t is drought tolerant. Rabbits seem to ignore it.

[\*Easy Cottage Garden for Beginners--->\*](#)

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