

Spring perennials an easy, low-maintenance choice



Carla Keast

AROUND THE YARD

I have a soft spot for most flowering perennials, especially the lower maintenance ones. Of course I have a favourite, and it changes with the season. Right now, it's moss phlox and leopard's bane, although the cornflower are starting to catch my eye.

The following perennials will give you

high returns for very little effort on your part, as long as you match the plant to the place. That means matching the plant's optimum growing conditions to the light and moisture of the spot where you're locating the plant. Always check the plant label, as different varieties of a plant sometimes have different growing condition requirements.

Moss phlox (*Phlox subulata*) should be named rolling out the carpet as it spreads its bright pink, or slightly subdued purple flowers out with a spectacular flourish. Give it full or partial sun, and average moisture until it becomes established,

after which, it is drought tolerant. Keep an eye on it, though, it can spread.

Leopard's bane (*Doronicum*) isn't all that common, probably because it goes dormant after flowering. It is a terrific easy-to-grow spring flowering perennial, though. The daisy-like flower is a bright crisp yellow. It has a fairly long flowering period, a nice bonus in mid spring. Give it full or partial sun, and moist soil. It does not like hot dry soil.

We'll know summer is on the horizon when the cornflowers (*Centaurea montana*) start strutting their stuff. They don't so much form a flower, as toss their blue wispy petals up above the foliage where they hang out until well into summer. It prefers full sun, and will do just fine in either moist, well drained soil or dry earth.



Submitted photo

Leopard's bane will give you a high return for very little investment.

Give these plants the growing conditions they want, and they will give you the flowers you want, and ask for very little in return.

Carla Keast has a Master's degree in Landscape Architecture and is a Winnipeg-based freelance landscape designer. She can be reached at contact@carlakeast.com

Eliminating the Canadian Wheat Board