



FINDING THE RIGHT PLANT FOR THE RIGHT PLACE

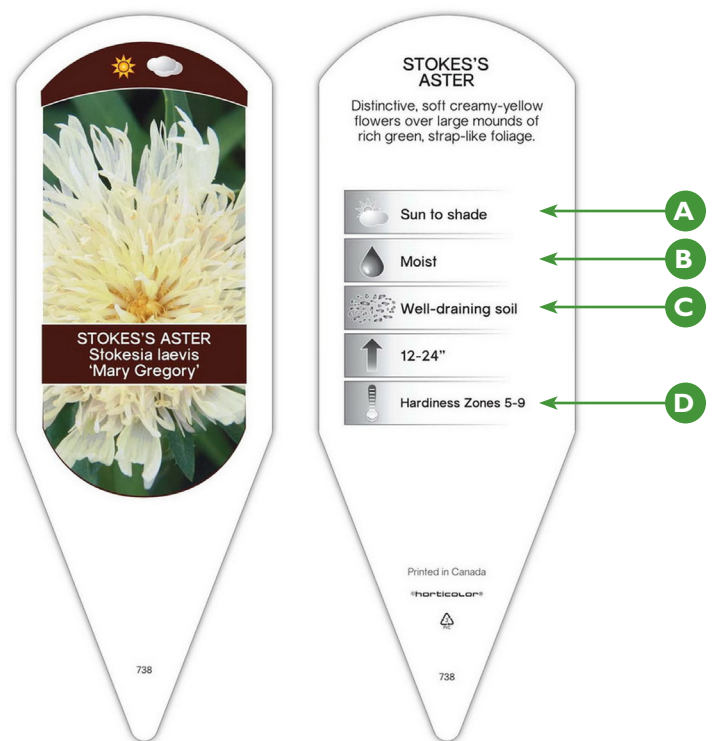
GARDENING becomes much easier when you choose the right plant for the right spot.

If you choose plants that are best suited to the location they'll be planted in, they should grow to be healthy with minimal work. The right plant in the right spot should establish quickly with a healthy root system. These healthy plants are better suited to withstand any environmental issues. For example – healthy plants that are planted in ideal locations are less likely to become diseased, and less likely to be adversely impacted by insect damage. While insects are still going to munch on your plants, the healthy plant will just shrug it off and keep on growing. It's the unhealthy plants that have less energy to respond to random insect dining and are more adversely impacted.

So how do you go about finding the right plant for the right spot? Here are a couple things to consider:

- **Evaluate your general environment.** For example – are your summers long, hot and humid, or milder with cool nights even when the days are hot?
- **Think about what plants grow naturally where you live.** Native plants will always perform best, however work with your local nursery to choose non-native plants that are not invasive and that respond well to your specific conditions.
- **Consider your planting spots and their unique conditions.** Is one garden space much drier while another bed is cooler and wetter? Defining your planting areas will help you identify plants that will respond best to each spot in your garden.
- **Identify the character of each bed:**

- A How much sun does it receive?** Choosing plants for the correct amount of sun is step one in keeping them healthy and happy. This is the most basic thing you can do to help your plants thrive and is often included on plant tags.
- 6 or more hours of sun is considered full sun
 - 4 to 6 hours of sun is considered part sun/part shade
 - Less than 4 hours of sun is considered shade



B Is your bed close to a water source?

- Plants that need little water can be beyond the reach of the hose
- Plants that need more water should be within easy reach of your watering source

C Is the soil wet, dry or normal? Plant tags should include information on water requirements, but always ask your local nursery if you have questions.

- Plants that need good drainage won't thrive in moist conditions
- Plants that need moisture won't thrive in dry beds
- Consider nearby shrubs and trees with extensive root systems – they leave less water for annuals and perennials.

- **Are you planting in a high traffic area or out of the way? Maintenance matters!**

- If you plant high maintenance plants in an area you frequent, you're more likely to maintain them deadheading, pruning, fertilizing and pest treatments. High maintenance plants should be placed in locations you see often.
- Plants that can take being ignored are well suited to corners of the garden. These are considered your "low maintenance" plants.

- **What structures are near the beds that might affect them?**

- Is your bed against a wall that receives sun all day? If so, it will be hotter than a similar full sun bed not against a wall
- Walls can also serve as windbreaks, making them a nice location for delicate plants

D What is your USDA hardiness zone? Knowing your zone will help you identify plants that will be winter hardy, and that fit your specific planting space. You can find the USDA hardiness zone here:

<https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb>

The hardiness is most important when choosing a perennial, shrub or tree as they're most likely to make it through the winter.

- **Other things to consider.**

- If planting where kids play, choose plants that can take some abuse.
- If planting under a window or in a narrow space, choose plants that don't naturally spread. Choosing a plant that fits the spot makes maintenance much easier.

When all else fails, and you're feeling overwhelmed – try native plants! Each area has a wealth of native plants to choose from. They are less likely to have pest and disease issues, and should do well in your specific conditions.

Choosing the right plant for the right spot really is as simple as choosing a plant well-suited to the location. Putting in some thought and time before choosing and planting can save time and help your garden be its best. And remember, if a plant doesn't thrive where you've planted it – you haven't failed, consider it a learning experience. You learn gardening by doing, and doing always provides learning opportunities.

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