

The University of Tennessee Gardens 2001 Trial Report

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Our 2001 gardening season was just about as perfect a growing season as you could have. We had normal temperatures and above normal rainfall for May, June, July, as well as August; rarely needing to irrigate. Such a great growing season provided outstanding opportunities for our test plants to prove their worth and many did excel. Of the 896 different varieties we evaluated, 52% were from cuttings. The following classes include those cultivars which were top performing plants throughout the growing season from the University of Tennessee Gardens.

Annual Species Summaries

Begonia - 'Dragon Wing Pink' from Pan American was great with its pink flowers against its large, shiny green leaves. 'Lotto White' and 'Lotto Scarlet' from Benary were impressive with their open habit and large foliage; 'Party Red Bronze Leaf' from Benary, 'Queen White' and 'Queen Pink' from Daehnfeldt were showy and uniform.

Cleome - The new Sparkler series from Goldsmith was compact growing to 36" tall. It was showy and uniform until it was attacked by harlequin bugs in August. Available in four colors: blush, lavender, white, and rose.

Coleus _ Favorite sun coleus among our visitors for their striking and colorful foliage included 'Inky Fingers', 'Meandering Linda', 'Greening's Yellow', 'El Brighto', 'Marrissa', 'Cantigny Royale', 'Pineapple Queen', 'Solar Shadow', and 'Purple Emperor'. (Glasshouse Works)

Geranium - *Cutting Geranium* _ 'Rocky Mt' and 'Tango' series from Fischer; 'Fantasia' and 'Designer' series from Ball Flora Plant; 'Americana' and 'Eclipse' series from Goldsmith. All of these series were impressive for uniformity, vibrant colors and profuse blooming. **Species Geranium** - 'Lavender Lass' from Ball FloraPlant. Fine flower and foliage texture but prolific blooms. **Ivy Geranium** _ 'Cascade' series from Fischer had profuse blooming with fine texture.

Impatiens _ 'Double Circus Orange White' from Pan American grabs your attention with its bright and double flowers; 'Stardust' series from Pan American is exciting for its interesting coloring pattern, 'Swirl Raspberry' from Pan American for its unique color and pattern, and 'Super Elfin Blue Pearl' from Pan American was a great eye-catching color; 'Double Fanciful Coral' from Ball Seed was a uniform double and had great color; 'Tempo Strawberry Butterfly' and 'Mosaic Mixture' from Bodger both had interesting patterns and colors; 'Fiesta' series from Ball Flora Plant was impressive with its double flowers and showy colors.

Melampodium _ 'Million Gold' from Takii was uniform, self_cleaning, and vibrant. A real showstopper in our garden.

New Guinea Impatiens _ 'Harmony', 'Sonic' and 'Super Sonic' series from Fischer; 'Celebration' and 'Celebrette' series from Ball Flora Plant. All displayed vibrant colors and large blooms.

Petunia - Double Petunia _ 'Ruffle' series and 'Double Wave' series from Ball FloraPlant were disease resistant and produced a profusion of blooms all season. **Groundcover Petunia** - The following series were all outstanding groundcovers and produced a profusion of bright colored blooms all season: 'Suncatcher' series from Ball FloraPlant, 'Avanlanch' series from Bodger, 'Wave' series from Pan American, 'Ramblin' series from Goldsmith, 'Supertunia' series from Proven Winners, 'Trail Blazer' and 'Kahuna' series from Syngenta.

Portulaca _ Both the 'Yubi' series and 'Colorburst' series from Sakata had electric colors and were great groundcovers.

Sanvitalia - 'Little Sun' from Ball FloraPlant was a great, spreading groundcover blanketed with bright-yellow, daisy flowers all season. The flower's eye and petals are both yellow making it a unique variety.

Sunflower - 'Chianti' from Ball Seed was impressive with a dark burgundy flower on multi-branching stems.

Torenia _ 'Duchess' series from Goldsmith was extremely uniform and compact. Flowers best in partial sun to shade but will tolerate full sun.

Verbena - These groundcover verbenas were showstoppers in our gardens all season: 'Aztec' series and 'Wildfire' series from Ball FloraPlant; 'Rapunzel Burgundy' and 'Lanai' series from Goldsmith.

Vinca _ 'Sunsplash Lilac' from Grimes was striking for its great clear color; 'Heatwave' series from Bodger, 'First Kiss' series from Benary, and 'Victory' series from Sakata all offer great varieties of colors and uniformity.

Zinnia _ Both AAS winners 'Profusion Orange' and 'Profusion Cherry' had no disease and were extremely uniform.

Perennial Species Summaries

***Amsonia hubrichtii* (Narrow Leaf Blue Star):** Discovered in 1942 in Arkansas, by Leslie Hubricht (and named in his honor), this blue star sports the narrowest, laciest, most threadlike foliage of any upright amsonia species. It makes a clump of 3 feet tall x 3 feet wide and prefers full sun to partial shade. Introduced by Woodlanders Nursery, this fine Southern native is truly the best of the blue stars. The sky blue flowers emerge atop the foliage when it breaks the ground in April. Green foliage all summer but in the fall, watch out!! The deciduous golden foliage is stunning! A must for the autumn garden. (Cedar Springs Nursery)

***Elymus arenarius* 'Glaucus' (Blue Lyme Grass, Blue Wild Rye, Blue European Beach Grass):** Outstanding perennial offers the bluest color of any grass! Effective, handsome spreading ground cover or accent plant. Incredibly showy when used in mass plantings or even in large container combinations. Tolerates a variety of conditions, including drought, and thrives in heat. Prefers full sun. Fast grower to 3 feet tall and wide. (John Deere Nursery)

***Linaria purpurea* 'Canon J. Went' (Purple Toadflax):** One of the most graceful, long blooming, easy plants that I have ever grown, *Linaria purpurea* probably ranks among the top 10 underused plants in the United States. It has been a very popular plant in British gardens for quite a long time. The long, slender vertical stems can reach up to three feet high and the plant forms a nice clump of up to one foot in diameter. *Linaria purpurea* prefers sun to partial shade. Foliage is a lovely, ferny, narrow greyish_green. This plant is long blooming and soft pink flowers occur during the summer. This plant can self_sow very easily, but I would not consider it invasive in the least. Color selections can be made from your seedlings and the British have named at least one cultivar that I know of, 'Canon J. Went', which has light pink flowers. (Walter's Gardens)

***Loropetalum chinense* var. *rubrum* 'Zhuzhou Fuchsia' (Zhuzhou Chinese Fringeflower)** From Zhuzhou, China, comes this pink_flowered *Loropetalum*, a member of the witch hazel family. It is distinctly upright in form and makes a great addition in the perennial border or as a backdrop to colorful annuals. Handsome maroon foliage ascends up and out gracefully, eventually growing to 10_15'; spidery hot_pink flowers appear for a month in spring. Minimal pruning is necessary; just after flowering, in late spring, lightly shape_up by cutting back any branches that grow slightly astray. Considered a more cold_hardy form; prefers full-sun to partial-shade. (John Deere Nursery)

***Perovskia atriplicifolia* 'Longin' (Blue Spire Russian Sage):** You are sure to love this season long bloomer which grows to 36" and is extremely heat and drought tolerant. The foliage is deeply dissected giving a lacy textural appearance in the garden. The growth is upright topped with dazzling fuzzy deep purple flowers throughout the summer. Prefers full-sun to partial-shade. (Mouse Creek Nursery)

***Persicaria microcephala* 'Red Dragon (Red Dragon Persicaria):** From Greg Speichert at Crystal Palace, comes this fabulous new perennial. The clumping rootstock emerges in spring with dark burgundy_red stems which grow 3_4' tall x 4_5' wide. Each stem is lined with exquisite tricolor and patterned leaves of purple, silver, and green. From midsummer through fall, the tips of the plant are covered in tiny white baby's_breath_like flowers. P. 'Red Dragon' is great in the perennial border as well as in a mixed container planting. (EuroAmerican)

***Salvia greggii* 'Big Pink' (Big Pink Sage):** 'Big Pink' is a very nice, large_flowered pink form of *S. greggii* collected by Pat McNeal near Saltillo, Mexico. The rigidly upright form and very shiny foliage make this a great plant even for the small garden. From May through July, and again from September through November, the 3' wide clump is topped with a stunning array of large, violet_pink flowers. The flowers are further accented by the unique dark maroon calyces

that surround them. Prefers sun to partial shade. Half-hardy growing to 40" tall. (Plant Delights Nursery)

***Salvia* 'Indigo Spires' (Indigo Spires Sage):** From the Huntington Botanical Garden in California, comes this nice bushy salvia hybrid (*S. farinacea* x *S. longispicata*). It covers itself in dark blue_purple flowers, borne on long arching stalks throughout summer and until frost. It grows to about 4 feet tall and prefers full-sun to partial-shade. The unusual twisting flower spikes create a form of their own in the garden. Its considered a half-hardy perennial so for increased hardiness, don't cut it down until spring! (Plant Delights Nursery)

***Salvia Van houttei* (Wine Sage):** This beautiful burgundy flowering salvia was introduced by Longwood Gardens who got it on a trip to South Africa. The identity of this plant is now considered to be an early form of *S. splendens* or a hybrid developed by vanHoutte, a Belgian nurseryman and collector. Flowers from midsummer until frost and grows about 3 feet tall. Considered a half-hardy perennial. Great when combined with artemisia or coleus with complimentary colors. (Hatchett Creek Farms)

***Yucca gloriosa* 'Variegata' (Variegated Soapwort):** This durable perennial came originally from the JC Raulston Arboretum. Each 2_3' wide trunked clump reaches 48" in height in 10 years. The blue_green rigid leaves are bordered with a wide margin that emerges gold, then changes to a rich cream. The good color contrast holds all season! This stunning yucca is a great addition to the perennial border as well as a dry garden. Thrives in full sun and well-drained soil. (Morning Glory Farm)

Herb Species Summaries

***Agastache foeniculum* 'Blue Spike' (Giant Hyssop):** This is a wonderfully aromatic perennial that will remind you of licorice or aniseed everytime you brush by it. The giant hyssop grows about 4 ft tall producing long, narrow flowerspikes that are usually light blue, purply_mauve or sometimes pink. It is a favorite of bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. In the winter it is very popular with chickadees, sparrow and junco who love the tiny black seeds. This is an easy perennial for a full sun to partial shade and ordinary garden soil. Blooms mid_summer. Will self_seed if allowed. (Park Seed)

***Aster novae-angliae* 'Purple Dome' (New England Aster):** Introduced by Dr. Dick Lighty, former Director of the Mt. Cuba Center, DE, this wonderful selection of a native New England aster is drought_tolerant and has a summer long bloom period. It grows to 18" tall and covers itself in vivid 1.5" wide brillant purple daisies. The clump will eventually spread to 2'. Tony Avent claims that when planted in mass, "the effect is indescribable!" (Plant Delights Nursery)

***Borago officinalis* (Borage):** Visitors to our gardens loved the vividness of the powder-blue flowers. Grows 12-14" tall and has rough, hairy leaves. A good plant for coarse texture in the garden. Performed well until the hottest part of the summer. Plants are sprawling, not very upright. Reseeds itself. (Vermont Bean Seed Co.)

***Capsicum annuum* 'Tricolor Variegata' (Ornamental Pepper):** Eye-catching and handsome foliage which is variegated white, purple and lavender. It covers itself in purple peppers which turn red as they ripen. Grows to 2 feet tall.(Vermont Bean Seed Co.)

***Celosia* spp. 'Cramer's Amazon' (Wheat Celosia):** Makes a grand presence in the garden. Everyone asks "what is it?" Works well as a focal point in a large bed or as a background plant. Grows over 5' tall, branches out, and stays upright. Hotpink blooms and splashes of purple on green leaves. Some have purple stems. Self sows very well. Great for cutting and drying. (Johnny's Selected Seeds)

***Echinacea purpurea* 'Kim's Knee-high' (Compact Purple Coneflower):** Introduced by Niche Gardens in 1999. A compact purple coneflower with deep pink blooms. It has an incredibly long season of bloom, and sturdy height, typically topping out a foot shorter than the species. Typically grows 15-30" tall. (Niche Gardens)

***Gomphrena globosa* 'Woodcreek Orange' (Globe Amaranth):** Striking deep orange globes with red highlights. Great for cutting and drying. Grows to about 2.5 feet tall. (Stokes Seeds).

***Ocimum basilicum* 'Ararat' (Ararat Basil):** Our overall favorite of all the basil grown this year. Has purple stems, green leaves with splashes of purple, and a delicious spicy clove-like scent. Grows 2-3 ft tall. Has a tendency to lean over. (Richter's)

***Ocimum sanctum* (Sacred Basil):** An attractive basil with purple foliage. Stems and leaf veins are more purple than Holy Basil. Leaf margins are wavy-scalloped. Grows 3-4 ft tall, stays upright, and is very branching.(Richter's)

***Oenothera versicolour* 'Sunset Boulevard' (Evening Primrose):** Really withstood the heat of the summer, right up until the hottest days. Beautiful bloom colors ranged from yellow to apricot to red. A real eye-catcher. Grows 2' tall and upright. (Park Seed Co.)

***Salvia chamaedryoides* (Blue Oak Sage):** Soft, grey foliage and lots of striking sky-blue flowers from early summer to fall. Makes a nice medium-sized clump, 12" tall. A real eye catcher! (Plant Delights Nursery)

***Salvia leucantha* 'Santa Barbara'(Dwarf Mexican Sage):** This amazing introduction from California is a breakthrough in the world of salvias. It only grows 2' tall and has a spread of 3_4'. The foliage is topped with spikes of fuzzy purple, with a nicely contrasting lighter purple lip, from mid_September until frost. (Plant Delights Nursery)

***Tagetes tenuifolia* 'Lemon', 'Orange' and 'Red-Gem' (Citrus-scented French Marigolds):** Citrus fragrance of the fine, lacy foliage is wonderful. Tiny, delicate flowers bloomed early. Performed well until the heat of the summer. Grows to 12" tall. Great as a border plant or in mass plantings. (Richter's)

Seed and Plant Sources

Special thanks are extended to each of the following companies for providing either the seeds or plants for the UT Gardens and supporting the efforts of the trial program:

All America Selections, 1311 Butterfield Rd., Suite 310, Downers Grove, IL 60515

American Takii, 301 Natividad Rd., Salinas, CA 93906

Mary's Greenhouse, 202 Meiser LN, McMinnville, TN 37110 (615) 668-2119

Ball FloraPlant, 622 Town Rd., West Chicago, IL 60185-2698 (630)588-3119

Ball Seed Company, P. O. Box 355, West Chicago, IL 60185

Benary Seed Company, 1444 Larson St., Sycamore, IL 60178 (815) 895-6705

Bear Creek Gardens, Inc., P.O. Box 9100, 2518 South Pacific Highway, Medford, Or 97501
(800) 545-3444

Bodger Seed Company, P. O. Box 5090, El Monte, CA 91734-5090

Cedar Springs Nursery, Route 1, Box 304, Zirconia, NC 28790 (704)692-5575

Daehnfeldt, 1308 State Rd. 114 West, P.O.Box 38, North Manchester, IN 46962 (219)982-5868

Fischer USA, 2995 Wilderness Place, Suite 102, Boulder, CO 80301 (303)415-1466

Floranova Plant Breeders, P.O. Box 1777, Soquel, CA 95073 (408)623-9474

The Flower Market, 4520 Old Kingston Pk., Knoxville, TN 37919 (423)584-1679

Glass House Works. <http://www.glasshouseworks.com/>

Goldsmith Seed Company, P. O. Box 1349, Gilroy, CA 95021

Grimes Seed Company, 210 W. Main Street, Box 398, Smethport, PA 16749

Hatchett Creek Farms, Gainesville, Florida 32641 Phone (352) 373_7589

Johnny's Selected Seeds, Foss Hill Rd., Albion, ME 04910 (207)437-4357

Mary's Greenhouse, 202 Meiser LN, McMinnville, TN 37110 (615)668-2119

Monticello Seeds, P.O. Box 316, Charlottesville, VA 22902

Mouse Creek Nursery, Rt. 2, Bell Springs Rd., Riceville, TN 37370 (423)462-2666

Nantuckette Farms, 7941 Oak Ridge Hwy, Knoxville, TN 37931 (423)693-6696

Niche Gardens, 1111 Dawson Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516, (919) 967_0078 <http://www.nichegdn.com/>

Nichols Herb Garden Nursery, 1190 North Pacific Highway, Albany, OR 97321-4580 (541)928-9280

Norvartis Seed Company, -5300 Katrine Ave., Downers Grove, IL 60515

Oakes Daylilies, 8204 Monday Rd., Corryton, TN 37721 (423) 687-1268

Oglevee Ltd., 152 Oglevee Ln, Connellsville, PA 15425 (412)628-8360
Papa Geno's Herb Farm, 1951 S. 25th St., Lincoln, NE 68502 (402)477-1400
Pan American Seed Company, P. O. Box 438, West Chicago, IL 60185
Park Seed Company, Cookesbury Rd., Greenwood, SC 29647
Paul Ecke Ranch, P.O. Box 230488, Encinitas, CA 92023-0488 (619)753-1134
Plant Delights Nursery, Raleigh, NC 27603 Phone: (919) 772_4794 <http://www.plantdelights.com/>
Randolph's Greenhouse, Jackson, TN
Richter's Herbs, 357 Highway 47, Goodwood, Ontario Canada L0C1A0 (905)640-6677
Sakata Seed Company, 18095 Serene Drive, Morgan Hill, CA 95037
Select Seeds, 180 Stickney Hill Rd., Union, CT 06076-4617
Shepherd's Garden Seed, 30 Irene St., Torrington, CN 06790 (203)482-3638
Stokes Seeds, <http://www.vaxxine.com/seeds/seedpage.htm>
Terra Nova Nurseries, 12162 SW Scholls Ferry Rd #126, Tigard, OR 97223 (800)215-9450
Waller Flowerseed Company, P.O. Box 70, 400 Obispo St., Guadalupe, CA 93434
Walters Garden, P.O. Box 137, Zeeland, MI 49464_0137, (888) 925_8377
<http://www.waltersgardens.com/>