

Test Your Knowledge

A flower producing both male and female parts is called:

- A. A perfect flower
- B. A complete flower
- C. A confused flower
- D. A happy flower

Answer below



Did You Know

Plants have certain areas where they will grow. Some have a large growing range like Oaks while others like Skimmia only grow in zones 6 and 7. Whether you believe in the long term effects of global warming or not, this part of the world has gone through a stretch of above average temperatures. Because of this, the nation's plant hardiness zone map has been readjusted. What does this mean to the gardener? Plants that wouldn't grow north of Long Island can now be grown in much of the state besides the Litchfield Hills.

"He is happiest who hath power to gather wisdom from a flower".

Mary Howitt

Answer: A– Perfect flowers are capable of producing fruit. In plants having only pistillate flowers (female) a plant with male flowers (staminate) must be present to provide the pollen.

Please send newsletter requests, questions and topics to designingeden@charter.net. To receive this newsletter send one box of milk chocolate (Nuts and caramels only, no creams) with your contact information to the address listed above.

Garden Calendar

July:

Water plants not receiving at least 1" of water per week. Water deeply and thoroughly. Avoid light sprinkling. Indication of a plant needing water includes drooping or curling leaves, burnt leaf edges, needle or leaf loss. Scrape away the mulch and place your hand on the soil. If it feels cool, there is most likely sufficient moisture in the soil. If the soil doesn't feel cool to the touch it's time to take out the hoses.

It's okay to prune back most perennials at any time. By pruning after bloom, you'll end up having a tidy plant for the rest of the season. Doing so might even encourage a second bloom. You can also cut back fall blooming perennials by 1/3 to prevent staking.

Trim evergreens such as yews, hemlocks and boxwood. Shearing stimulates new growth and will create a denser shrub. Remember to shear hedges so the base of the hedge is slightly wider than the top. This will allow sunlight to reach the hedge evenly.

August: Now is the most beneficial time to reseed damaged turf or install turf areas.

You can transplant and divide most perennials if the plant is given adequate water.



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Greetings from Richard



Boy, do I love this time of year. Not because of the heat, not because of the humidity. The reason I love this time of the year is because my wife is a teacher. Having her not work in the summer gives me at least an extra hour a day to prepare for the day's events. The spring and fall seasons are difficult to say the least.

My morning routine as father and husband is to get the kids out of bed, fed and dressed by the time I leave for work at 7. Many times a truck or trailer needs to be loaded or unloaded before I can leave for work. Some days I'm up at 3:30am and outside by 4 am. Yes, 4am! I'm finding out that I need to slow down a little. I recently found out that there is an ongoing joke at my kid's school between my wife and their teachers. It seems that more often than not little Ben's clothes have been put on backwards. In my defense, who says shirt buttons have to go in the back? I don't have one shirt where the buttons are in the back. So remember, no matter how busy and stressed you are and how hectic life becomes we shouldn't forget to slow down and smell the flowers. I promise it will make you feel better unless you have allergies. Enjoy your summer.

Richard

Richard Schipul

Plants to Cover and Smother

What is a groundcover? The word groundcover is a term widely used within the field of horticulture. Is it a plant or is it a growth characteristic which certain plants have? A groundcover is any plant which spreads laterally to cover the soil surface.

The most obvious groundcovers 'hug' the ground but a groundcover could grow to any height and could be an annual, herbaceous perennial or some type of woody plant. Even some spring flowering bulbs could be classified as a groundcover. Why use groundcovers you might ask? The benefits of using groundcovers are plentiful. Once established, most groundcovers need very little maintenance. Because of the manner in which they spread, groundcovers can prevent soil erosion on a steep slope. They also form a dense canopy over the ground which limits the amount of light that reaches the ground, this in turn prevents weeds from germinating. Groundcovers help moderate soil temperatures and retain soil moisture the same way mulch does, but you don't have to replenish groundcovers every year as you do with mulch. Groundcovers also add another dimension to gardens. The use of a groundcover in the landscape will tie garden areas together helping to create a unified effect.

For those of you who think Pachysandra is

your only option, here are some of my favorite groundcovers worthy of mention.



Bunchberry. Resembles flowering dogwoods in every way besides its growth habit. Native groundcover which does well in moist shade. 6" tall. White flower, red fruit, purple fall color.



Lady Fern. Grows to 30". A versatile, native, low maintenance fern. Will usually naturalize in a variety of growing conditions.



Golden star. Native groundcover growing to 6-8". A flush of yellow flowers in spring and then intermittently throughout the season. Excellent for naturalizing in a woodland. Attracts butterflies.



Leadwort. Fine in Fairfield County. Not supposedly hardy in Litchfield County but I've been growing it for 8 years. Slow to leaf out in spring. Purple fall color. Most intense blue flowers in spring and fall you'll ever witness.

What You're Saying

Stephanie came home while the sod was almost complete in the front yard of her Riverside, CT home and said "Oh my God, you really are an artist. It looks beautiful". Thanks Stephanie for the kind words. Below is the before, in progress and after photo's. Design by Susan Cohan, landscape by Designing Eden LLC, house by Greg's Carpentry.



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