

# Reimagining the Perennial Palette

*With all the interest in the New Perennial Movement and a market shift towards resilient landscapes, a new palette of perennials has emerged at the intersection of horticulture and ecology. This lecture editorializes on that intersection and how home gardeners and professional horticulturists might reimagine the nature of gardening.*

## Grasses

*Grasses form the basis for functional layers—the green mulch that creates a sustainable, living weft.*

1. *Andropogon gerardii* 'Dancing Wind' (Dancing Wind big bluestem)
2. *Schizachyrium scoparium* 'Standing Ovation' (Standing Ovation little bluestem)
3. *Andropogon ternarius* (splitbeard bluestem)
4. *Andropogon glaucopsis* 'Liberty Blue' (Liberty Blue purple bluestem)
5. *Koeleria macrantha* (junegrass)

## Green Mulch and Horticultural Spackle

*Grass-like and easily lumped into the latter, sedges have increased dramatically in popularity in the last five years for their versatility, particularly in shady circumstances.*

1. *Carex* after spring shearing
2. *Carex appalachica* (Appalachian sedge)
3. *Carex pensylvanica* (Pennsylvania sedge)
4. *Carex grayi* 'New Moon Mighty' (New Moon Mighty Gray's sedge)
5. *Carex albusina* (white bear sedge)
6. *Eurybia divaricata* (eastern wood aster)
7. *Packera plattensis* (Platte River ragwort)
8. *Prunella vulgaris* 'Grandiflora Mix' (Grandiflora selfheal)
9. *Prunella vulgaris* 'Under the Sea' (Under the Sea selfheal)



Greater Des Moines  
**Botanical Garden**

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10. Parking Lot, Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden
11. My gravel garden featuring *Eragrostis trichodes*, *Symphotrichum pilosum*, *Bouteloua* 'Blonde Ambition' etc.
12. *Eriogonum allenii* 'Little Rascal' (Little Rascal barrens buckwheat)
13. *Euphorbia corollata* (redneck baby's breath)
14. *Erigeron philadelphicus* (marsh fleabane)

### **Asters, etc.**

*The aster family contains two of the top 10 perennial crops (USDA 2014 Census of Horticultural Specialties), echinacea and coreopsis, along with many other favorites.*

1. *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii* (Deam's black-eyed Susan)
2. *Rudbeckia* 'Glitters Like Gold' (Glitters Like Gold black-eyed Susan)
3. *Rudbeckia* 'American Gold Rush' (American Gold Rush black-eyed Susan)
4. *Vernonia* 'Southern Cross' (Southern Cross ironweed)
5. *Vernonia* 'Summer's Swan Song' (Summer's Swan Song ironweed)
6. *Symphotrichum cordifolium* 'Snowstorm' (heartleaf aster)
7. *Symphotrichum* 'Lalla' (Lalla hybrid stoloniferous aster)
8. *Echinacea paradoxa* (yellow coneflower)
9. *Echinacea pallida* (pale coneflower)
10. *Echinacea atrorubens* (Topeka coneflower) and *E. tennesseensis* (Tennessee coneflower)
11. *Echinacea* hybrid strain in Kelly's garden
12. *Echinacea* 'Green Twister' (Green Twister coneflower)

### **Vertically Integrated**

*Verticality is the sort of hot design trend that talking heads like to rave about. Rhetoric aside, it presents a wide range of planting opportunities, especially to evoke wildness and authenticate sense of place.*



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1. *Rudbeckia maxima* (giant coneflower)
2. *Silphium perfoliatum* (cup plant)
3. *Silphium perfoliatum* 'The Holy Grail' (The Holy Grail cup plant)
4. *Silphium mohrii* (Mohr's rosinweed)
5. *Silphium pinnatifidum* (cutleaf prairie dock)
6. *Angelica atropurpurea* (purplestem angelica)
7. *Arnoglossum atriplicifolium* (pale Indian plantain)
8. *Napaea dioica* (glade mallow)
9. *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Fascination' (Fascination Culver's root)

## **Floral Resources**

*Milkweeds, agastaches, mints and more continue to rise in popularity for their pollinator appeal. Their persistence and durability as perennial plants guarantees multiple seasons of garden interest.*

1. *Agastache* 'Velvet Crush' (Velvet Crush hybrid hyssop)
2. *Agastache nepetoides* (giant golden hyssop)
3. *Pycnanthemum muticum* (short-toothed mountain mint)
4. *Pycnanthemum tenuifolium* (slender mountain mint)
5. *Monarda bradburiana* (eastern horsemint)
6. *Salvia involucrata* (rosebud sage)
7. *Asclepias tuberosa* (butterfly weed)
8. *Asclepias purpurascens* (purple milkweed)



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