

Annuals vs. Perennials

You've decided to add some color to your garden and every store has dozens of the 4 or 6 packs of annuals lined up just like candy bars at grocery check out lines. It is tempting to choose a few petunias, some trailing lobelia and other "color spots" as garden departments like to call them. Your mind sees them filling pots, jazzing up your empty garden beds and perking up your entry area.

Now, stop and think. How many times have you done the same thing? Year after year, planting these temporary flowers, giving a brief display to your yard and making a negative impact on your wallet? Annuals are short lived and most of us are drawn to them every spring and summer.

The frugal alternative is to search out the perennial offerings, those plants often not looking like the stars of the garden department. Most come in gallon containers or larger and sport price tags many times the amount of the annuals.

Wait a minute. Why would these be the frugal gardener's choice? The basic difference is annuals are going to provide that burst of color once – and a perennial plant comes back each year, or is hardy year round.

If you consider gardening with perennials like putting money into an investment account, you start to get the vision. Besides continuing to add to the beauty and value of your garden, you can divide perennials every couple of years; making them a gardener's equivalent of [a compound interest bearing account!](#)

Now, there is something a frugal gardener can embrace! Think of how many pots you can fill on a permanent basis? Which gardeners on your gift list would love a plant or a pot full of plants? The price of that one perennial keeps going down as

you see it multiplying over the years.

Once you understand the differences between annuals and perennials your decision to fill your garden with things like hardy geraniums, ornamental grasses and flowering shrubs will be clear. And, if you're still needing the color burst from a pack of petunias, you can get one and splice them in between the work horses of your garden...the perennials!

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