

UT Gardens 2010 Best & Beautiful Plants

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Note: A 'K' for Knoxville or 'J' for Jackson at the end of each plant description indicates that it is growing only at that test garden. No symbol indicates it is growing at both gardens.

Best in Show Annual

Calibrachoa Million Bells® 'Trailing Magenta' from Suntory was a low-growing variety that impressed everyone with its season-long show of numerous bright pink blooms resembling miniature petunias. Due to its height (3") and trailing habit, this carpet-like annual was best sited in the front or edge of a planting bed or placed in a container.

Best Repeat Annual Variety

Begonia BIG™ 'Rose with Bronze Leaf' from Benary, produced masses of large, self-cleaning blooms above lush, glossy foliage. Tolerant of both shade and sun locations, this large, upright begonia was a standout in our gardens from early spring until frost. The **BIG™ 'Red with Green Leaf'** variety, also from Benary, performed equally well.

Best New Annual Variety

Pennisetum Vertigo™ was a dramatic ornamental grass that featured broad blades of deep burgundy and reached a height of 3-5'. Because it produced no bloom, it was best used as a contrast to flowering plants in the landscape. From Proven Winners.

Top Annual Performers

Angelonia Serena™ series (Lavender, Purple, and White) were seed-grown mounding annuals from PanAmerican. Each performed well all season, with perfect foliage and full blooms. **Angelonia Angelmist™ 'Spreading Purple Improved'** was an upright vegetative variety from BallFlora that featured lush growth and blooms all summer long.

Anisodonteia Slightly Strawberry™ from Proven Winners was an unusual annual perfectly suited as a filler plant in the middle of landscape beds. Low maintenance, it featured soft pink hibiscus-type blooms.

Begonia Brandy® Improved and **Nightlife Blush** (from Benary) along with **Volumia™ Rose Bicolor** (from Syngenta) were seed grown begonias that boasted heavy blooms all season. Like most begonias, these were well suited to part-shade or shady garden areas.

Bracteantha Dreamtime™ ‘Jumbo Light Pink’– The huge blooms on this mounding annual were unusual because they opened up each day and featured a beautiful range of soft pink colors. Ball FloraPlant provided this variety as well as the equally striking **Dreamtime™ ‘Jumbo Pure White’** and **Dreamtime™ ‘Jumbo Red Ember’**.

Calibrachoa ‘Liberty Blue Vein’ and **‘Liberty Magenta’** from J.P. Bartlett were carefree annuals with dense, healthy foliage and numerous blooms. A trailing habit meant they were well-suited to the front of landscape beds or containers. **Million Bells® Brilliant Pink** was a mounding variety from Suntory that performed very well. Proven Winners provided three notable varieties in the **Superbells® series: Blackberry Punch** – an unusual and striking color combination and the more typical **Lavender** and **Yellow** varieties.

Carex ‘Amazon Mist’ and **‘Prairie Fire’** were short ornamental grasses from Kieft that provided a nice contrast of color and texture to flowering plants.

Celosia ‘Fresh Look Gold’ (an AAS winner) and **‘Glorious Red’** (from Benary) featured healthy foliage and striking blooms all season long.

Cleome Seniorita Rosalita® was a wonderful variety of an old-fashioned annual. This tall upright plant with spidery lavender blooms was well suited for the mid to back of a landscape bed but, as always, was short-lived and gone from the garden by the beginning of August.

Coleus (Solenostemon) ‘Rebel Rouser’ from Proven Winners. Grown for its foliage rather than its bloom, coleus always provides an excellent contrast to flowering plants in the landscape. This shade-tolerant variety had an attractive bold texture and color. Two other varieties from Proven Winners, **Colorblaze® Alligator Tears™** and **Lancelot™ Cherry Cordial™** were also great performers that tolerated shady garden conditions.

Coreopsis ‘Ruby Frost’ – Striking cream and burgundy blooms covered this open habit plant throughout the summer and well into autumn; **‘Cherry’**, **‘Citrine’**, and **‘Pineapple Pie’** were beautiful selections with exceptional blooms. All from Terra Nova.

Diascia Diamonte™ Coral Rose was a surprise this summer. An annual that usually performs much better in cool season conditions, this AAS Winner variety held up well in the heat and humidity.

Euphorbia Diamond Frost® was, as usual, a carefree mounding annual. Profusely covered with tiny white blooms, it was a great filler plant that served as a contrast to annuals with larger more prominent blooms. From Proven Winners.

Gomphrena ‘Audray Purple Red’ from American Takii was a new spin on an old-fashioned plant. This full, mounding variety was absolutely loaded with bright, clover-like blooms all

summer long and was well suited to the middle of a planting bed. ‘**Audray Bicolor Rose**’ was equally attractive, with a more sedate bloom color.

Hibiscus Luau[™] ‘**Peach Mai Tai**’ was a dramatic annual with exceptionally large, striking blooms against dark green glossy foliage on a compact plant. **Luau**[™] ‘**Pink Paki**’ was equally impressive. Both from Proven Winners.

Impatiens ‘Patchwork’ series (Peach Prism and Pink Shades), vegetative varieties from Ball FloraPlant, were non-stop bloomers all season long. The **Super Elfin**[™] series (**Cherry Splash, Red Starburst, Rose Starburst, and Violet Starburst**), a seed-grown series from PanAmerican, provided a welcome splash of color in our woodland garden where the full, mounding annuals appreciated the shade.

Laurentia (Isotoma) ‘Avant-Garde Blue’ and ‘Avant-Garde Pink’, both from Thompson & Morgan had a full mounding habit, lacy foliage and delicate blooms that made them great fillers against plants with bolder texture or blooms.

Lobularia Snow Princess[™] was a ground-hugging annual that tolerated part-shade and was covered all summer long with dense panicles of small white blooms. From Proven Winners.

Lysimachia Superstition[™] from Proven Winners was a carefree and vigorous groundcover annual with dark ruby-bronze foliage and bright contrasting yellow blooms.

Marigold (Tagetes) ‘Moonsong Deep Orange’ is an award-winning variety of the popular annual. Remarkably long-lasting in the landscape, it was disease-free all season long and remained liberally covered with large, bright blooms against attractive, lacy foliage. From AAS Winners.

Melampodium ‘Casino Light Yellow’ from American Takii was a mounding annual with striking, dense foliage and profuse, cheerful yellow blooms all summer long.

Nierembergia Augusta[™] **Blue Skies** from Proven Winners was a deceptively tough performer, with delicate-seeming foliage and light-blue cup-like blooms that provided a season-long show.

Ornamental Pepper (Capsicum) ‘Black Pearl’. This AAS Winner has never failed to grab visitors’ attention in the garden. Its dark purple foliage was a wonderful contrast to the shiny black marble-sized fruits that ripened to bright red.

Osteospermum Asti[™] **White** was an AAS Winner that was covered profusely with unusual blooms resembling a blue-eyed daisy. A mounding carefree annual that performed beautifully all summer long.

Petunia ‘Black Velvet’ from Ball FloraPlant was a vigorous trailing annual that boasted the blackest blooms ever and was quite eye-catching in the landscape. This solid black variety was joined by **Ball Flora’s ‘Pinstripe’ and ‘Phantom’** varieties which featured black and cream blooms. The **Supertunia® series (Vista Bubblegum, Vista Silverberry, Indigo Charm, and Lavender Skies)** As always, this incredibly vigorous series from Proven Winners was covered in

masses of clear pink blooms from early summer to frost. The AAS Winner varieties '**Burgundy Trailing Type**' and '**Opera Supreme Pink Morn**' were also vigorous and heavy blooming.

Salvia '**Coral Nymph**' and '**Lady in Red**' (from American Takii), '**Forest Fire**' (from Benary), and '**Red**' (an AAS Winner) were carefree and extremely vigorous varieties of Texas Sage featuring nonstop blooms all summer long. '**Evolution**' (also an AAS Winner) and '**Fairy Queen**' (from Benary) were great varieties of Mealycup Sage.

Sweet Potato Vine (*Ipomoea*) Illusion™ series (Emerald Lace and Midnight Lace) and Sweet Caroline™ series (Bewitched Purple, Bronze, Green Yellow, Light Green, Purple, Red, Sweetheart Light Green, Sweetheart Purple, and Sweetheart Red), all from Proven Winners, provided a riotous selection of colors and foliage textures. All were extremely vigorous vines that performed well all summer long.

Torenia **Summer Wave™ series (Large Blue and Large Violet)** from Suntory were mounding annuals covered with vibrant blooms that had an unusual 'wishbone' structure formed by joined anthers. These varieties performed best in a part-shade location.

Verbena **Superbena® Royale Chambray** was a Proven Winner selection that was simply perfect throughout the summer, with a ground-hugging habit and an unusual purple-blue bloom color.

Vinca (*Catharanthus*) **Titan™ series ('Apricot', 'Icy Pink', and 'Dark Red')**, '**Cherry Halo**', '**Rose Halo**', and '**Pacifica Orange**', all from PanAmerican Seed, along with '**Pacifica Burgundy Halo**', an AAS Winner, boasted numerous blooms in attractive colors. All were maintenance free annuals with mounding habits that performed well all season long.

Zinnia **Zahara™ series (Double Cherry, Double Fire, and Starlight Rose) and Zowie! Yellow Flame** (all AAS Winners) featured exceptionally gorgeous and heavy blooms throughout the season.

Perennials

Achillea '**Summer Berries**', although trialed as an annual, was actually a seed-grown perennial from American Takii that bloomed its first year in the garden, yielding extra value for your landscape dollar.

Amsonia hubrichtii - **Arkansas blue star, thread leaf blue star.** It was no surprise that this fabulous plant has been chosen as the 2011 Perennial Plant of the Year™. *Amsonia* offers a variety of features throughout the season. From late spring to early summer, it features two- to three-inch wide clusters of small, light blue, star-shaped flowers with bright green fern-like foliage in spring and summer that turns a bright yellow-golden color in fall. It can grow up to 36 inches tall and equally wide, and thrives in full sun to partial shade in a moist but well-drained site. Once established, it can tolerate drier conditions.

Coreopsis '**Ruby Frost**' – **Ruby frost tickseed.** This 2010 hybrid coreopsis is from Terra Nova Nurseries. Named through a contest held by 'Birds & Blooms' magazine, this selection is a real

breakthrough in breeding for color. It has a ruby colored bloom fringed with a frost-white margin. This perennial is ideal as an accent or in mass plantings for the mixed bed, border, or containers.

Echinacea ‘**Paradiso Mix**’ (from Sahin) and **Prairie Splendor**[™] (from Syngenta) performed well in a hot and humid summer that was hard on other trialed coneflowers. Both had profuse blooms and held up well throughout the season.

Gaillardia x grandiflora ‘**Arizona Apricot**’ – **Arizona apricot blanket flower** is a 2011 All-America Selections winner and a wonderful perennial for our region. This new variety offers an apricot color not seen in *Gaillardia* before. Daisy-like blooms about 3 to 3.5 inches in size have yellow edges that deepen to a rich apricot in the center. The compact 12-inch tall plants offer bright green foliage and a tidy uniform habit, best viewed when planted to the front of the flower bed, and will bloom from early summer into autumn. ‘**Arizona Apricot**’ is drought tolerant and relatively maintenance free. It thrives in full-sun and a well-drained site and looks great when planted in mass. ‘**Arizona Red Shades**’ (from Benary) along with AAS Winners ‘**Apricot Shades**’ and ‘**Mesa Yellow**’ were strong varieties of this perennial flower. All offered bright and cheerful bloom colors with healthy foliage and profuse blooms throughout the summer.

Gaura ‘**Summer Breeze**’ (from Jelitto) and ‘**The Bride**’ (from Kieft) were stunning, airy annuals which worked well in the middle to back of garden beds. The wands were liberally covered with small white blooms until frost.

Lavender (*Lavendula*) ‘**Ellegance Snow**’ and ‘**Ellegance Purple**’ from Kieft brought a welcome herbal fragrance to the garden, with heavy blooms and healthy foliage throughout the season.

Miscanthus sinensis ‘**Gold Bar**’ - **Gold bar dwarf zebra grass**. This new selection is slow growing and can take up to five years to reach a height of five feet. It is upright and compact with a spiky texture. All these attributes make it ideal for smaller gardens where other ornamental grasses can quickly take over.

Paeonia x (Intersectional hybrid)- **Itoh peony**. Interbreeding tree peonies and herbaceous peonies was thought impossible until 1948, when Japanese breeder Toichi Itoh did it. It is said that he had tried tens of thousands of crosses before succeeding. Now these Intersectional Peonies (so called because they are between the two major Peony sections, or groups) are commonly called Itoh Peonies in his honor. Itoh hybrids have the best characteristics of both herbaceous and tree peonies. They are vigorous, easy to grow, and very long-lived. They are relatively low plants, rarely growing taller than 45 inches, but they feature the large blooms of tree peonies held up on sturdy stems. The flowers of Itohs are often in more vibrant colors even than the plants from which they are bred.

Phlox hybrids - **Summer phlox**. Good hybridizing and breeding has brought an array of fantastic new phlox hybrids that tout numerous wonderful characteristics. These new hybrids thrive in full-sun. They bloom from July through October and are mildew resistant. They are also self-cleaning, which means that no deadheading is required because as old flowers fade and

wither away new ones continue to open and put on a colorful show. They have a shorter, stockier growth habit, growing to just 16" tall and 20" wide. Numerous colors are available. Some of the hybrid phlox grown in the UT Gardens that are great performers for our Tennessee landscapes are the Cocktail Series: 'Watermelon Punch', 'Pina Colada', 'Cosmopolitan', 'Peppermint Twist', 'Purple Kiss', and 'Tequila Sunrise' as well as the Flame Series: 'Pink', 'Lilac', and 'Purple'.

***Physostegia* 'Crystal Peak White'** from Benary, was trialed as an annual, but was actually a perennial that bloomed the first year from seed. It provided dense, profuse blooms in mid-summer and persisted in the landscape even after frost.

***Sedum* 'Crystal Pink'** from Terra Nova was a delightful succulent selection with frothy yet dense pink blooms. Its water-wise nature made it well suited to rock gardens or well-drained landscape beds.

***Stipa* 'Pony Tails'** from Kieft. This under-used ornamental grass provided a wonderful fine texture, graceful weeping form, and sense of movement to the landscape. As with other grasses, it was best used as a contrast to flowering plants.

***Verbascum* hybrids - Ornamental mullein.** Can be either biennials or short-lived perennials. *Verbascum* has an upright vertical form with tall flower spikes rising from a basal rosette of woolly gray-green leaves and is available in colors ranging from pure white to pinks, peaches, yellows and lavenders. Blooming begins in late spring and continues through late summer or even into autumn depending on the variety. It thrives in full sun and is well suited for the sandy or rocky soils found in rock gardens but is susceptible to root rot if drainage is not adequate. Some great hybrid selections to use are 'Southern Charm', 'Caribbean Crush', 'Jackie in Pink', 'Jackie in Yellow', 'Sixteen Candles' and 'Wedding Candles'.

Tropicals

***Aechmea* 'Wally Berg' - Wally Berg bromeliad.** A beautiful red-orange selection developed by the late Wally Berg of Sarasota, Florida. A new, unusual and striking color.

***Ananas comosum* - Pink variegated pineapple.** Everyone loves the creamy white, pink, and green variegated foliage of this pineapple plant. It stands out as a striking specimen plant.

***Kalanchoe thyrsiflora* 'Flapjack' – Flapjack kalanchoe.** This clumping succulent has large flat blue-green leaves with red leaf margins and -- you guessed it -- is shaped like a flapjack. When grown in full sun the leaf margins become even redder and broader. This is truly a desert plant, which makes it an ideal plant for a xeriscape or low-water usage area.

***Musa acuminata* 'Siam Ruby' - Siam Ruby Banana.** Rare red-leaved banana from the wilds of New Guinea. Originally sold for as much as \$1500! Very fast growing, grows to 8 feet tall. Not believed to be cold hardy.

***Musa velutina* – Pink velvet banana.** Beautiful pink flowers and bananas make this a striking banana that is actually hardy for Tennessee. Rarely exceeding 6' tall, this banana produces copious flower stalks near the top of the trunk, starting in late summer. Each stalk produces clusters of small, pink, velvet bananas that peel themselves when ripe. Not good for eating.

Trees and Shrubs

***Acer palmatum* var. *dissectum* 'Red Select' - Red select cutleaf Japanese maple.** One of the best maples known for retaining red foliage all season. Its red lacy foliage turns a brilliant crimson fall color. It has a slightly weeping form and will ultimately top out at about 12-15 feet tall with a generous spread up to 10 feet wide.

***Callicarpa americana* 'Welch's Pink' – Welch's pink American beauty berry.** This new introduction is named for its pink midsummer flowers and pink autumn berries. It grows 3-6 feet tall and thrives in full-sun and partial-shade.

***Camellia sinensis* - Tea camellia or tea bush.** This evergreen makes a dense, round shrub that grows to between 4 feet and 6 feet tall and just as wide. It produces leathery, dark green leaves that are a bit narrower than its ornamental relatives and covers itself each fall with fragrant white flowers about 1.5 inches in diameter. Flowering typically starts in September and can continue into early December. Several varieties are commercially available including pink-flowering selections and selections with variegated foliage. 'Rosea' is one with pink flowers. 'Shirotae' is a selection with pewter-colored leaves with white margins, and 'Silver Dust' has new growth that emerges almost white. As the leaves mature, they turn green with some silver flecking. 'Gold Splash' has large green and yellow variegated leaves.

***Cotinus coggygia* 'Grace'- Purple smoketree or smokebush.** 'Grace' is the result of a cross between *Cotinus coggygia* which originates from Eurasia, and *Cotinus obovatus*, which is a small tree native to the southeastern United States. This hybrid does not have the rich dark purple of its Eurasian parent, but rather is a lovely deep mauve that flashes reddish leaf undersides. It has large misty blooms, the feature that appears to be purple "smoke" that gives the plant its common name. 'Grace' is very easy to grow, requiring nothing more than a sunny site and well-drained soils. Can be left to grow as a small tree up to 15 feet tall or managed as a shrub if pruned back severely each year, producing striking colorful foliage.

***Gardenia jasminoides* 'Kleim's Hardy' – Daisy gardenia.** Produces masses of fragrant, single, daisy-shaped, white flowers in late spring/early summer and sporadically throughout the season. A very hardy selection that prefers full sun to partial shade. Mounding habit with very dark green, lustrous foliage and heavier blooms than other gardenias. Grows up to 3 feet.

***Ginkgo biloba* 'Mariken' - Mariken maiden tree.** A wonderful dwarf cultivar. This slow growing selection is ideal as a container or specimen plant. It grows only 2-3 feet tall and can sometimes develop a pendulous, weeping shape when mature. It has brilliant golden foliage in fall.

***Juniperus chinensis* 'Holbert' – Holbert Chinese juniper.** Spreading growth habit of 8-9 feet wide and just 2-3 feet high. Great blue foliage holds color through the winter months.

***Nyssa sylvatica* 'Zydeco Twist' – Zydeco twist black gum.** This contorted-branched black tupelo (or sourgum) is really unique and different. After the vivid red fall foliage drops and the branches are more obviously zig-zaggy in winter, its form is especially striking. Tolerant of a wet site, it grows to 20 feet tall.

***Thuja occidentalis* ‘Sunkist’ – Sunkist oriental arborvitae.** One of the brightest yellow-gold conifers available. Tolerant of partial shade to full sun and a moist to dry and well-drained site. Grows up to 4 feet tall and 2-3 feet wide.

***Thuja orientalis* ‘Franky Boy’ - Franky boy oriental arborvitae.** A finely textured foliage and bright chartreuse color that turns bronzy-orange in the winter make this a winning year-round plant. Thrives in full-sun to partial-shade and grows to just 4 feet tall and 3 feet wide. Tolerant of most soils. Growth habit creates a wonderful, dwarf conifer with an overall plant form of a tear drop.

***Thuja orientalis* ‘Van Hoey Smith’ - Van Hoey Smith oriental arborvitae.** Grows up to 6 feet tall. Beautiful variegated green and gold finely textured foliage.

***Viburnum setigenum* - Tea viburnum.** A great native shrub with showy spring blooms, good fall color, and outstanding fall fruit. Many mistake this for a winterberry holly because it is also deciduous. Grows 8’-12’ tall and 5’-8’ wide. Wonderful shrub for attracting birds.

Roses

***Rosa* ‘Carefree Marvel’ – Carefree marvel shrub rose.** This bright, deep pink rose is a low growing rose with a broad habit. Grows up to 2 feet tall and 3-4 feet wide. Disease resistant and low maintenance, it is ideal for spilling over a rock wall or ledge.

***Rosa* ‘Kimberlina’ – Kimberlina floribunda rose.** This 2009 Floribunda of the Year® winner is outstanding. The soft pink blooms would work with any color combination especially with its dark green foliage. Touted as being one of the most vigorous floribundas ever introduced.

***Rosa* ‘Lynn Anderson’ – Lynn Anderson hybrid tea rose.** A beautiful, vigorous hybrid tea with a mild fragrance. Its creamy, white center blends to light then dark pink edges.

***Rosa* ‘Rainbow Sunblaze’ – Rainbow sunblaze miniature rose.** This rose has beautiful double flowers that stay well above the foliage. The center of the bloom is yellow with the outside petals a contrasting orange-red.

***Rosa* ‘Tournament of Roses’ – Tournament of roses hybrid tea rose.** A soft, delicate pink colored rose that is very fragrant. This is a selection that looks great from a tight bud until fully open.