Top 20 Perennials for Sun

This is a list of the some of the best perennials that will accept varying degrees of sun. See a Garden Advisor for help in determining the best plants for your situation.

Acanthus, Flame
Anisacanthus wrightii- Native. An upright, 3-4' shrubby perennial with shiny green leaves that blooms reddish-orange tubular flowers in summer. Hummingbirds simply love this plant. The delicate, airy foliage makes a good contrasting background in flower beds. Very tough.

Artemisia
Artemisia spp. Artemisias are great perennials for dry areas with poorer soil. Most sport silver-grey, fine cut foliage, grow from 1-3', and all make a great accent plant, with the variety 'Powis Castle' being a favorite. Best in hot, full sun beds and borders.

Aster, Hardy Blue
Aster oblongifolius- Native. Strong, durable Texas perennial that is widely adapted to most well drained soils. Lovely blue flowers will grow two to four feet high in sun. Blooms late summer and into the fall season, attracting many varieties of native pollinators. Mature, 2-3' clumps can be easily divided in fall.

Autumn Sage
Salvia greggii- Native. Many cultivars bloom in wide combinations of red, pink, coral, purple, yellow, and white all spring, and heavier in fall on this tough perennial. Needs good drainage. Can be treated as a 2-3' x 3' shrub where it is evergreen farther south, semi-evergreen in our area returning each spring. Lightly shear between blooms.

Blackeyed Susan 'Goldsturm'
Rudbeckia fulgida 'Goldsturm'- Native. This selected, compact strain of the Texas perennial is fast becoming a favorite. Blooms mid to late summer with masses of golden, yellow black-eyed daises, attracting butterflies well. Spreads to form colonies of 2-3' high masses. Sun loving and drought resistant, and very hardy.

Blackfoot Daisy
Melampodium leucanthum- Native. This tough and very long blooming plant forms short, 12-18" mounds of spilling foliage covered in fragrant, white daisies most of the summer. Attracting butterflies and pollinators, it is ideal in rock gardens with very well drained soil.

Daylily 'Stella d'Oro'
Hemerocallis x hybrida- With a wide variety of heights and colors and a grassy, lush form, there's a place for a daylily in any perennial garden. Shorter favorites such as 'Stella d'Oro' and many others have bright yellow, orange, or red tubular blooms that each last only one day, but are quickly replaced by more. Low maintenance in borders or containers.

Gaura, Lindheimer's
Gaura lindheimeri- Native. Several cultivars of this wildflower, with delicate white and pink flowers that look like butterflies. This 3-4' high perennial will bloom throughout early summer and into fall. Great for that English garden or meadow, where a blooming, softening effect is desired.

Iris, Bearded
Iris germanica spp.- The bearded group of irises have several height classifications, but all are ideal, long-lived perennials, with dramatic shows of large flowers in mid-spring. These make tough, easy additions to any garden, as their long, spiked leaves offer much contrast to other foliage forms in perennial beds and borders. Really a great performer sited under deciduous trees, and beautiful as a cut flower.

Lamb's Ear
*Stachys byzantina***-** A wonderful, spreading groundcover that forms clumps of bright, silvery furred foliage, 10-18" high. In summer, pink to lavender flower spikes appear, which can be removed if desired. Very drought tolerant, it appreciates ground level irrigation.

Lantana, Hardy
Lantana camara- Native. This older species has many cultivars, and all are covered from summer into fall with combinations of bright orange, pink, yellow, or red flowers that attract butterflies well. Easy to grow, long blooming, and extremely durable perennials averaging 3-6' high.

Mexican Bush Sage
Salvia leucantha- Showy Salvia with purple and white bi-color blooms in late summer to fall, attracting bumblebees. Blooms are soft above silver leaves, reaching 3-4'. Tolerates drought. The dwarf 'Santa Barbara' grows 2'-3' tall. Mulch in winter.

Mexican Mint Marigold
Tagetes lucida- Native. Sometimes called Texas Tarragon, this Texas herb has edible leaves with a pleasant, anise like aroma, making it a very usable substitute for tarragon. Bright golden yellow flowers are borne on top of plant in fall,18-30", attracting migrating butterflies. Morning sun and moist, well-drained soil are best.

Phlox, Creeping
Phlox subulata- Hardiest and most dependable of the creeping phlox varieties, this is the old-fashioned light pink variety. With an evergreen mat of 4-6" spiny foliage, it is great in rockeries, fronts of borders, or as a sunny ground cover.

Phlox, Summer
Phlox paniculata- This group of taller growing wildflowers have been developed for maximum height and long-lasting color. Best in sun with good air circulation during warmer weather, Phloxes come in many colors and habits, average 18-36" high, and attract butterflies and hummingbirds well.

Purple Coneflower
Echinacea purpurea- Native. Very hardy summer bloomer 24-36" with purple flowers, and shorter, white and other improved varieties exist. Great for cut flowers, it attracts a wide variety of native pollinators, especially butterflies, very well. Remove old flower heads to increase flowering.

Ruellia 'Katie's Dwarf'
Ruellia brittoniana 'Katie's'- Durable variety of our much taller native perennial that blooms purple flowers all summer. Low growing, 8-12", it makes great border plant. Re-seeds and can be divided after first frost. Very adaptable, it tolerates wet, poorly drained clay soil, to heat and dryness. Mulch in winter.

Skullcap
Scutellaria suffrutescens- Native. Hardy evergreen, mounding perennial with small leaves. It stays low, spreads wide and blooms heavily all summer. Purple and other colors exist. With a 12-18" height, it is great in rock gardens, borders and prairie lawns. Shear back to encourage re-bloom.

Turk's Cap
Malvaviscus arboreus drummondii- Native. One of our largest perennials, with large, 2-4' bright green foliage great for lighting up shady to part sun areas, and long-blooming red 'fez' shaped flowers May to November that attract hummingbirds and butterflies, and fruit attracting birds.

Yarrow
Achillea spp. With green-leafed and grey-leafed yarrows, all offer bright, yellow flat- topped flowers in summer, held high above attractive, lacy foliage, with the favorite 'Moonshine' and silver-leafed versions tougher and more drought tolerant.