

# WINNERS CIRCLE

BY JASMINA DOLCE

## **Rudbeckia 'American Gold Rush'** (*Intrinsic Perennial Gardens*).

This compact, upright, dome-shaped plant presents bright, golden-yellow flowers with black centers and narrow 2-inch-wide hairy foliage. Blooming from July to September, it shows no signs of Septoria leaf spot even in wet, humid conditions.

*These standout cultivars earned top honors for their beauty, strength, floriferousness, color, garden performance, resilience and more.*

**I**t can be difficult to select which varieties to add to and remove from your production each season. There are hundreds of thousands of beautiful plants to choose from; it's really a good problem to have. Yet, decisions must be made. And where do you begin?

Each year, GPN compiles a list of recent award-winning varieties to share with growers as they plan for seasons to come. Organizations like the ones listed below are dedicated to the success of breeders, growers, garden center retailers and consumers. They evaluate numerous varieties every year and select those with the greatest potential and reliable performance. The varieties listed were tested, trialed, used in various applications and impressed judges and members of the industry with their beauty, presentation and versatility in use.

## ALL-AMERICA SELECTIONS

[www.all-americaselections.org](http://www.all-americaselections.org)



**Echinacea 'Sombrero Baja Burgundy'** (*Darwin Perennials*). After being trialed over three tough winters, AAS judges noted this variety's hardiness, sturdy branching and floriferous blooming habit. It adds a bold accent to gardens with vibrant, deep violet-red blossoms.

## **Coleus 'Main Street Beale Street'**

(*Dümmen Orange*). Beale Street is the first ever coleus to be named an AAS Winner. It features deep red foliage that holds its color extremely well in the garden. The lush, bushy plant grows uniformly and does not flower until very late in the season — up to six weeks later than comparisons.





AMERICAN HOSTA GROWERS ASSOCIATION

www.hostagrowers.org



**Hosta 'Dancing Queen'** (Terpenig 2005). 'Dancing Queen' presents bright yellow foliage that is broad and wedge shaped with a rippled edge. Foliage turns pale yellow later in the season, and pale lavender flowers grow in mid-summer.

FLEUROSELECT

www.fleuroselect.com



**1. Celosia 'Sol Gekko Green'** (PanAmerican Seed). An impressive breeding achievement, this foliage celosia expands the options for sun-loving accent plants in containers as well as for quick-growing, shrub-like plants in borders. Judges praised the beautiful color contrast and outstanding garden performance.



**2. Rudbeckia 'Amarillo Gold'** (Benary). 'Amarillo Gold' brings golden yellow brilliance to containers and landscapes. This *Rudbeckia hirta* from seed displays large green disc flowers that bloom profusely from early summer to first frost. Flowers are larger than comparable varieties in trials, and judges appreciated the abundance of attractive flowers on short, sturdy stems.



**3. Delphinium 'Cheer Blue'** (Miyoshi & Co. Ltd.). A popular cut flower and landscaping item, *Delphinium grandiflorum* is now available in a dwarf version. 'Cheer Blue' has shorter stems and upward-directed flowers without spurs, making it an excellent component in patio planters and borders. This hybrid is vigorous and uniform, requiring little production time.



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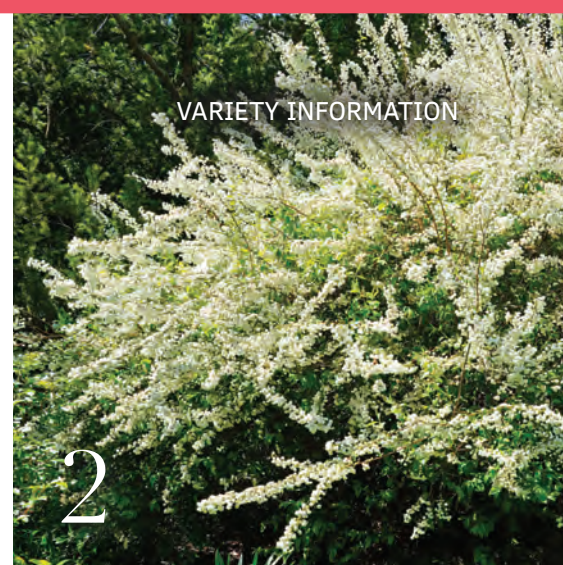


Photo: Walters Gardens

**Aralia cordata 'Sun King'.** This high-impact perennial brings a bold pop of glowing color and texture to shade and part-shade borders. Bright yellow shoots emerge in spring, then grow up reaching up to 6 feet tall and nearly as wide. The small cream-colored umbels of flowers are attractive to bees and are flowed by tiny dark drupes.



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VARIETY INFORMATION



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ASSOCIATION OF SPECIALTY CUT FLOWER GROWERS

www.ascfg.org

**1. Lisianthus 'Voyage Apricot' (Sakata).** The Fresh Cut Flower of the Year, 'Voyage Apricot' is often mentioned as a "favorite lisianthus" and hailed as an excellent producer. It has a long vase life, and its double flowers make it a standout in the vase. Cut stems are typically 24 to 30 inches.

**2. Spirea 'Bridal Veil'.** This year's Woody selection, 'Bridal Veil' is a classic cultivar that provides arching stems of pure white clusters to brighten large arrangements as well as landscapes. The shrub is fairly carefree and usually grows 4 to 8 feet tall. It is hardy to about Zone 4.

**3. Ranunculus 'Elegance Salmon' (Onings Holland).** Cut flower growers love this Bulb Cut of the Year for its unique color, which blends a blush pink to soft salmon-peach, creating a multi-layered effect on each bloom. Individual petals are slightly ruffled. Long 16- to 20-inch stems make them ideal for many styles of floral designs.

**4. Short-toothed Mountain Mint.** The Foliage Cut Flower of the Year is a vigorous grower that supplies beautiful, fragrant foliage. In late summer, tubular pink flowers add a colorful accent. Native to eastern North America, it is also attractive to pollinators like bees and butterflies. Plants are hardy to Zones 4 through 8 and grow 24 to 36 inches tall. [gpn](#)

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