

Community PlantAid Nursery

The notes his week are concentrating on some perennials that are available at the nursery, are proven performers and have, in the past, done really well in my Marysville garden.. They may have been recently potted on so please look after them until they have developed a substantial root system.

Persian Catmint (*Nepeta × faassenii* 'Dropmore')

It should be no surprise that this catmint does so well in Marysville when you realize that it was developed in Manitoba, Canada! Certainly gives an indication of its toughness. The bright blue flowers seem to be on the plants all summer and a shear after the first flush will ensure a further flowering. This plant is very cold resistant and benefits if all the past season's growth is removed when it looks ratty and the new grey-green foliage is starting to show. It only grows less than 30cm tall by an equal spread and likes full sun.

Twinspur (*Diascia integerrima*) is an easy and very rewarding clumping perennial with many wiry stems culminating in mauve-pink snapdragon-like flowers in spring and autumn. It can be grown in the front of the garden bed and looks terrific in a large container. Usually all it needs in terms of maintenance is an occasional pinching out and the removal of the spent foliage at the end of the season. New growth will appear from below and beside the clump. Likes full sun.

Beard Tongue (*Penstemon* cultivars)

If there was one perennial that I would grow in Marysville it would be a Penstemon. The plants at the nursery are a mixture of hybrids – red, purple, mauve, pink, white and multicoloured. They flower here from early summer into the winter but this can be ensured by cutting back the stems that have finished flowering down to 10cm above the ground. During winter shear they benefit from having all the old growth removed making sure not to cut off any new growth which will produce the initial flowers next season. Ultimately the plant will clump up and may need to be divided but I don't worry. Expect the plants to be up to a meter in height. I reckon every garden in Marysville should have at least one Penstemon. (They are great weed suppressers as well!!)