



## Uncanoonuc Mt. Perennials

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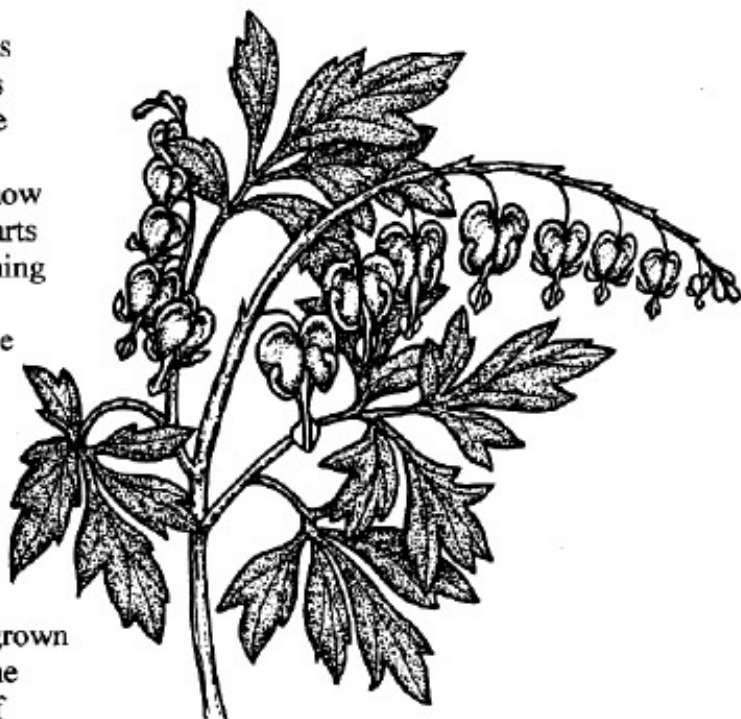
### BLEEDING HEARTS

#### Bleeding Heart

The old-fashioned **Bleeding Heart**, *Dicentra spectabilis*, is a much cherished perennial. (The milky white inner petals extend below the heart-shaped, pink outer petals, hence the common name "bleeding heart".) It is a long lived, low maintenance perennial that gives a wonderful flowering show from May into June and sometimes beyond. Bleeding Hearts form large, rounded mounds 2 ½ - 3' tall and wide of arching stems bearing dark green, compoundly divided foliage.

The pink and white, heart-shaped flowers gracefully dangle side by side on flowering stems up to nine inches long.

Bleeding Hearts make stunning specimen plants in a fairly rich soil that is moist but well-drained. A lightly shaded location is best. The plants will live in deep shade, but flowering will be greatly reduced. Planted in full sun, the foliage's natural tendency to yellow after flowering is accelerated. A cooler spot keeps the plant looking lush and full much longer. In southern New Hampshire, well-grown Bleeding Heart plants look great into September. When the foliage does begin to deteriorate, it can be clipped back. If grown in the full sun and/or a drier location, consider planting a bulky, later emerging plant (eg: Daylilies or Coneflowers) near-by to act as a filler. New plants are easy to produce by division of the clumps in very early spring or, better yet, in the fall. They also may be grown from seed, and self-sown volunteers are sometimes found near the mother plants. Rejuvenation of the plants by division is recommended every five or six years or so.



The **White Bleeding Heart** is *D. spectabilis* 'Alba'. The foliage is light green as it emerges, becoming darker as it matures. The flowers are pure, milky white. It is just as hardy and long lived as the old-fashioned Bleeding Heart - and just as gorgeous with its cool, sophisticated good looks.

'**Gold Heart**' is a newish cultivar of *D. spectabilis*, with bright pink stems sporting bright yellow foliage and the classic pink and white flowers. If this appeals to you, grow it in the partial shade. Rumor has it, full sun will burn the foliage.

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## **Fringed Bleeding Heart**

The **Fringed Bleeding Heart**, *Dicentra eximia*, is a wildflower native to the eastern United States. A rugged and very pretty plant, it forms a rounded mound 12 - 18" high and wide. The grayish-green, basal, very finely divided foliage persists though the season. Showy sprays of mauve-pink, narrowly heart-shaped flowers occur May into June and then in flushes through August. Deadheading (removing spent flower stalks) encourages rebloom. Fringed Bleeding Hearts prefer a spot in partial shade to shade and a rich, moist, well-drained soil. Propagation and rejuvenation advice mirrors that given for Bleeding Hearts on the previous page.

The **White Fringed Bleeding Heart**, *Dicentra eximia 'Alba'*, is a lovely plant. Light green foliage topped with sprays of pure, milky white.

The **Pacific Bleeding Heart** is *Dicentra formanosa*, native to the northwestern United States and very similar to the Fringed Bleeding Heart. It has shorter inner petals, is more tolerant of drier soils and tends to have a spreading versus a clumping habit.

**Cultivars:** As with other plants, cultivars are (surprise) cultivated varieties - these arise from species hybridizing or chance mutation and usually need to be propagated asexually. There are many cultivars of the Fringed Bleeding Heart. Most can tolerate more sun than the species. A few are described below...

**'Aurora' Fringed Bleeding Heart...**

compact, at 12-15", with blue-green foliage and dainty white flowers

**'Luxuriant' Fringed Bleeding Heart...**

a robust variety - deep blue-green foliage and cherry red flowers

**'Stuart Boothman' Fringed Bleeding Heart...**

showy, deep pink flowers over burgundy-blue foliage

