

The University of Tennessee Gardens 2005 Best Plants Report

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Following is a list of the top performing plants from the UT Gardens 2005 summer

2005 UT Garden Winners

Best in Show – AAS Winner Ornamental Pepper ‘Black Pearl’. Striking purple-black foliage with lavender blooms leading to round black-purple peppers turning bright red in late summer. A real showstopper in our gardens.

Best New 2005 Variety - New Guinea Impatiens ‘Fanfare Bright Coral’ from Ball FloraPlant. Impressive uniformity and extremely large, bright salmon flowers. A real showstopper.

Best Old Variety – Torenia ‘Catalina Blue’, ‘Catalina Purple’ and ‘Catalina Pink’ from Proven Winners were impressive for their bright colors and cascading growth habit. The "Snapdragon" like flowers were produced in abundance all season long.

Top 5 Performers:

Pentas ‘Kalidescope’ series from Benary with four great colors (Appleblossom, Carmine, Lilac, and Deep Red). All produced large flowers, are self-cleaning, and were weather durable.

Angelonia ‘Serena’ and ‘Angelmist’ series from Pan American and Ball FloraPlant were short and compact. Impressive flower-power all season long. Great in containers but really impressive in mass plantings in the landscape

Vinca ‘Nirvana’ and ‘Nirvana Cascade’ series from Fischer, USA. Great colors and growth habits make these vincas outstanding. ‘Nirvana Cascade’ has a semi-trailing growth habit and large blooms great for mass bed displays, containers or hanging baskets. The ‘Nirvana’ series is more upright.

Petunia ‘Jamboree Burgundy’ series from Fischer, USA; ‘Supertunia Vista Bubblegum’ from Proven Winners, and ‘Surfinia Rose Veined’ from Jackson and Perkins all were outstanding for their colors, flower production, and vigorous but compact growth habit. All were ‘standout’ selections.

Lantana ‘Lucky Yellow Improved’ from Ball FloraPlant has loads of bright, clear yellow flowers which were incredibly eye-catching in the landscape.

Other ‘Best’ Notables

Ageratum – Both the ‘High Tide’ series from Pan American and the ‘Cloud Nine’ series from Ball FloraPlant were impressive. ‘Cloud Nine’ had large blooms, was uniform, and mounded in habit. ‘High Tide’ was self-cleaning, tall, and dense.

Begonias - Waxleaf Begonia ‘Lotto Apple Blossom’ from Benary and ‘Braveheart Rose Bicolor’ from Syngenta were covered with loads of flowers all season with no disease problems. Great colors for this durable landscape plant. ‘Braveheart Rose Bicolor’ saturates the garden with beautiful rose and white blooms in sun or shade. Fills containers and beds quickly, sets flowers early and keeps flowering all summer long.

Calibrachoa - The ‘Callie’ series from Fischer, USA is mounding and uniform and great in containers. ‘Superbell’ series from Proven Winners is disease resistant and a bit up-right in habit. ‘Million Bells’ series from Jackson & Perkins had great colors,

habit and performance as did the 'Cabaret' series from Ball FloraPlant. 'Cabaret' had great mounded and trailing habit and vibrant colors.

Celosia 'Fresh Look Orange' has outstanding large plumes, season-long, profuse blooming, and intense color. Self-cleaning and uniform habit.

Coleus - Favorite sun coleus among our visitors for their striking and colorful foliage included

the seed varieties 'Wizard Mosaic' and 'Kong Mosaic' which were dramatic in the landscape due to their mammoth size foliage and great performance; Vegetative types included 'Glennis' and 'Pink Chaos' from Proven Winners. Both were praiseworthy among visitors. 'Aurora Black Cherry' from Ball FloraPlant was popular as well for its fine foliage and pink color. Other choice selections included 'Crimson Velvet', 'Dabbled Apple', 'Copper Glow', 'Sadona', 'Marissa', 'Purple Dragon', and 'Raspberry Ruffles'

Euphorbia 'Diamond Frost' – loads of soft, airy flowers cover this plant all season adding a soft texture to the landscape. Great for containers or in mass plantings.

Gallardia 'Torch Red Ember' from Ball FloraPlant was impressive for its non-stop blooming and self-cleaning habit. Formed a showy mass in the landscape quickly. The bicolored flowers are great. 'Arizona Sun' AAS Winner. Large, 3-4" blooms were loaded on plants all season-long. Compact habit growing to 10". Bright, showy red and gold color. Self-cleaning!

Geranium Vegetative types: 'Rocky Mountain' series from Fischer; 'Americana' series from Fischer, USA; 'White Mountain', 'Samaritan Dark Salmon', 'Patriot', 'Red Coat', 'Puritan', 'Quaker', 'Faith', 'Olivia Light Coral', 'Abigail Medium Salmon', 'Abigail', 'Beth', 'Amy' and 'Anne' from Bartlett were all strong bloomers on uniform plants. Little botrytis disease. Ivy Types: From J.P. Bartlett Co., 'Dark Pink' and 'Light Purple' were impressive for abundant flowering; 'Tutti Frutti' 'Purple Blizzard', 'Ruby Dream', 'Holiday Red Blizzard', 'Caliete Coral' and 'Monlina 2005' from Fischer, USA were impressive for habit and flowering.

Gaura 'Pink Picotee' and 'Karalee White' from Proven Winners was heat tolerant and produced abundant flowers all season long. Great in containers or in the landscape. Helenium 'Dakota Gold' from Pan American Seed flowered all season long. It is short and compact and has a fine texture. Great for containers or mass plantings in the landscape.

Heuchera 'Dolce Mocha Mint' and 'Dolce Licorice' from Proven Winners offer great color and habit. Great foliage accent plants.

Hibiscus 'Luna Pink Swirl' from Ball Seed Company had short, stocky growth with large, showy blooms late into the season.

Impatiens - The 'Advantage' series from Boder was impressive with large blooms and uniform habit; 'Stardust Cherry' from Pan American Seed is striking for its unique flower color pattern; the 'Butterfly' series from Fischer, USA is striking for its flower shape and abundant blooming; and 'Fiesta Stardust Salmon' and 'Fiesta Ole Peach' were unique for flower color pattern, size of bloom, and habit.

Impatiens, New Guinea Type – The new 'Compact Sonic' series from Fischer, USA is impressive for compactness yet large, showy blooms. 'Cherry' and 'Deep Salmon' were favorites. The 'Sonic' and 'Super Sonic' Series from Fischer always put on a great show. You are guaranteed success with selections from either of these series. Favorites from the Sonic series include: Sonic 'Magic Pink', 'Hot Rose on Gold', 'Orange', and 'Sweet Cherry'. Favorites from the Super Sonic series include: Super Sonic 'Violet Ice', 'Coral Ice 03', 'Cherry Cream', 'Pastel Pink', and 'Burgundy'.

Lantana 'Tropical Fruit' from Proven Winners covers itself in soft lavender and yellow blooms from mid-season on. Makes a great show in the landscape or in containers.

Lavender 'Lavance' from Ball is compact with lots of flowers late into the season.

Lobelia – ‘Laguna Sky Blue’ from Proven Winners, ‘Techno Blue’ from Fischer USA, and ‘Waterfall White Sparkle’ all had great heat tolerance and they all flowered prolifically. The blue colors are terrific. All are great in containers as well as for a border or foreground in a landscape bed.

Lophospermum ‘Wine Cascade’ Has soft mauve blooms and a trailing habit great for containers. From Jackson & Perkins.

Marigold - ‘Golden Gate’ and ‘Bonanza Flame’ from Pan American Seed lasted late into the season with little disease. ‘Hero Bee’ from Bodger was also impressive for prolific blooming and disease resistance.

Mecardonia ‘Gold Flake’ from Proven Winners covered itself in yellow blooms all season. Durable and mat forming. Great groundcover in the landscape or cascading plant in a container.

Ornamental Millet - ‘Jester’ from Pan American Seed was notable for its dramatic, mottled colors. ‘Puple Baron’ was notable for its compact habit, shorter than others, and dark color.

Pentas – ‘Butterly Light Lavender’ and ‘Butterfly Pink’ were great performers for prolific flowering, weather durability, and habit.

Perilla ‘Magilla Vanilla’ from Ball FloraPlant was a real showstopper for its colorful creamy white foliage with varigations. Great foliage accent plant.

Petunia - From seed, ‘Wave Pink’, and ‘Easy Wave Shell Pink Imp’ were two of our favorites for habit and prolific blooming. From Bodger, the ‘Avalanche’ series did great and has a great habit. The ‘Hurrah’ series from Syngenta had great colors and a durable, showy habit too. Vegetatively reproduced and groundcover types: The ‘Surfinia’ series from Jackson & Perkins; ‘Jamboree’ and ‘Whispers’ series from Fischer; and ‘Suptertunia’ series from Proven Winners were all impressive. The ‘Double Wave Blue Velvet’ from Ball FloraPlant stood out as well and was impressive, vigorous, and carefree in the gardens.

Phlox – The ‘Intensia’ series from Proven Winners was incredibly show and heat tolerant! ‘Cabernet’, ‘Lavender Glow’, ‘Lilac Rose’, and ‘Neon Pink’ were all outstanding and quite eye-catching in the gardens.

Plectranthus ‘Blue Yonder’ from Proven Winners is impressive for its fine foliage texture and variegated foliage. It covers itself in light blue flower spikes in late summer making a real show in the garden. ‘Mona Lavender’ from Proven Winners is also showy for its green foliage with purple undersides and blue flowers in mid-late summer.

Portulaca ‘Tequila’ series from Pan American Seed had showy colors and flowers stayed open late into the day.

Purslane ‘Rio’ series from Ball FloraPlant had vibrant colors, vigorous growth, and was durable in the landscape.

Salvia farinacea ‘Evolution’ is an AAS Winner and is more compact than other varieties of this species. Its well-branched habit yields an increased number of flower spikes as well. Great for containers or mass planting in the landscape. ‘Mystic Blue Spires’ from Ball FloraPlant is a taller and wisper cultivar with standout qualities. Long flower spikes and deep blue flowers make this plant striking either in containers or in the landscape.

Scaevola– The ‘Whirlwind’ series from Proven Winners was compact with huge, showy blooms. ‘Whirlwind Blue’ and ‘Whirlwind White’ were both vigorous and floriferous.

Shizanthus ‘Treasure’ series from Proven Winners is a great early season or fall annual. Flowers similar to stock and with vibrant colors.

Torenia ‘Clown Rose Improved’ from Pan American Seed has a bright, clear color and is a prolific bloomer.

Verbena – ‘Temari Patio White’ from Jackson & Perkins; the ‘Lanai’ and ‘Rapunzel’ series from Fischer; and the ‘Aztec Pearl and ‘Aztec Violet’ from Ball FloraPlant’ all displayed uniform habit, compactness, profuse blooming, and showy colors. Plants were fast growing and resistant to powdery mildew. All thrived in our heat and full sun.

Vinca - The ‘Pacifica’ series from Pan American Seed had large blooms and great colors. Great upright habit. ‘Sunstorm Bright Red Improved’ from Sygenta was a bright, clear red and really noted by visitors. ‘First Kiss Blueberry’ AAS Winner had impressive color, large blooms and uniform in habit.

Zinnia – ‘Magellan Coral’ AAS Winner had great color and habit. ‘Zowie’ AAS Winner is a showstopper with its red and yellow bicolored flowers

2005 Top Herbs

African Foxglove (*Ceratotheca triloba*) will provide you with elegant blooms throughout the summer and fall. Some plants produce white blooms, while others have pink; both are quite beautiful. Although it is a drought-tolerant annual, it will grow taller (to 5-6 feet) if it is given steady watering. It has been used medicinally.

Black Hollyhock (*Alcea rosea nigra*) is a striking old-fashioned plant covered with large blooms that are such a dark purple they appear black. It can grow to an impressive height of 6-8 feet, and will often bloom a second time if cut back after its first flowering in early summer. It has been used medicinally, as a culinary herb, and also as a source of dye and papermaking fiber.

Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) is one herb that is perfect for those difficult moist or boggy sites. It can even grow in shallow water. Its crimson flowers are sure to delight you throughout its summer-long blooming season. It has been used medicinally.

Clary Sage (*Salvia sclarea* 'Vatican White') is a biennial herb that has attractive basal foliage in its first year of growth, with a beautiful flower spike that can reach up to 3 feet in height in its second year. The showy blooms and bracts attract butterflies. Parts of the plant are edible; it is also used medicinally and produces an essential oil that is used in perfumes and cosmetics.

Coral Bells (*Heuchera* 'Creme Brulee') is a wonderful foliage plant. Its unique blend of bronze and burgundy tones gives you some great opportunities for eye-catching plant combinations in your garden, and it is surprisingly heat and sun tolerant. *Heuchera* has been used medicinally and as a dye fixative. Proven Winners selection.

Lion's Ear (*Leonotis nepetifolia*) is definitely an attention-getting annual. It's a tall (4-6 feet) and 'architectural' plant with unusual orange blooms. Bees and butterflies find it attractive as well. It has been used medicinally and can be dried for use in floral arrangements (although the seed pods can be sharp – handle with caution).

Moon Flower Vine (*Ipomoea alba*) is a vigorous vine that looks great on a trellis or fence. The large white blooms open at dusk and have a wonderful fragrance. It is an annual vine in our zone, but will often volunteer the next year. The young leaves and seeds are edible, and the entire plant has been used medicinally.

Papalo (*Porophyllum ruderale*) is a culinary herb from Mexico that has only recently been introduced into the United States. Although its bloom is insignificant, it has unusual and ornamental foliage and a strong scent. It can grow to an impressive height of 6-7 feet and does require staking. Fresh leaves can be used much like cilantro in a number of dishes.

Pineapple Sage 'Golden Delicious' (*Salvia elegans*) is a new cultivar of pineapple sage that is a standout thanks to its golden foliage. The bright red blooms really stand out against the contrasting foliage. The leaves of this variety retain the original's pleasant scent, and can be used either fresh or dried as a culinary flavoring. A real showstopper in our late summer garden! Proven Winners selection.

Polish Amaranth (*Amaranthus cruentus*) is spectacular in the garden. The burgundy foliage and stems are a perfect foil for the full red plume-like bloom. It readily re-seeds itself, but you won't mind. The seeds and leaves are edible, and the plant is also used as a dye source.

Red Valerian (*Centranthus ruber*) may take some time to get established, but once it does you're in for a treat. It can grow to 2-3 feet and can be encouraged to repeat bloom by deadheading once the cherry-red blooms are past their prime. Parts of the plant have been used medicinally, and the seeds were used in ancient embalming.

Spanish Lavender, Rabbit Ears (*Lavandula stoechas pedunculata*) is a tender perennial for us. Different than English Lavender, Spanish Lavender blooms early in the season and can bloom non-stop all summer even into fall. It loves a sunny location, where it grows to two feet in height, three counting the flower stems. Its whimsical Rabbit Ears name comes from the form of the blooms, which consist of barrel-shaped peduncles with two or more "rabbit ears" on top. A great species for lavender oil.

Sunset Hyssop (*Agastache rupestris*) is one plant that has it all. Its apricot blooms contrast beautifully with its fine gray-blue foliage, it has a wonderful fragrance (like root beer), and it attracts butterflies and hummingbirds to your garden. It can also be used to make an herbal tea.

2005 Top Perennials

Achillea millefolium 'Fireland' - Tall, upright habit. Flowers open red, then fades to pink and then gold. Ball FloraPlant.

Ajuga reptans 'Caitlain's Giant' from Proven Winners has big, bold and lush burgundy foliage all season long; blue flowers in spring; tolerates deep shade and bad

conditions. ‘Burgundy Glow’ from Ball FloraPlant has bright, variegated foliage of pink, burgundy, and white.

Althea ‘Queeny Purple’ - 2005 AAS Winner. Dwarf and compactness make this hollyhock a novel selection. Great for borders or in the foreground of the gardens.

Artemisia vulgaris ‘Janlim’ from Riverbend Nursery has bright yellow and green variegated foliage. Grows upright to about 2 feet tall. Striking in combination with brightly-colored flowering plants.

Artemisia stelleriana ‘Silver Brocade’ from Greenleaf Perennials is a striking groundcover type artemisia with silver-white foliage and deeply lobed foliage.

Boltonia asteroides ‘Jim Crockett’ from Ball FloraPlant is a compact, short boltonia growing to just 2 feet tall. Flowers throughout most of the summer.

Callirhoe involucrata - Purple Poppy Mallow from Jelitto Seed. A vigorous groundcover with deeply lobed foliage which covers itself in bright pink, mallow-like blooms. Flowers all summer. Great for a dry, well-drained site.

Coreopsis ‘Creme Brulee’ - from Riverbend Nursery is a yellow-flowered coreopsis that is being promoted as an improved version of *C. verticillata* ‘Moonbeam’. It has larger, deeper yellow flowers on a more vigorous plant having denser less open form. Grows in dense, bushy clumps to 12-20” tall eventually spreading to 24” wide. Butter-yellow flowers bloom profusely from June to October. Lacy deep green leaves.

Coreopsis rosea ‘Sweet Dreams’ - from Mary’s Greenhouse is a thread-leaf coreopsis with pink and white bicolored flowers. Flowers all summer.

Dahlia ‘Ellen Houston’, ‘Yellow Hammer’, and ‘Bishop of Llandoff’ - ‘Ellen Houston’ has rich flowering, double orange/red flowers with incredible dark black leaves. Grows to 18"-24". “Classic Summertime” has soft yellow flower that is a striking contrast to

its dark, weathered bronzy leaves; large plant; 2'-4'. 'Bishop of Llandoff' grows tall to 36" and has striking single red flowers. All from Brent & Becky Bulbs.

Echinacea 'Orange Meadow Bright' - from Riverbend Nursery has a striking orange color. Unique and showy in the gardens.

Echinacea 'Sparkler' - from Terra Nova Nursery has green foliage that is speckled and splattered with white. Unique and novel.

Erysimum 'Pastel Patchwork' - from Ball FloraPlant has loads of soft, mauve flowers from early summer thru mid-summer. Grows to 24". Beautiful color.

Euphorbia 'Blue Lagoon' - from Riverbend Nursery. The foliage may be bluish-green, but the inflorescences of 'Blue Lagoon' offer a lime-green and yellow dazzle that lasts for months.

Gaura lindheimeri 'Ballerina Rose' - from Ball FloraPlant is a compact selection growing to just 18" tall. Loads of pink-rose colored blooms from mid-summer on.

Leucanthemum x superbum 'Ice Star' - from Ball FloraPlant grows to 30" and is a strong, sturdy plant. Full flowers make a show in mid-summer.

Lychnis arkwrightii 'Vesuvius' - from Greenleaf Perennials is a particularly splendid variety. It has dark, bronzy-maroon foliage and bears very conspicuous and very large, molten lava-coloured, orange-scarlet flowers. Grows to about 16" tall and flowers in mid-summer.

Lysimachia congestiflora 'Persian Chocolate' - from Greenleaf Perennials is a semi-evergreen groundcover which makes a mass of small purple foliage. In late spring, the purple foliage is topped by hundreds of golden bells...a really amazing sight. We love the bronze foliage.

Origanum laevigatum 'Pilgrim' - from Greenleaf Perennials makes a 2' wide clump of tiny glaucous green leaves which are topped in late June with 18" tall sprays of rich lavender-purple flowers held in a dark purple calyx. A great ornamental oregano.

Phlox paniculata 'Flamingo' - Greenleaf Perennials; 'Lilac' and 'Purple' Flame from Ball FloraPlant. All are compact, short, and sturdy plants which bloom from mid-summer on.

Salvia greggii 'Navajo Red' and 'Navajo Purple' from Ball FloraPlant are bright colors and showy in the garden. Flower all season.

Salvia x sylvestris 'Snow Hill' - from Ball FloraPlant is compact and covers itself with loads of white flower spikes. Flowers from June thru September.

Salvia x mexicana 'Limelight' - from Singing Spring Nursery puts on quite a show from August until frost with loads of chartreuse and bright blue flower spikes. A real showstopper in the garden.

2005 Top Tropicals

Alocasia 'California' - Upright leaves and compact habit make this selection versatile in the garden. Great in containers or the tropical border. Grows 18"-24". Brent & Becky's Bulbs.

Alocasia 'Frydek' - Pronounced and bold white veins make this plant striking in the garden. Leaves are medium-sized and a dark, velvety green. Brent & Becky's Bulbs.

Alocasia plumbea 'Nigra' - Extremely large 12"-24" dark green leaves, almost black and somewhat metallic. Leaves are glossy with edges that are ruffled and indented; 3'-5'. Brent & Becky's Bulbs.

Bromiliad 'Fudge Ripple' - Deep bronze foliage with grey variegated banding makes this plant striking and a real conversation piece. .

Colocasia 'Yellow Splash' - Taro, Elephant's Ear is a green and yellow variegated selection from Brent & Becky's Bulbs. Striking foliage and great for color combinations.

Canna 'Red Futurity' - Very dark red, self-cleaning flowers complimented by dark bronzy green, almost black leaves. Great in full sun. Grows to just 2-3'. Short and compact. Brent & Becky Bulbs.

Curcuma elata 'Giant Plume' - Pinecone Ginger - Large, bright pink spike blooms comes up separate from the broad, lush leaves and can be used as a cut flower; loves sun and is hardy to zone 7. Grows 2'-3'. Brent & Becky Bulbs.

Curcuma zeodoria - Zedoaria Pinecone Ginger - Has striking leaves with red central veins; likes sun to medium shade; zone 8-10. Brent & Becky Bulbs.

Dianella tasmanica 'Variegata' - Variegated Flax Lily - Beautiful green and white sword-shaped leaves make this a striking foliage plant in any combination. Singing Springs Nursery.

Eucomis autumnalis - Pineapple Lily. Soft creamy to yellow to greenish flowers in mid-summer. Grows 12"-16" tall. Brent & Becky's Bulbs.

Eucomis 'Sparkling Beauty' - This Pineapple Lily emerges in spring bearing deep burgundy leaves that slowly pale to olive green. In mid-summer 2' tall, wine-red flower stems sport starry, out-facing blossoms of creamy-white tinged with burgundy-pink. Singing Spring Nursery

Gladiolus 'Flevo Junior' and 'Flevo Amico' are dwarf gladiolus. 'Flevo Junior' is hot pink and white and 'Flevo Amico' is a scarlet red. Both are incredibly showy and striking in the garden. Brent & Becky's Bulbs.

Musa acuminata - Sumatrana, Zebrina or Rojo Banana - Green leaves stained with burgundy wine markings on top and red beneath; does well in containers indoors and outdoors; 6'-10'. Brent & Becky's Bulbs.

Senna didymotropa - Popcorn Bush - The foliage is what gives this plant its name. Grows 4-6' tall and bears foot-tall spires of large golden blossoms that spring from glossy brown buds. A dynamite look make popcorn bush a must *for tropical-looking gardens*. Singing Spring Nursery.

Scadoxus - Blood Lily - A mass of tiny florets with prominent stamens clustered in one large, orange-red, softball-sized, bottlebrush, round flower is so eye-catching, it wins a place in many summer gardens. This South African native is 8"-10" tall and provides bright color in the late summer garden. Bold, broad green leaves emerge after the flowering is over. Although it is said to need partial shade, we have this pest resistant, adaptable plant happily blooming in full sun.
Brent & Becky's Bulbs.

Xanthosoma atrovirens 'Lime Zinger' - Elephant Ear - 'Lime Zinger' has chartreuse green giant leaves which manage to appear bright and cool at the same time, especially when planted with darker colored plants. It's a terrific plant that will grow in water, in a boggy area or in a well watered garden. The leaves tend to stay green longer when planted in full shade. Singing Springs Nursery.

Be sure to visit the UT Gardens in Jackson and Knoxville in 2006. The American Conifer Society will have its National Conference in Knoxville in mid-June. Check out the UT Gardens website at <http://utgardens.tennessee.edu/> for more information.