

Winners Circle

Looking for new varieties to add to your production? Look no further! Check out these latest award-winning varieties.

COMPILED BY JASMINA DOLCE

Growing outstanding plants is crucial to the success of your business and reputation. That's why GPN compiles this list of top performers. Each year, multiple associations throughout the United States and abroad evaluate

hundreds of varieties to find the few that stand out among the rest. Top honors are only given to a handful of extraordinary plants. Selected for strength, versatility, beauty and hardiness, here are this year's award winners.

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Cabbage 'Katarina' (Bejo Seeds). This new cabbage has a smaller head size (4 inches) and shape to be grown successfully in containers on patios, decks or in-ground beds. Judges noted that 'Katarina' matured as much as one to three weeks earlier than other comparable cabbage varieties. Once the main head was removed, the plant continued to grow smaller side heads as well. The taste is less bitter and sweeter than conventional varieties.



Geranium 'Brocade Fire' (Dümmen Orange). Sister to Cherry Night, Fire boasts the same unique bicolor foliage, which is complemented with semi-double orange flowers. It is ideal for combination planters, landscapes and garden beds. This robust plant keeps its foliage color and brilliant blooms throughout the summer.



Kohlrabi 'Konan' (Bejo Seeds). Selected for its smooth, globe-shaped bulbs that can grow up to 6 inches in diameter, 'Konan' is the perfect upright size and shape for container gardening and garden plots. It is a great choice for first-time kohlrabi growers as its upright leaves resist insect damage and the plant stays healthy all season long.



Geranium 'Brocade Cherry Night' (Dümmen Orange). Striking foliage paired with large, semi-double, cherry pink blooms make 'Brocade Cherry Night' the perfect accent in containers and gardens. It is relatively easy to care for and once established has a low to medium moisture requirement.



Kale 'Prizm' (Syngenta). 'Prizm' is a foodie gardener's dream, with excellent tasting, almost nutty-flavored leaves that are tender enough to enjoy in fresh salads but also hold up well when cooked. It produces short, tight ruffled leaves that grow well in containers as well as in-ground beds. The almost stemless stalks are quick to re-leaf, so harvest early and often for a continual supply throughout the season.



Mizuna 'Red Kingdom' (Asia Seed Co.). This Japanese mustard is an attractive plant that can be grown in containers or the landscape as an ornamental edible. The color is a vibrant reddish purple all through the season, and gardeners will appreciate how it does not bolt as easily as other mizunas and stands up to the heat.

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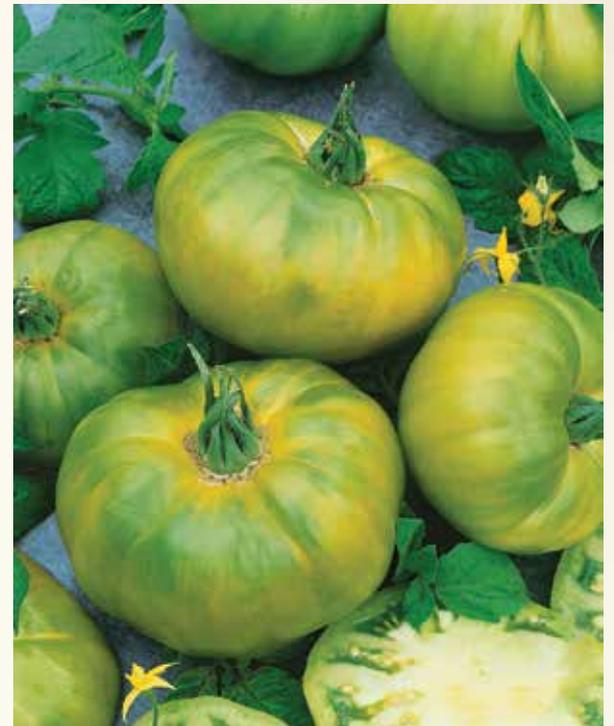
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Pepper 'Cornito Giallo' (Johnny's Selected Seeds). Starting as small green fruits, 'Cornito Giallo' develops into bright yellow jewels with a sweet and fruity flavor. The peppers are plentiful and durable, yet easy to eat fresh. An early bloomer, this variety can be enjoyed throughout the growing season and well into fall.



Pumpkin 'Pepitas' (Seeds by Design and W.A. Burpee). 'Pepitas' is a winner in both decorative and culinary arenas. It is named for its hullless or naked seeds (pepitas) that lack the tough outer hull making them easy to eat after slow roasting. Each high-yield plant produces numerous, uniform, medium sized (9 to 12 pounds) pumpkins on healthy, disease-resistant vines.



Tomato 'Chef's Choice's Green' (Seeds by Design). The newest addition to the Chef's Choice series is uniquely colored yet delicious. It produces beautiful green fruits with subtle yellow stripes and citrus-like flavor.



Pepper 'Escamillo' (Johnny's Selected Seeds). This early bearing pepper has a compact habit, making it ideal for any home garden. Gardeners will appreciate the high yield of peppers per plant and how the fruit itself is held off the ground for easy picking and less rotting.



Strawberry 'Delizz' (ABZ Seeds). These vigorous strawberry plants are easy to grow and produce an abundant harvest throughout the season. They have a nice uniform and compact size, making them a great choice for containers, hanging baskets or garden plots. 'Delizz' is daylength-neutral, making it possible to fruit continuously from June through summer until fall frost.



Tomato 'Candyland Red' (PanAmerican Seed). 'Candyland Red' is the only AAS award-winning currant-type tomato. Gardeners will appreciate the dark red, sweetly flavored fruit that can be enjoyed throughout the season. The plant itself has a tidier habit than other currant-type tomato plants, with the fruit tending to form on the outside of the plant.

ASSOCIATION OF SPECIALTY CUT FLOWER GROWERS

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Snapdragon Madame Butterfly. Winner of the Fresh category, Madame Butterfly was bred by the original Goldsmith Seeds. Flowers in the Madame Butterfly series have a unique double petal form. This "azalea type" prevents pollination by insects, allowing flowers to last longer than single-petaled varieties. The mix contains bronze/white, cherry/bronze, ivory, pink, red, rose, yellow and bronze blooms. Flower stems grow 26 to 36 inches. They are suitable for outdoor or high tunnel production from spring through fall.



Hydrangea 'Annabelle'. Winner of the Woody category, this variety's ability to flower each year on new growth makes it a dependable workhorse for cut flower growers. A native to North America, 'Annabelle' is hardy to Zone 3. Harvest when sepals are fully colored and flower heads are no longer soft to the touch. Stems can also be cut when sepals are green and not yet open, and again after they have matured to green when sepals will be papery. At the end of the season, cut remaining stems to the ground, as 'Annabelle' is best treated as a large perennial.



Tuberose 'Mexican Single'. Well known for its sweet fragrance, *Polianthes tuberosa* has been cultivated around the world for years. Tuberoses are relatively easy to grow, needing full sun and well-drained soil. Plants are hardy to Zone 6, but in colder climates, bulbs can be dug up in the fall and replanted in the spring. 'Mexican Single', winner of the Bulb category, is a preferred cultivar, as the postharvest life of the double forms is often unacceptable. Flower stems may grow as long as 3 feet.

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Begonia 'Senator iQ Rose Bicolour' (Sakata). This striking new variety has deeper, darker bronze leaves contrasted with rose bicolor blooms. It is an excellent garden performer thriving in full or partial sun with exceptional heat and drought tolerance. An eye-catching novelty, 'Senator iQ Rose Bicolour' looks wonderful in hanging baskets and container combinations, as well as in garden beds and landscapes.



Lupine 'Mini Gallery Blue' (HM Clause). The latest addition to the popular Gallery series, 'Mini Gallery Blue' presents many spikes in a true deep blue color that hold well above the deep green foliage. It is dwarf, compact, very early flowering and thrives in full sun and well-drained soil. Growers will appreciate the shorter production cycle of this lupine, which does not require the use of PGRs. Compact plants are easy to transport and allow production in smaller pots.



Penstemon 'Twizzle' (Van Hemert & Co.). This first-year flowering perennial has taller flower stems than existing varieties on the market while preserving the natural elegance of wild penstemon. 'Twizzle' is a beautiful border plant that blooms over a long period, stretching from summer to fall. The strong, low-maintenance plants stand out on the bench and will look wonderful in plant combinations.

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Hosta 'Curly Fries' (Solberg 2008). This smaller sized hosta reaches 11 inches tall and 20 inches wide. Highly ruffled narrow leaves emerge yellow and then fade to near white. It has a vigorous mounding habit. The scape is deep purple, topped with lavender flowers in mid to late summer.

PERENNIAL PLANT ASSOCIATION

www.perennialplant.org



Anemone 'Honorine Jobert'. A very low-maintenance plant, 'Honorine Jobert' can be grown in sun or partial shade; it will not tolerate poor drainage or dry soil. Since it flowers into autumn, the bright white plant stands out in the landscape and provides accents to the deeper gold, orange and red colors of the fall garden. The dark green textural foliage is attractive and provides a beautiful backdrop for the white flowers. *gpn*



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