

Home & Garden

Flower Power: tips for planting perennials

(NC)—While each perennial is unique in its own way, there are a few general planting tips to keep in mind that will help minimize transplanting shock and help to ensure your perennials bloom.

"Planting perennials allows you to enjoy permanent, year-after-year display of colours and eye-catching blooms," says Bruce Shuh, Home Hardware.

Shuh offers the following handy hints for planting perennials:

- Before planting, work in large amounts of composted manure, peat moss or garden compost, 20 to 30 centimetres deep.
- Add a small amount of phosphorus fertilizer to encourage rapid rooting after planting. Avoid over-fertilizing, which can lead to rampant growth and poor flowering.
- To protect tender roots from drying out, don't remove perennials from their containers until you're ready to plant them. Water perennials before removing to reduce root damage.

- With a few exceptions, perennials should be planted at the same depth as they were in their containers. To reduce heat stress – for both yourself and your plants – plant early in the morning or in the late afternoon.

- For large-rooted perennials, dig a hole about a spade's width wider than the root ball, spread the major roots carefully, then add the soil back into the hole, firming it down as you go.

- Water thoroughly and deeply after planting to settle the soil around the roots and remove air pockets. After this initial watering, water only when the plant starts to wither slightly.

- When planting, be careful not to overcrowd perennials. This may cause disease and poor performance.

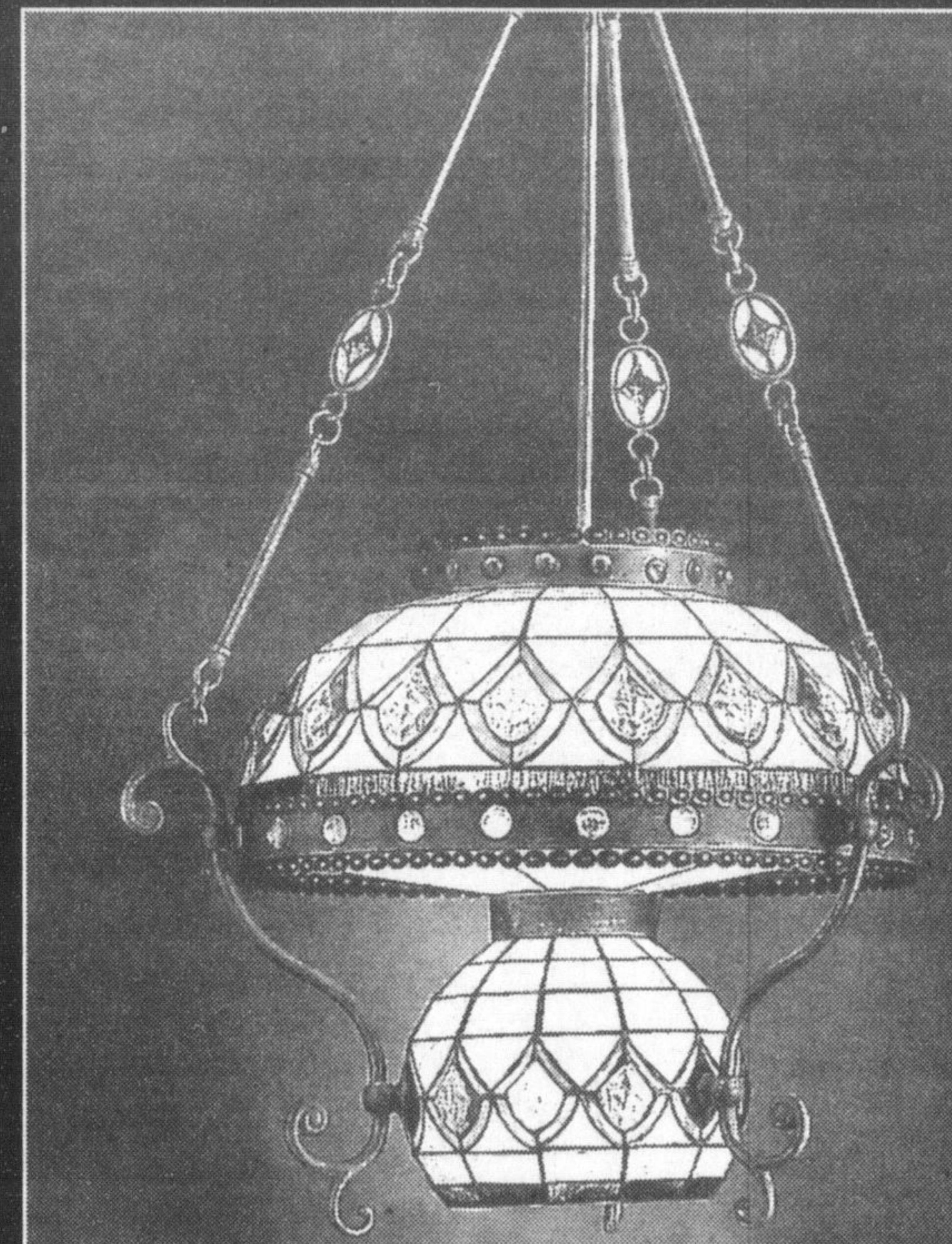
- Avoid frequent, shallow watering. Water less often for longer periods to encourage deep rooting.

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