



# Winner's Circle

These impressive varieties wowed judges around the world with their beauty, fragrance and vigor.

By Jasmina Radjevic

**D**eciding which varieties to carry in your garden center can be quite the task. Not all consumers share the same tastes, but you want to stock plants that you know will sell well. That's why each year *Lawn & Garden Retailer* puts together a list of all the award-winning varieties chosen by various well-known organizations. All-America Rose Selections, All-America Selections Hosta Growers Association, Association of Specialty Cut Flowers Growers, Fleuroselect and Perennial Plant Association are all organizations dedicated to providing green industry professionals, as well as consumers, with valuable information about varieties on the market.

#### All-America Rose Selections

All-America Rose Selections (AARS) is a nonprofit association of rose growers and introducers dedicated to bringing exceptional, easy-to-grow roses to gardeners across the country.



Left: 'Mardi Gras'. Top: 'Dream Come True'. Bottom: 'Rain Blue and Purple'.

Its sole function, since its foundation in 1938, has been to test new rose varieties to determine which can be recommended to the rose-buying public as rose varieties of top quality. To be chosen as an AARS Winner, a rose must complete a two-year testing process in nationwide test gardens. Rose varieties in these trials receive only as much care as the average home gardener would be likely to give.

**'Dream Come True' (Weeks Roses).** This rose produces yellow blossoms, blushed with ruby red at the tips, all set amongst abundant matte-green foliage. This variety is a vigorous plant that yields long-stemmed, long-lived blooms with mild tea fragrance, making it appealing in the landscape and a great choice for bouquets. It is bred to have excellent disease resistance. [www.weeksroses.com](http://www.weeksroses.com)

**'Mardi Gras' (Jackson & Perkins).** With blooms in a novel blend of pink, orange and yellow, and a peppery scent, 'Mardi Gras' should enhance the atmosphere in any setting. Each high-centered hybrid tea-style bloom begins as an apricot-orange bud that slowly spirals open to reveal a 4-inch bright-pink and orange bloom with a yellow base. This floribunda has proven to perform exceptionally well across the country with little-to-no care. The colorful blooms are framed with dark-green, semi-glossy foliage, and its upright habit makes 'Mardi Gras' an ideal rose to use as a hedge or in a border with mixed perennials. [www.jacksonandperkins.com](http://www.jacksonandperkins.com)

#### All-America Selections

All-America Selections (AAS) is the oldest international, independent testing organization in North America for flowers and vegetables grown from seed. The organization's purpose is to test new, unsold cultivars; to inform gardeners about the AAS winners; and to earn gardeners' trust in AAS winners. Before an AAS winner is introduced, it is tested at independent test sites across North America. Judges evaluate entries based on novel flower forms, flower colors, flower show above foliage, fragrance, length of flowering season and disease or pest tolerances or resistance. There are four AAS trial categories: vegetable, flower, bedding plant and cool-season bedding plant.

**'Rain Blue and Purple' (Tokita Seed Co. Ltd.).** This viola changes from purple and white to purple and blue as it matures. This results in a spreading pool of cool-blue shades. 'Rain Blue and Purple' exhibited heat and cold tolerance in AAS trials. In winter Southern trials, it



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produced color all season, drawing high scores. Flowering 3- to 4-inch pots can be produced in 70 to 75 days from sowing seed.

### All-American Daylilies

The All-American Daylily Selection Council (AADSC) is an organization that administers a network of test sites throughout North America, which perform rigorous evaluations of daylily cultivars, taking into account more than 50 criteria. The dilemma for today's gardener is selecting from more than 40,000 different registered cultivars. Since 1985, the AADSC has tested or evaluated nearly 6,000 daylilies available on the market. Daylilies earning this award show superior performance across at least five USDA Hardiness Zones.

**'Summer Valentine'.** This variety's blooms are well formed and are adorned with a wide rose eye and picotees edging. The flowers are perched on 22- to 28-inch tall scapes and float about 5 inches above the foliage for a well-balanced presentation. Low maintenance and with high impact, 'Summer Valentine' performs well in borders, beds and containers.

### American Hosta Growers Association

The American Hosta Growers Association (AHGA) is a trade organization for nurseries that specialize in the growing and sale of hostas. AHGA aims to foster interest in hostas through marketing and educational programs, disseminate information on cultural practices and pest problems of hostas, and help to standardize hosta nomenclature. The Hosta of the Year Award

was established in 1996. It is selected by a vote of AHGA members. Award winners are hostas that are good garden plants in all regions of the country, are widely available and in sufficient supply, and retail for about \$15 in the year of selection.

**'Blue Mouse Ears' (E. & J. Deckert).** This popular hosta makes a very tight miniature mound of very thick, rounded, mouse-like, blue-green leaves. A mature plant can grow to 8 inches high by 19 inches wide. Leaves grow to about 2½ inches long by 2¼ inches wide. In July, the plant is topped with dense clusters of lavender flowers on scapes that rise to 12 inches. This is the first time a small hosta has been chosen, so it should be adaptable in any size shade garden.

### Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers

The Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers (ASCFG) provides information on growing techniques, marketing strategies and new developments in the cut flower industry. Each year, the association tests the latest in cut flowers to determine those that perform best.

**'Blue Glitter' (Benary).** Eryngium 'Blue Glitter' serves a dual purpose: It adds height in the back of a perennial border and provides stem length for fresh and dried cut flower production. This variety has silvery-blue stems that unfold into an abundance of small shimmering blue pincushion flowers. The interesting texture and color draw attention in the garden and



Top to bottom: 'Summer Valentine'; 'Blue Mouse Ears'; 'Blue Glitter'.

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in arrangements. Growers appreciate this eryngium for the long postharvest life of the cut flowers. [www.benary.com](http://www.benary.com)

**Fleuroselect**

Fleuroselect is an international

organization for the ornamental plants industry providing a unique platform for its members, 90 companies involved in breeding, producing and distributing ornamentals. Its main activities include the testing, protecting and promoting

of new flower varieties. The Fleuroselect Gold Medal is awarded to cultivars that have been tested by Fleuroselect's team of independent, expert judges and proven to clearly surpass any existing variety in terms of breeding innovation and beauty.



Top to bottom: 'Ballerina Red'; 'Ballerina White'.

**'Ballerina Red' and 'Ballerina White' (Kieft Seeds Holland).**

Armeria 'Ballerina Red' and 'Ballerina White' impressed judges with their excellent garden performance. These new varieties are early and produce an abundance of ball-shaped flower heads on short, strong stems from June to September. These first-year flowering perennials have increased compactness and uniformity in their plant and flowering habit. They also are heat tolerant. The main target for these varieties is the general bedding plant market due to the uniformity, short production time and floridity. [www.kieft-pro-seeds.com](http://www.kieft-pro-seeds.com)

**'Frelander Blue' (Clause).**

Besides being compact and uniform, prunella 'Frelander Blue' flowers early and in great profusion from May to October. It is a vigorous, hardy perennial that is excellent for the front of borders. It can be used for fine edgings in herb or vegetable gardens. 'Frelander Blue' is also appealing in flower beds and containers. Sown from seed, this variety will produce masses of flowers in the first year and come back year after year. Its



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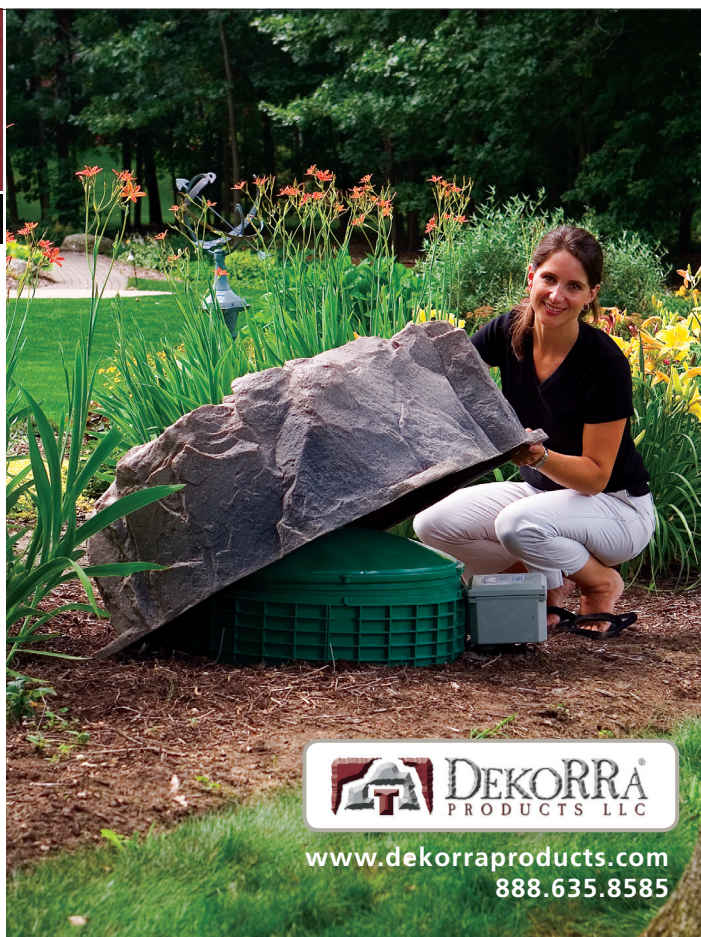


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Top to bottom: 'Freelander Blue'; 'Rozanne'.

spikes of tubular flowers attract bees and butterflies. [www.clause-vegseeds.com](http://www.clause-vegseeds.com)

### Perennial Plant Association

The Perennial Plant Association (PPA) is dedicated to improving the perennial plant industry by providing education to enhance the production, promotion and utilization of perennial plants. The Perennial Plant of the Year Program promotes the use of perennials. Four perennials are selected by the Perennial Plant of the Year Committee from an extensive list of nominations made earlier by PPA members. Each year, members cast their vote for one of the four selected plants with the following attributes: suitable for a wide range of climate types, low maintenance, easily propagated — easily comes true from seed or vegetative propagation, and exhibits multiple seasonal interest.

'Rozanne' (Blooms of Bressingham). 'Rozanne' is a long-season flowering geranium that may be used as a ground cover, as a border-front specimen, as a mass planting or in a patio con-

tainer. The large violet-blue flowers with purple-violet veins and small white centers offer non-stop flowering through the growing season. Hardy to Zones 5 through 8, this variety thrives in full sun to partial shade and boasts exceptional heat tolerance and drought tolerance. It prefers moist, well-draining soil. The

20-inch high 'Rozanne' mounds to a 24- to 28-inch spread. [www.bloomsofbressingham.com](http://www.bloomsofbressingham.com)

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## WHEN DEVASTATION STRIKES YOUR HORTICULTURAL BUSINESS

### option 1:



fig. 1

Bravely hold back tears.



fig. 2

A noble effort. However, noble only gets you so far. Go ahead and let'em rip. Hope that someone takes pity.



fig. 3

Dry your eyes. Abandon all hope. Accept your fate.

OR

### option 2 (the wiser decision):

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