

# WINNERS

# CIRCLE

THESE STANDOUT VARIETIES PERFORMED STRONG AT TRIALS IN THE UNITED STATES AND ABROAD.

Compiled by Abby Kleckler

**W**ith so many choices, picking the crops that are sure to make your plant lineup shine can be a challenging feat. *Lawn & Garden Retailer* has assembled a snapshot of this year's winning varieties to help you choose what makes the most sense for you to grow. These plants won over judges with their weather tolerance, maintenance requirements, appearance, use of PGRs and other factors.



## ASSOCIATION OF SPECIALTY CUT FLOWER GROWERS

**1. Hydrangea Everlasting series (Plants Nouveau).** These re-blooming hydrangeas were bred specifically for the cut flower market and have long-lasting morpheads that change colors from green to soft shades of pink, purple, blue and red, and back to again to green, making them perfect for event use. Stems grow 3 to 4 feet. Plants are hardy to Zone 5.

**2. Snapdragon Chantilly Series.** This series charmed with its open face and large flowers that give an overall gorgeous impression. Flower stems are 40 to 55 inches, and the series comes in a wide range of flower colors such as 'Chantilly Light Salmon' and 'Chantilly Cream Yellow', making them perfect for spring.

**3. Anemone 'Galilee Blue'.** This variety's strong stems and large flowers provide dependable color in bouquets or single-stem bunches and can be grown earlier to help cut flower growers extend their seasons. Besides blue, magenta pink, violet, scarlet and bicolors are showstoppers in their own right.

## GREEN GOODS



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## ALL-AMERICA SELECTIONS

**1. Angelonia 'Serenita Pink' (PanAmerican Seed).** This elegant yet tough variety brings long-lasting color with very little maintenance in mixed combos on the patio or in the landscape. The plants grow 12 to 14 inches tall and wide and are heat tolerant and deer and rabbit resistant. This angelonia performs best in full to part sun in well-drained soil.

**2. Bean 'Mascotte' (Clause Vegetable Seed).** As the first AAS-winning bean since 1991, this compact variety is perfect for small-space gardens. This bush-type bean produces long, slender pods that stay above the foliage for easy harvest and has white showy flowers during bloom time. Judges liked the crunchiness of the bean and the plentiful harvest all season long in patio containers, window boxes and garden beds.

**3. Gaura 'Sparkle White' (Kieft Seed).** This heat-tolerant variety's long, slender stems sporting a large number of dainty white flowers tinged with a pink blush will add a touch of airy elegance to the garden. Commercial growers can utilize it as a first-year flowering perennial or as an annual. It is perfect for mass plantings in sun-drenched landscape beds, in groupings with other perennials or in larger containers.

**4. New Guinea impatiens 'Florific Sweet Orange' (Syngenta Flowers).** This impatiens

is perfect for brightening gardens or patio containers in partial to full shade with its uniquely bicolored flowers in shades of light salmon to deep orange. Its resistance to impatiens downy mildew make it an alternative for shade gardens where the disease is a concern. Set out in the garden only once night temperatures are above 45° F.

**5. Ornamental pepper 'NuMex Easter' (The Chili Pepper Institute at New Mexico State University).** This compact, well-branched, uniform-in-size plant displays small clusters of four to six fruits on top of the plant in a range from lavender to light yellow and, when fully mature, a light orange. This ornamental chile pepper variety can be grown indoors or in outdoor beds or pots with at least 12 hours of good quality sunlight.

**6. Osteospermum 'Akila Daisy White' (Pan American Seed).** This clear white osteo with a yellow center is easily grown from seed. The uniform plant with open flowers that produces non-stop blooms all summer is more drought tolerant than other osteos and is best in a sunny, well-drained location. Plant in early spring.

**7. Pepper 'Mama Mia Gallo' (Seeds by Design).** This yellow, sweet Italian pepper matures early with long tapered fruits and easy-to-remove skin. Bright yellow/gold fruit are pendant on sturdy dark green bushy plants with excellent

coverage from sunburn. The 24-inch plant takes up less space than similar varieties and offers disease tolerance to Tobacco mosaic virus.

**8. Petunia 'African Sunset' (Takii).** AAS judges found this petunia has attractive shades of orange flowers that prove itself against other similarly colored petunias. It grows evenly and uniformly in the garden while producing a prolific number of blooms all-season long. Germinate seed at 72 to 76° F and once germinated keep temperatures at 65 to 68° F.

**9. Tomato 'Chef's Choice Orange' (Seeds by Design).** This disease-resistant hybrid is derived from the heirloom 'Amana Orange' and provides wonderful flavor only 75 days from transplant. A bright, almost neon, internal color and superior flesh taste and texture make this tomato excellent in soups and sauces. Average size fruits are 12 ounces.

**10. Tomato 'Fantastico' (Pro-Veg Seeds).** As an early-maturing, high-yielding grape tomato, this fruit works great in hanging baskets, container gardens and small gardens. Long clusters of sweet, tasty fruits are held toward the outside of the plant, making them easy to harvest, while these half-ounce graped shaped fruits resistant cracking better than the comparisons in the AAS trials.



## AMERICAN HOSTA GROWERS ASSOCIATION

### **Hosta 'Abiqua Drinking Gourd' (Walden West 1989).**

This hybrid of 'Tokudama' and *H. sieboldiana* boasts dark blue-green seersucker leaves with heavy substance and near white flowers in mid-summer. It matures to 24 inches high by 46-inches wide and is an early bloomer (late June into early July).

## FLEUROSELECT

**1. Begonia 'California Sunlight' (Selecta).** This newcomer is a semi-upright, bushy plant with great garden performance that flowers from May until first frost. Abundant, large orange flowers beam above the dark foliage and cascade down, leaving a swirl of color. The cutting-raised variety will stand out in pots, hanging baskets and containers or look wonderful in mixed beddings.

**2. Lavandula 'Bandera Purple' (Kieft Seed).** Fleuroselect judges were impressed with this variety's compact plant habit and floriferousness. This half-hardy annual shows an abundance of spikes carrying dark purple flowers with purple flags and will thrive in pots, containers or beddings in temperate climates. It's the first commercially compact *Lavandula stoechas* from seed.

**3. New Guinea impatiens 'Florific Sweet Orange' (Syngenta Flowers).** This two-time winner caught the judges' eyes with its bicolor genetics introduced into seed-raised impatiens hawkeri. The showy, full plant has huge flowers presenting splendidly above the foliage. The shade-lover is perfect for hanging baskets and window boxes, for edges and flower borders and for massing beneath taller plants.

**4. Osteospermum 'Akila Daisy White' (PanAmerican Seed).** As the first F1 hybrid osteo from seed in this color, it caught judges eyes and made it a two-time winner. This new variety flowers earlier and more freely than other osteos, from spring to late autumn. The variety thrives in a pot, container or border in a temperate climate, and flowers open during the day and close at night.



## AMERICAN GARDEN AWARD

**1. Verbena 'Lanai Candy Cane' (Syngenta Flowers).** This first-place winner commands curbside attention with striking red-and-white striped beauty. It offers continuous summer blooms stacked atop a well-balanced plant habit and has superior weather tolerance.

**2. Zinnia 'Zahara Cherry' (Pan American Seed).** Coming in second place, this zinnia grows in containers, landscape beds or just about any other sunny location. Its bold-colored flowers bloom continuously all-season long and are both disease and drought tolerant.

**3. Impatiens 'SunPatiens Compact Electric Orange' (Sakata).** Vibrant deep orange blooms helped this variety win third place. SunPatiens fill quickly providing three seasons of color in the garden and in containers. They perform in sun or shade and grow readily in rain or shine, needing no care beyond regular watering.



## PERENNIAL PLANT ASSOCIATION



**Panicum virgatum 'Northwind'.** The 2014 Perennial Plant of the Year is a warm-season switch grass that performs best in full sun and offers golden fall color with blue-green foliage. It can enhance any sunny border, not just a native-, meadow- or prairie-style garden and is adaptable to almost any soil. The variety is hardy to Zones 4 to 10. **LGR**

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