



Illustrated by F. A. Giles

Herbaceous Perennials

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Herbaceous Perennials,

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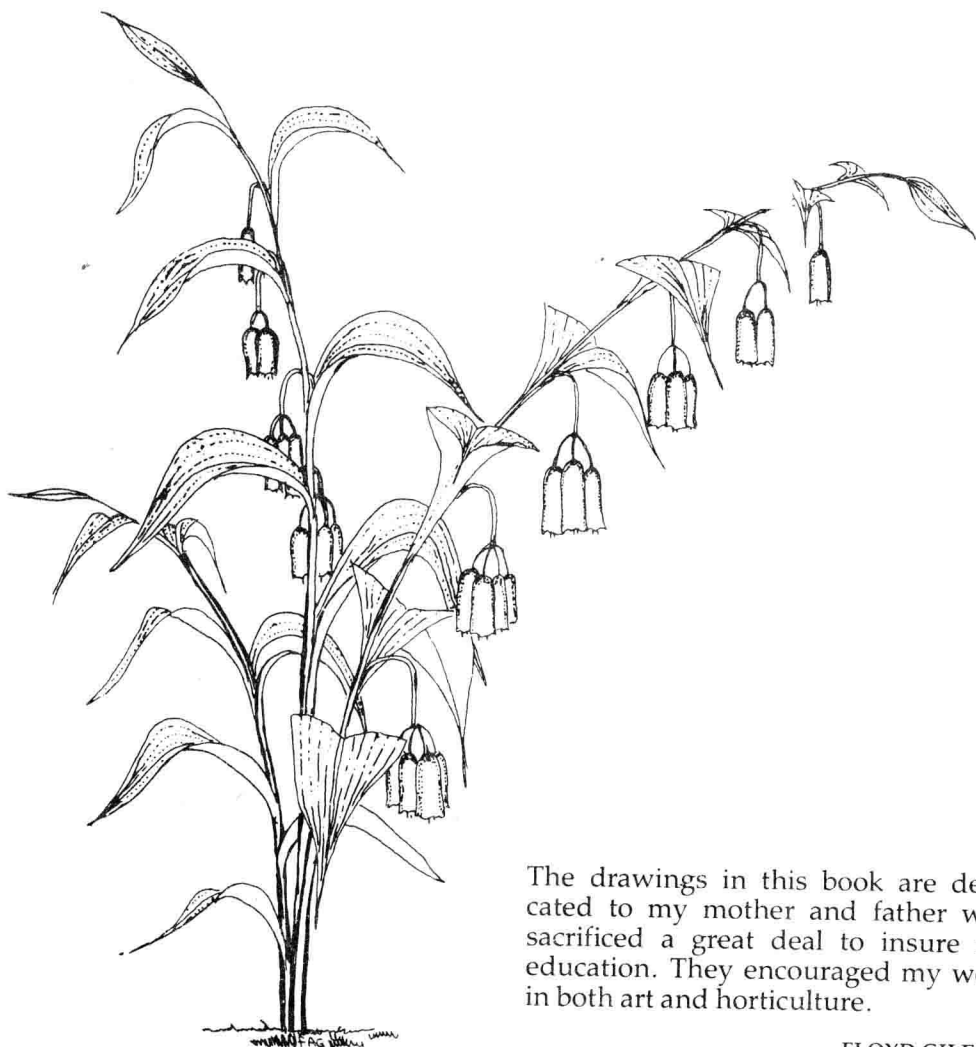


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The drawings in this book are dedicated to my mother and father who sacrificed a great deal to insure my education. They encouraged my work in both art and horticulture.

FLOYD GILES

Preface

We would like to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to three classic reference works in the field:

BAILEY, L.H., *The Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture* (New York: Macmillan, 1941)

THE STAFF OF THE L.H. BAILEY HORTORIUM, Cornell University, *Hortus Third: A Concise Dictionary of Plants Cultivated in the United States and Canada*; initially compiled by LIBERTY HYDE BAILEY and ETHEL ZOE BAILEY, revised and expanded by the staff of the L.H. Bailey Hortorium (New York: Macmillan, 1976)

CUMMING, RODERICK W., and ROBERT E. LEE, *Contemporary Perennials* (New York: Macmillan, 1960)

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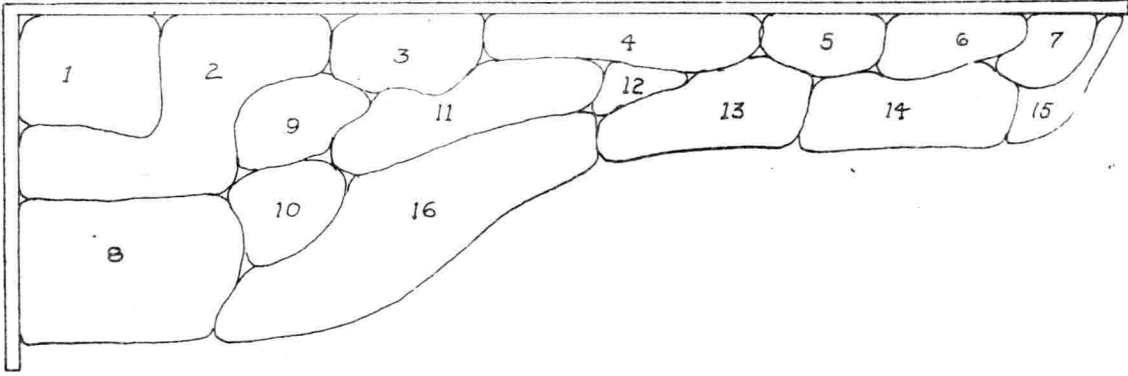
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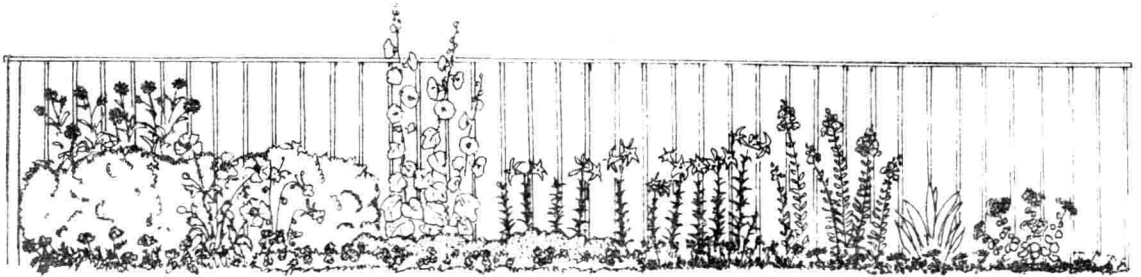
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Perennials



1. HELIOPSIS
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3. ALCEA ROSEA
4. LILIUM
5. PHLOX
6. IRIS
7. SEDUM SPECTABILE
8. VERBENA CANADENSIS

9. AQUILEGIA X HYBRIDA
10. PAPAVER ORIENTALE
11. AURINIA SAXATILIA
12. LYCORIS SQUAMIGERA
13. DIANTHUS BARBATUS
14. SEDUM SPURIUM 'SCHORBUSSER BLUT'
15. SEDUM ACRE 'GOLD CAP'
16. AUBRIETA DELTOIDEA



Acanthus

consists of 20 or more species of perennial herbs and subshrubs found mostly in the Mediterranean region but extending to tropical and subtropical Asia and Africa. The genus name comes from the Greek word *akanthos*, meaning "thorn."

Acanthaceae

(Acanthus family)

Acanthus spinosissimus (*Acanthus spinosus*)

Spiny Bear's-breeches

FLOWERS: The purple flowers are borne in long erect spikes atop 2- to 4-foot flower stalks. Each flower is 1 inch across and is subtended by large, leaflike, shiny green, often fringed purple bracts tipped with recurved spines. The irregular, broadly flaring, tubular flowers have a 4-lobed calyx with 2 lobes smaller than the other 2, a corolla with a short tube, an expanded 3-lobed lower lip, no upper lip, and 4 stamens. The flowers are single- or double-lipped and are borne sessile in July and August for a 2-month-long flowering season.

LEAVES: The attractive, bold foliage is mostly basal, deeply and irregularly pinnatifid, with each lobe ending in rigid, glistening white spines. The shiny dark green leaves are rigid and leathery and are up to 2 feet long and 1 foot across. The leaves must be handled with gloves.

PLANT CHARACTERISTICS: This impressive 3- to 4-foot-high plant grows vigorously. Once planted, it is difficult to eradicate because each broken root is capable of growing.

GARDEN VALUE: *Acanthus spinosissimus* is a stately perennial. Although the flowers are handsome, the plants are often grown solely for their distinctive foliage, with the flower stalks being removed as soon as they appear. It is an excellent anchor plant for the pe-



rennial garden; the foliage can also be displayed effectively in narrow or individual beds. Subtropical in appearance, it is sometimes grown in permanent landscape containers on the terrace or patio.

The flower spikes may be cut for flower arrangement; they last weeks in water. Although the original colors tend to fade, the flowers are often dried for winter bouquets.

CULTURE: *Acanthus* is a very adaptable plant. It will grow in sun or shade; however, flowering is best in sun. This plant grows best in a warm, rich, light, well-drained soil.

This plant's wide-ranging roots make it a good selection for dry areas.

Plant in spring or fall. Space plants 3 feet apart. Too much water can be fatal, especially in winter or spring. Because the plants need protection in the northern states, you should mulch them heavily in fall. Those planted in the fall need extra protection. Feed regularly with a balanced fertilizer during the growing season.

After flowering for 3 to 5 years, they can be dug up and divided in either spring or fall.

Acanthus can be divided in spring or propagated by seed sown in spring. Seedlings take 3 years to flower. Root cuttings taken in fall require two years to produce a flowering-sized plant.

ADDITIONAL NOTES: This plant was a favorite of the Greeks and Romans of the 5th century B.C. The leaf and scroll (which acts as a stalk) form the principal adornment of the Corinthian capital.

NATIVE HABITAT: Southern Europe. ◇



Achillea

contains nearly 100 species of usually aromatic perennial herbs native to the Northern Temperate Zone of the Old World.

The name *Achillea* refers to Achilles, who, according to legend, was supposed to have healed his wounds with the plant.

Compositae—Anthemis tribe
(Composite family)

Achillea filipendulina (*Achillea eupatorium*)

Fern-leaf Yarrow



FLOWERS: The many small, yellow flowers are $\frac{3}{16}$ inch across and are borne in flower heads from June to September. The dense, convex corymbs

are nearly 5 inches across. The disc flowers are tubular, bisexual, and fertile. The ray flowers are female and fertile.

LEAVES: The aromatic gray-green leaves are alternate or in a basal rosette, simple, 1- or 2-pinnatifid, linear-lanceolate, up to 10 inches long, and hairy.

PLANT CHARACTERISTICS: This perennial grows up to 4 feet high. The stiff, erect stems are furrowed and glandular-spotted, almost hairy.

GARDEN VALUE: The plant provides brilliant midsummer color in the perennial border, mixed border, or wild flower garden or a naturalized area. The flowers are excellent for cut flowers or dried for winter bouquets. If the lower leaves are stripped off when the stem is cut, the fresh flowers will last longer.

CULTURE: The plant requires a sunny site in a well-drained, fertile soil. Plant in spring. Space plants about 2 feet apart. Scatter a handful of bonemeal about the base of the plants each spring. Although the plants tolerate dryness, they produce better flowers when kept fairly moist. Taller varieties usually need staking when grown in a rich soil under ideal conditions. Flower heads turn brown and ugly and should be removed. Clumps should be divided after 3 or 4 years of flowering to maintain vigor.

It is most easily propagated by dividing the plant in spring. Seeds may be sown in the spring and will flower the following year.

NATIVE HABITAT: Asia Minor, the Caucasus.

SELECTED CULTIVARS AND VARIETIES:

♦ 'Coronation Gold': Abundant 3-inch-wide, mustard-yellow flowers, borne from June through August; gray-green foliage. ♦ 'Gold Plate': Butter-yellow flower heads up to 6 inches across. ♦ 'Parker's Variety': Deep yellow flowers 3 to 4 inches across. ♦ *var. alba*: White flowers. ♦

Compositae—Anthemis tribe
(Composite family)

Achillea millefolium
Common Yarrow

Also known as Milfoil, Sanguinary, Thousandseal, Nose-bleed, Soldier's Wound-wort, Knyghten Milfoil, Old Man's Pepper

FLOWERS: Many small flowers, about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch across and usually muddy white, are borne, in terminal, flat, dense corymbs 2 to 3 inches across, from mid-July to mid-September. The involucral bracts are oblong and somewhat hairy. The disc flowers are tubular, bisexual, fertile, and yellow. The ray flowers are either absent or female and fertile.

LEAVES: The strongly aromatic leaves are alternate or in a basal rosette. They are simple, finely 2- or 3-pinnately dissected, and tomentose or nearly glabrous. The lower leaves are lanceolate to oblanceolate, long-petioled—up to 8 inches long—and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch across. The upper leaves are lanceolate to linear and sessile.

PLANT CHARACTERISTICS: This weedy perennial grows up to 3 feet high and is rhizomatous. The flowering stems are simple or corymbosely branched above and pubescent or nearly glabrous.

GARDEN VALUE: *Achillea millefolium* is best reserved for the wild flower garden or a naturalized area. It can be

grown in very poor, dry soil where grass cannot grow and can be mowed to keep it low. Only the cultivars should be grown in the perennial border. The flowers are excellent for fresh flower arrangements or dried for winter bouquets.

CULTURE: The plant requires a sunny site in a well-drained, fertile soil. Plant in spring. Space plants about 12 inches apart. Scatter a handful of bonemeal about the base of the plants annually. Although the plants tolerate dry conditions, they produce better flowers when kept fairly moist.

They are propagated by division of the plants or by seed sown in spring.

NATIVE HABITAT: Dry soils in Europe and western Asia; it has been naturalized in North America, New Zealand, and Australia.

ADDITIONAL NOTES: The dried leaves have medicinal properties. The flowers are used in Sweden as a hop substitute in brewing beer.

SELECTED CULTIVARS: The cultivars are superior to the species. ♦ 'Crimson Beauty': Bright red flowers 2 to 3 inches across. ♦ 'Fire King': Bright rosy-red flowers 2 to 3 inches across atop 18-inch stems, with silvery foliage. ♦ 'Kelwayi': Magenta-red flowers. ♦ 'Rosea': Pink flowers. ♦ 'Rubra': Deep pink flowers.

RELATED SPECIES:

Achillea nana: Dwarf Yarrow. Dull white flowers $\frac{3}{8}$ inch across are borne in dense, rounded corymbs atop 6-inch-high stems throughout most of the summer. The leaves are strongly aromatic, finely dissected, and about 1 inch long. This stoloniferous perennial

is tufted and about 8 inches high. Its native habitat is Southern Europe. The primary use is in a rock garden, as an evergreen carpet, and between flagstones in walks. It is an excellent plant for hot, dry, sandy sites. The plant will not exceed 4 inches in height when grown in sandy soil.

Achillea ptarmica: Sneezewort, Sneezeweed, White Tansy. Flowers up to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch across are borne in loose, rounded corymbs 3 to 6 inches across from July to September. The disc flowers are greenish-white; the ray flowers are white. The dark green, shiny leaves are alternate or in a basal rosette; they are sessile and simple, range from linear to lanceolate, grow 1 to 4 inches long and $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 inches across, and are finely serrate, essentially glabrous, and slightly clasping at the base. This rhizomatous perennial grows 1 to 2 feet high. The stems are glabrous or slightly pubescent. The foliage is fine-textured; the plant is grown for its cut flowers. All parts of *Achillea millefolium* have a pungent flavor and, when dried, excite sneezing. For best performance, the plant should be divided annually. Cultivars are propagated by division. Its native habitat is Europe and Western Asia, and it has been naturalized in Eastern North America. The root was dried, ground, and used for homemade snuff in colonial times.

◊ 'Angel's Breath': Profuse, pure white flowers. ◊ 'The Pearl': White flowers atop a 15-inch-high plant. This plant was known as "the great cemetery plant" in the late 1800s. ◊ 'Perry's White': Double white flowers. ◊ 'Snowball': Double white flowers.



Achillea tomentosa: Woolly Yarrow. Bright yellow flowers $\frac{1}{8}$ inch across are borne, in dense $1\frac{1}{2}$ - to 2-inch-wide flat-topped corymbs, from June to September. The gray-woolly rosette is almost evergreen at the base and is aromatic when crushed. This mat-forming perennial grows 6 to 12 inches high. It requires full sun and light sandy soil. Use in a rock garden, between flagstones, and as a ground cover in sunny areas, especially if the top is cut off to reveal the gray matlike basal foliage. This plant can be maintained as a low ground cover by mowing. Light foot traffic usually causes little damage. The plant spreads rapidly unless growing in very poor soil. It should be divided annually for best performance. Its native habitat is Europe and Western Asia.

◊ 'Aurea': Darker yellow flowers. ◊ 'Moonlight': Pale yellow flowers atop a 1-foot-high stem. ◊ 'Nana': Dwarf form. ◊

Aconitum

comprises over 100 species of summer- or autumn-flowering perennials with tuberous roots and stems that are erect, trailing, or somewhat climbing. The plants are native to the Northern Temperature Zone.

The roots, leaves, and seeds of the plants in the *Aconitum* genus are poisonous—as are the flowers of some species—not when touched but when consumed or when the sap enters the bloodstream through scratches or wounds. *Aconitum* roots could be mistaken for horseradish. Some species are a source of drugs. The poison used on arrows in India came from one Himalayan species.

According to legend, Theophrastus named the plants *Aconitum* because he had observed large colonies of them growing around Acona, Greece. The common name Monkshood refers to the hood-shaped flowers.

Ranunculaceae

(Crowfoot or Buttercup family)

Aconitum carmichaelii (*Aconitum fischeri*)

Azure Monkshood

FLOWERS: Numerous showy, deep purple flowers about 1½ inches high are borne in August and September on pubescent pedicels in a dense panicle. The center raceme is 1 to 8 inches long. The unusual flowers are irregularly symmetrical and bisexual and have many stamens. The showy part of the flower consists of the 5 petaloid sepals. The upper sepal is large and helmet-shaped; the lateral edge of the opening is almost straight. There are from 2 to 5 small petals. The upper 2 are spurlike and are included in the helmet; others are minute or absent.

LEAVES: The handsome, leathery, dark green leaves are alternate, single, palmately cleft, and 2 to 6 inches across. The leaves remain attractive throughout the season.

PLANT CHARACTERISTICS: This sturdy, erect perennial grows 2½ to 4 feet high, and in some sites it may attain a height of 6 feet or more. The roots are tuberous and turnip-shaped.

GARDEN VALUE: *Aconitum carmichaelii* has been popular for a long time in European gardens but has never achieved extensive popularity in America. The tall, dignified spikes are handsome in the middle and back of the perennial border, in the shrub border, as a specimen clump, or in a naturalized wooded area. The plant contrasts beautifully with many perennials of different color and form: the white, red, or purple flowers of *Phlox paniculata* and *Lilium*; the white flowers of *Chrysanthemum maximum*; and the yellow flowers of the late-flowering *Helenium* and *Achillea filipendulina*. It is also attractive with *Anemone japonica*, *Helianthus*, and *Aster* 'Harrington's Pink'. Planted with *Delphinium*, the vertical background effect of the perennial border extends into late summer. This plant provides excellent, unusual, cut flowers.

CULTURE: *Aconitum carmichaelii* grows best in a cool, moist, well-drained soil with abundant amounts of leaf mold or organic matter. It prefers partial shade, where the flowers last for a longer time, but will grow in full sun if sufficient moisture is available. *Aconitum* thrives in cool, mountainous regions with cool nights; it is difficult to grow in climates with hot summers.

Plant in fall or early spring. Place