

BLOOMIN' EASY

Six low-maintenance plants fit for Wisconsin weather

BY LAUREN SIEBEN

Whether you have a green thumb or you struggle to tell an orchid from an azalea, these plants are staples for Wisconsin gardeners as the ground starts to thaw and spring comes into bloom.



HOSTAS

The look: Leafy and green, hostas are ubiquitous in the Midwest.

Maintenance: These perennials require little attention and thrive in full shade or partial sun. Plant them near the east or north sides of your home, wooded areas or shady spots in your yard.

Expert insight: "The large leaves give nice texture to any garden spot," says Evan Kasper, landscape designer and sales representative at La Rosa Landscape Company Inc.



PRAIRIE DROPSEED

The look: Thin, dense grass that grows in graceful arches.

Maintenance: This ornamental grass is native to the region and tolerates a wide range of soils. It can also withstand drought conditions (or that week when you forget to water the plants).

Expert insight: "The blooms have a unique popcorn fragrance," says Jeff Hershberger, professional landscape architect at David J. Frank Landscape Contracting Inc.



DAYLILIES

The look: Brilliant floral blooms in shades of orange, yellow and pink.

Maintenance: Varieties such as Happy Returns and Stella De Oro are repeat bloomers that require full to partial sun.

Expert insight: "Daylilies are nice to use at entry points for a splash of color," Kasper notes.



HYDRANGEAS

The look: Flowering shrubs in a variety of colors.

Maintenance: Paniculata hydrangeas come in numerous shapes, sizes and colors. Depending on the variety, hydrangeas require partial shade to full sun.

Expert insight: "Incrediball hydrangeas are exceptionally sturdy, and the Invincibelle Spirit variety is a pink blooming hydrangea with an extended blooming season from mid-summer to frost," Hershberger says.



GREEN GEM BOXWOOD

The look: Round, dense green foliage.

Maintenance: This hardy broadleaf evergreen stays green with a bronze hue throughout winter and performs well in partial shade to full sun. At first, Green Gem boxwoods require regular watering.

Expert insight: "These are ideal for formal gardens or foundation plants, but keep them protected from winter winds," Kasper says.



DIERVILLA

The look: Colorful in red, orange or black to provide a pop of color in your garden.

Maintenance: This shrub can survive in sun or shade and has a high tolerance for drought.

Expert insight: "Deer resistance makes Diervilla an easy choice for gardens in our area," Hershberger says. **M**