

Become the Ultimate Flower Gardener! – Jenny Rose Carey,
Central Rappahannock Master Gardeners Association
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In this increasingly hectic world, it is lovely to be able to create and tend to a seasonal and beautiful flower garden that suits your needs as well as those of pollinators and birds. I love plant-packed gardens and intermingled combinations. I garden without pesticides and herbicides and suggest that you should too.

When planning your ultimate flower garden begin by thinking of the following things:

1. **Why do you want to grow flowers?** What is your theme or purpose? Flowers could be for visual beauty, for fragrance, to produce cut flowers, or to feed pollinators or birds.
2. **Start a flower wish list** – Match against your flowery goals as you make your list.
3. **Where should it be?** For plentiful flowers find an area with six or more hours of sun a day. Average soil is fine for most flowers. **Plant flowers where you will enjoy them.**
4. **What size should your garden be?** Start small and expand as you learn.
5. **What seasons do you want flowers?** When do you use your garden? Divide the wish list into seasons. **The Four Flowery Seasons:** 1. Early to Mid-Spring. 2. Late Spring and Early Summer. 3. High Summer. 4. Late Summer into Autumn
6. **Add flowers of different types** – annuals, biennials, perennials, hardy and tender bulbs.
 - **Hardy Annuals (Cool-season)** – *Papaver rhoeas* – Shirley Poppy, *Borago officinalis* – Borage, *Nigella* – Love-in-the mist, *Tropaeolum* - Nasturtium
 - **Half-hardy Annuals (Warm-season)** – *Cosmos bipinnatus* – Cosmos, *Zinnia elegans* - Zinnia, *Celosia argentea* ‘Flamingo Feather’ – Celosia, *Nicotiana* – Flowering Tobacco
 - **Biennials** – *Digitalis purpurea* – Foxglove – useful for the ‘June Gap’
 - *Dianthus barbatus* – Sweet William – useful for the ‘June Gap’
 - **Perennials** – *Aquilegia vulgaris* – Columbine, *Platycodon grandiflorus* – Balloon Flower, *Pycnanthemum muticum* – Blunt Mountain Mint, *Helenium* – Helen’s Flower
 - **Hardy Bulbs** – *Narcissus* ‘Rapture’, *N.* ‘Beryl’ and *N.* ‘Topolino’, *Tulipa* ‘Honky Tonk’, *Viridic*, *Scilla siberica* – Spring Squill, *Iris reticulata* ‘Cantab’, *Lilium* - Lilies
 - **Tender Perennials** – *Gladiolus* – Gladiolus, *Dahlia* – Dahlia
7. **Design your flower bed using flower shapes** – Mix up flower shapes to help a variety of pollinators and improve design. (Tubular for hummingbirds, flat for large butterflies).
8. **Look at the roles of the flowers in the flower bed** – Bold beauties and supporting cast.
9. **Consider plant presence in the flower bed.** Size, shape, foliage texture and color.
10. **Think of flower colors and combinations that you love** – Visit other gardens for ideas.
11. **Your amended “Wish List” becomes your buying list.**
12. **Grow plants for seeds and bulbs** – To reduce plant transportation costs and impact.

If you are interested in seeing images of my garden at Northview, Ambler, PA,

feel free to follow my Instagram accounts –

@Northviewgarden and @Jennyrosecarey

Books by Jenny Rose Carey ‘*Glorious Shade*’, Timber Press 2017

The Ultimate Flower Gardener’s Guide, Timber Press 2022

To receive my once-a-month email – go to my website: jennyrosecarey.com