

Winners' Circle

These 15 varieties have earned recognition from various industry associations for their strong performance, bold colors and resilience.

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Each year GPN compiles a list of award-winning varieties that have impressed judges throughout the country and abroad. Every organization has a slightly different method of choosing its

standout performers, but one thing all these varieties have in common is success in numerous trials. This snapshot can help you choose what makes the most sense for you to add to your production lineup.

ALL-AMERICA SELECTIONS

www.all-americaelections.org



Verbena 'Vanity'

Van Hemert & Co. Seeds

This verbena's deep blue/purple flowers are 1 to 1½ inches across and continue to attract butterflies day in and day out, while the compact habit makes it sturdier and easier to maintain. 'Vanity' prides itself on performing well in hot, dry conditions while remaining a showy garden plant. 'Vanity' is also the recipient of the Fleuroselect Gold Medal award (page 28).

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Celosia 'Flamma Orange'

Clover Seed Co. Ltd./Sakata

This compact variety has numerous branches, each with a strong flower plume, as well as secondary blooms, which give a long show of color in the garden. AAS judges were impressed with the superior garden performance and how well it stood up to hot, humid and rainy conditions during the trial season. Its early flowers won't fade.



Sunflower 'Concert Bell'

Tohoku Seed Co. Ltd.

'Concert Bell' puts on quite a performance with a unique flower presentation of multiple clusters of 10 to 12 flowers on an erect columnar stem. Beautiful golden yellow blooms appear earlier than the comparisons. Each plant grows to a very uniform height of 5 to 6 feet and, if used as a cut flower, makes an instant, ready-made bouquet from just one cut.



Verbena 'Beats Purple+White'

Selecta One

Verbena Beats is an incredible new series of verbena that performs all summer long. The AAS judges raved about how early to flower Purple+White was, making it a pollinator magnet all season long. The unique purple and white bicolor blooms maintain a nice, attention-getting pattern and thrives even during severe heat stress, and it is resistant to powdery mildew.

AMERICAN HOSTA GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Hosta of the Year

www.hostagrowers.org



Petunia 'Bee's Knees'

Ball FloraPlant

'Bee's Knees' is the first petunia to win an AAS gold medal distinction since 1950. Each 'Bee's Knees' petunia is filled with lush blooms that put on a colorful show of deep yellow, non-fading flowers all season long. The intense yellow petunia color contrasts beautifully against the deep green leaves. Bee's Knees offers great garden performance in a variety of conditions and requires very little maintenance.



Hosta 'Island Breeze'

Walters Gardens 2014

'Island Breeze' is an improvement on its parent 'Fire Island' by virtue of its wider green margin and thicker substance. It merges with a brilliant yellow center, and the red petiole bleeds into the base of the leaf with dark lavender flowers in late summer.

FLEUROSELECT

Gold Medal Winners

www.fleuroselect.com



Rudbeckia 'Goldblitz'

PanAmerican Seed

This newcomer is a first-year-flowering solution for growers unable to reliably finish *Rudbeckia fulgida* 'Goldsturm' under their natural growing conditions. 'Goldblitz' plugs do not require special treatment during production. The rudbeckia flowers approximately 14 to 21 days earlier, is more uniformly grown in its first year and has an excellent garden performance.



Helenium 'HayDay Golden Bicolor'

Syngenta Flowers

'HayDay Golden Bicolor' is the first *Helenium autumnale* from cuttings that is genetically suited for pot production. The dense branching results in loads of flowers that attract pollinators and wildlife. The brightly colored golden-yellow blooms with red undersides flower from summer through autumn until the first frost.



Helianthus 'Lemon Cutie'

SeedSense

Growers will love this *Helianthus annuus*, a naturally compact variety that is easy to produce without growth regulators. The well-branched plants with multiple, semi-double, lemon-colored heads will be a showstopper on the benches, and consumers will marvel over this non-traditional sunflower with unique plant habit and flower shape.



Verbena 'Vanity'

Van Hemert & Co.

Thanks to its shorter stems, this *Verbena bonariensis* is clearly more compact than existing varieties. The tight flower clusters have a more intense purple-blue color and bloom from mid-summer until autumn frost. 'Vanity' offers a long flowering season, attracts bees and butterflies, and spreads a subtle fragrance in the early morning and evening. It's also an AAS national winner (page 24).

ASSOCIATION OF SPECIALTY CUT FLOWER GROWERS

Cut Flowers of the Year

www.ascfg.org

Allium sphaerocephalon

The bicolor green and purple flowers are egg shaped on 24-inch stems. They open in mid June and last about three weeks. Growers love that long vase life, as well as the great texture they add to bouquets.



Lisianthus 'Corelli Light Pink' Group III

American Takii

This double-flowered variety is a florist favorite. The large blooms have fringed petals with a delicate curl. Light pink flowers are carried on branched stems up to 40 inches. One grower said, "The 'Corelli Light Pink' have been incredibly consistent with strong stems, amazingly fluffy blossoms and a fantastic color."

Smoketree 'Royal Purple'

Monrovia

Smoketree is well named, due to its showy "puffs" that appear after the yellow flowers. It is useful for its green or purple foliage, as well as for flowers that appear May to July. Plants can grow 10 to 15 feet and are hardy in Zones 4 to 8. 'Royal Purple' is a compact, purple-leaved variety of the European species. Cut flower growers and designers call it "the little black dress" of the foliage world.



PERENNIAL PLANT ASSOCIATION

Perennial Plant of the Year

www.perennialplant.org

Rudbeckia 'American Gold Rush'

Intrinsic Perennial Gardens

At the height of summer, 'American Gold Rush' turns up the volume for a long season of dazzling color right up to autumnal frosts. The bright golden-yellow flowers feature arching rays and a reddish halo surrounding dark chocolate cones. The 3-inch flowers blanket the compact plant, which is only 22 to 27 inches tall with a broader width to 40 inches if given room to grow. [gpn](http://gpn.com)



(Photo: Richard Hawke, Chicago Botanic Gardens)

Physocarpus 'Amber Jubilee'

Bailey Nurseries

This cultivar's foliage not only makes a durable cut specimen, but its color change from golden to orange to red also makes it an unusual and useful foliage for all types of designs. Plants grow to about 5 feet tall and are hardy to Zone 3.

