

UT Gardens 2011 Best & Beautiful Plants

Prepared by:

Dr. Susan Hamilton, Director of the UT Gardens

James Newburn, Assistant Director

Jason Reeves, Curator of the Jackson UT Gardens

Beth Willis, Trials Coordinator

Information is also posted on:

UT Gardens website at <http://utgardens.tennessee.edu/>

UT Gardens Jackson at <http://west.tennessee.edu/ornamentals/>

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.

Top Annuals of 2011

Best in Show – *Lantana Luscious*[®] *Citrus Blend* This carefree plant is a fantastic performer – its full, shrubby habit grows to 3 ½' tall, with great foliage texture and masses of vibrant blooms in shades of red and orange. (Proven Winners)

Best New Variety – *Angelonia Sungelonia*[™] *Deep Pink* This annual provides non-stop blooms all summer and can grow to just over 2' tall. Fantastic shades of pink on the blooms contrast beautifully with dark purple stems and deep green foliage. (Suntory Flowers)

Best Repeat Variety – *Petunia Supertunia*[®] *Vista Bubblegum* A selection that never fails to impress with its vigorous growth, tall mounding habit (up to 1 ½' tall) and large, soft pink blooms which cover the plants. Sets the standard for vegetative petunias. (Proven Winners)

Top Twenty (alphabetical)

***Antirrhinum* 'Twinny Peach'** Enjoy this variety as a cool-season or summer annual for its unusual, double blooms in peachy-yellow tones. Finely textured foliage on full plants that grow to just over 1' tall adds to the appeal. (AAS Winner)

***Begonia* 'Whopper Red Bronze Leaf'** Large, bright red blooms really stand out against the dark bronze foliage on this full, self-cleaning annual which grows to 1' tall. (Ball)

***Bidens* 'Sunbeam'** Cheery yellow blooms are abundant on this mounding annual which reaches 1 ½' tall. The delicate foliage texture provides additional interest. (Ball FloraPlant)

Calibrachoa Superbells*[®] *Coralberry Punch An interesting bloom color combination (coral, burgundy, and yellow) drives the interest in this vigorous annual with a groundcover habit. (Proven Winners)

***Capsicum* 'Black Pearl'** This is consistently one of the annuals which prompts the most admiring comments from garden visitors. The shiny round peppers which mature from purple-black to red stand out beautifully against the dark foliage, all on a plant that can reach 2' in height. (PanAmerican)

***Gaillardia* 'Arizona' series (*Apricot* and *Red Shades*)** Both of these varieties provide non-stop masses of large blooms in bright colors on mounding plants that reach almost 1 ½' tall. (Benary)

***Heliotropium Simply Scentsational*[®]** This remarkably heat tolerant variety boasts lush growth (to 1 ½' tall) and wonderfully scented lavender-colored blooms. Still looks great far past the point that many annuals have faded away. (Proven Winners)

***Hibiscus* 'Mahogany Splendor'** Use this spectacular foliage plant as a contrast to your flowering varieties. The burgundy color and rich texture of this 4' tall annual make it a standout selection. (PanAmerican)

Impatiens Infinity[®] series (**Electric Cherry** and **Salmon Bisque**) These New Guinea varieties stand up well, even in full sun conditions. Vibrant colors pop against dark foliage on full plants that grow just over 1' tall. (Proven Winners)*Knoxville only

Ipomoea 'Sweet Caroline' series (**Bewitched Improved**, **Bronze**, **Raven**, **Sweetheart Purple**, and **Sweetheart Red**) You won't go wrong using any of the varieties in this series. All exhibit vigorous growth, with foliage colors that resist fading. Mounding-spreading habits can grow between 1 – 1 ½' tall depending on the variety. (Proven Winners)

Lobularia Snow Princess[®] A ground-hugging annual at only 8" tall, this vigorous grower is literally covered with masses of tiny white blooms so that it looks like a carpet. (Proven Winners)

Mecardonia Gold Dust[™] This is another carpet-like groundcover which grows to 6" tall. Lush plants are dotted with bright and cheery golden blooms. (Proven Winners)

Pelargonium Presto[®] **Dark Salmon** An intense bloom color contrasts with dark stems on this geranium which manages to beat our summer heat and humidity with season-long blooms and growth to just over 1' tall. (Ball FloraPlant)

Pennisetum Graceful Grasses[®] **Vertigo**[®] The broad, burgundy blades of this tall grass (to 5' tall) provide a wonderful foliage contrast to neighboring flowers and also a nice sense of motion whenever there is a light breeze. (Proven Winners)

Petunia Cadenza[™] **Rose Red** This vigorous annual turns heads with its numerous cherry-pink blooms on a mounding habit that can reach 1 ½' tall. (Takii)*Knoxville only and **Petunia Surfinia**[®] **Wild Plum** This spreading petunia (to 8" tall) draws the eye with its large purple blooms. (Suntory Flowers)

Scaevola Surdiva[®] series (**Light Blue** and **White**) These spreading varieties reach only 9" tall, but are covered all season long with delicate fan-shaped flowers. (Suntory Flowers)

Solenostemon Lancelot[™] **Velvet Mocha**[™] This foliage plant impresses with its height (up to 4' tall), lush growth, and dark coppery foliage color. Provides a great contrast to flowering plants. (Proven Winners)

Torenia 'Kauai Lemon Drop' and **'Kauai Magenta'** These seed-grown wishbone flowers have a mounding growth habit (reaching just over 1' tall) and are covered all summer long with delicate, cheery blooms. (PanAmerican), and **Torenia Summer Wave**[®] **Large Amethyst**. This vegetative variety sports numerous blooms on a spreading-mounding habit that can reach over 1' tall. (Suntory Flowers)

Verbena Aztec[™] **Burgundy** Intense burgundy blooms stand out on this vigorous groundcover which only reaches 6" tall. (Ball FloraPlant) and **Verbena Tapien**[®] **Blue-Violet** This carpet-like annual, which grows to 8" tall, is covered in masses of vibrant purple blooms and also boasts a delicate foliage texture. (Suntory Flowers)

Zinnia 'Double Zahara Fire' The vibrant orange blooms of this variety absolutely draw attention to themselves. Numerous blooms on mounding plants that can grow to more than 1 ½' tall. (PanAmerican)

Top Perennials

Clematis 'Roogucchi' also sometimes spelled 'Roguchi'. This vine dies to the ground each winter, and springs forth each spring, eager to flower on new growth. Rooguchi is a cross between a shrubby clematis *C. integrifolia* and a vining form, *C. reticulata*. As a result, its habit falls somewhere in between. This sprawling character is good for tumbling over a retaining wall or even out of a large container, and is mannerly enough to plant where it may weave through a

complementary shrub. Each individual flower deserves admiration as a work of art, shaped like a hanging bell, with four, gently recurving petals. rigid and leathery. This plant blooms without rest from late spring until late fall. It is resistant to clematis wilt - often the bane of this genus. Plant Rooguchi in good, well drained soil, where it gets several hours of sun and good air circulation. A site too shady and damp can encourage powdery mildew. This foliar disease often disappears on its own, once the weather has thoroughly warmed. *Jackson only.

***Dryopteris celsa* - Log Fern** - Native to moist woods in the eastern U.S. Log fern gets its common name from often being found growing on rotting logs. Its upright firm-textured, shiny green, deeply cut leaves are oblong, and can grow to 3 feet tall but more often reach 18 -24 inches. The foliage remains evergreen in the south and should be cut back before the new starts in the spring. It slowly forms expanding clumps and grows best in acidic moist soil in a shady spot. *Jackson only.

***Echinacea* 'Quills 'N Thrills'** PPAF The quilled pink petals of this coneflower make the blooms unusual and noteworthy. Plants grow to almost 1 ½' tall and are loaded with blooms in their first year. (Terra Nova) *Knoxville only.

***Helenium* 'Mardi Gras'** ('Helbro')USPP #15124 - Helen's Flower. Growing up to 3' tall and covered in masses of blooms in beautiful shades of yellow, orange, and russet, this variety is striking and one of the best we've grown. (Blooms of Bressingham)

***Hypericum* Hypearls™ series (Olivia and Renu)** At 36", Olivia begins with yellow berries that change to a striking salmon color over time. 'Renu' features round berries that start out cream and eventually turn to bright pink. Its foliage also has a red tint to new growth, which will reach 30" tall. (Blooms of Bressingham)

***Iris germanica* – Bearded Iris.** Reblooming bearded iris are growing in popularity. 'GNU' is a beautiful broken colored iris. Medium blue-violet falls cleanly streaked with white. 'Victoria Falls' is an award-winning tall bearded iris with light blue ruffled petals that cascade like a waterfall. In the center of each petal is a "signal patch" of white, highlighting a white beard. 'Victoria Falls' produces three main branches and two spurs, which often produce up to 14 flowers. Winner of the Dykes Medal in 1984. *Knoxville only.

***Juncus* Blue Mohawk™** A beautiful steely-blue color and fine texture give this rush a lot to recommend it. It makes a wonderful contrast to flowering plants. (Proven Winners)

***Thelypteris decursive-pinnata* - Japanese Beech Fern** – This underutilized fern has become a favorite in the UT Gardens Jackson. The light to medium green fuzzy leaves look a bit different than most ferns and stay green until the temps really drop. It spreads by short runners, and can be useful as a groundcover. Over time it can form large dense colonies especially in moist soil. Japanese Beech fern does not require as much moisture as some ferns such as Japanese painted and lady fern, but certainly benefits from occasional watering. Shade to part shade. Size 8 to 18 inches tall. *Jackson only.

***Vernonia lettermannii* 'Iron Butterfly'** is a dwarf form of an underutilized native ironweed native to Arkansas and Oklahoma. Its soft, fine textured foliage looks very similar to *Amsonia hubrichtii*. In late summer, wispy violet purple flowers appear in masses at the tips of its 18-30" well branched stems, and attract butterflies. Grows best in full sun to light shade in average soil but tolerates even poor dry soil.

Top Tropicals

Cyperus Graceful Grasses[®] series (**King Tut**[™] and **Baby Tut**[™]) The unusual foliage textures of these two grass-like plants provide a wonderful contrast to neighboring plants. Bold and striking – these are not for the faint of heart; they can reach up to 6' tall. (Proven Winners)

Carica papaya This tree-like tropical garners a lot of attention, particularly once the large fruit begin to develop. The deeply lobed foliage provides a lot of texture interest.

Top Trees and Shrubs

Buddleia Lo & Behold® '**Blue Chip**' - **Butterfly Bush** – This is a breakthrough variety of buddleia with all the fragrance and butterfly appeal of traditional varieties in a small, easy to maintain package. 'Blue Chip' stays under three feet tall without any pruning, and blooms continuously from midsummer to frost without deadheading. It is frost tolerant, non-invasive and very easy to grow. Pruning generally not needed, but may be trimmed in spring. Fragrant flowers. Deer resistant. Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds.

Callicarpa dichotoma '**Duet**' - **Variegated Beautyberry** – Discovered at Tennessee Tech in 2000 and released jointly by them and the U.S. National Arboretum. This exciting new introduction of a white berried beautyberry is unique for its variegated foliage. Reaching a height of about 6' tall in 4 years and having the graceful rounded habit of other beautyberries it will have a spread of about the same. Its berries are produced in fall and will remain about 2-3 weeks after the foliage drops. It can be grown in full sun without much scorching of the variegation but light shade in the afternoon may benefit the plant in hotter climates. Great plant when used as a specimen, in the deciduous hedge or in the shrub border. The variegated foliage, berries, and growth habit extends its season of interest to year round.

Chamaecyparis pisifera '**Vintage Gold**' **False Cypress** – We have found 'Vintage Gold' to be one of the best conifers to hold vivid gold color all summer in our heat. Makes a handsome pyramid with graceful pendulous branches. Mature size is unknown but expect it to reach 10' tall and 4' wide at the base in about 6 years. Certainly gets much larger than stated by most plant labels and literature.

Chionanthus retusus '**China Snow**' - **Chinese Fringe Tree, Chinese Fringetree**. This pest free small tree is noted for its showy spring bloom and clean green foliage throughout the heat of summer. There are two distinct forms seen available in the trade, one being more upright - the other spreading and multi-stemmed. The wide-spreading form has a more leathery, rounded leaf, and a peeling shiny brown bark that adds ornamental interest. A particularly fine specimen of this type is called 'China Snow', and was propagated from a tree in Knoxville by illustrious Tennessee nurseryman Don Shadow. Fist-sized snowy panicles of numerous lacy small flowers top the lustrous foliage in late spring. A generous and precocious bloomer, this tree is easily grown in any soil but wet, tolerant even of partial shade. Twenty feet tall and wide, occasionally larger.

Cornus sanguinea '**Midwinter Fire**,' also sold under the name '**Winter Flame**'. Commonly called bloodtwig dogwood, is a hard plant to beat for a colorful show in the winter landscape. The standout features of this selection include golden fall foliage, followed by branches and stems that start out yellow in color at the base of the plant and gradually turn bright orange to red towards the tip of the plant. Full-sun to part-shade and well-drained to moist soil. Small white flowers similar to Queen Anne's Lace appear in late spring. The flowers give way to clusters of dark purple berries in summer that are good for attracting birds.

Cotoneaster lacteus (formally **C. parneyi**) – Parney cotoneaster. A large, dramatic evergreen cotoneaster that can grow to 6'-10' tall and wide. Loaded with bright and showy red berries all

winter. Loose, upright and spreading habit. Sun to partial shade; prefers a moist, well-drained soil but tolerates a range of site conditions. Drought tolerant; good resistance to lace bugs and fireblight disease.

Edgeworthia chrysantha - Paperbush Plant. This well-branched shrub often begins blooming in mid-winter, long after its foliage has fallen and its silhouette is a tracery of thick, upright branches, somewhat like a young fig tree with more spread. Each flowerhead is creamy yellow, composed of masses of tiny florets to form a 1½- to 2-inch cluster. The blooms are set on the very tips of the branches, and once they open, expect them to remain for 6 to 8 weeks, releasing a fabulously sweet, intense scent. If you have a spot of partial shade or dappled sunlight, consider transforming it with this spectacular shrub. Expect Grows 8' tall and just as wide.

***Heptacodium miconioides* – Seven-Son Flower.** A small tree 15' to 20' that is multi-stemmed and grows in full sun and tolerates a wide range of soils. Hardy to Zone 5 and is native to China. Has white blooms for a long period in late summer. With age the bracts of the blooms fade to a fuchsia color and the tree appears to have pink blooms. The tree is drought tolerant and with age the bark peels off in long strips, so it has a long period of attractiveness.

***Hydrangea paniculata* Little Lime™.** A new dwarf form of the ever popular 'Limelight' hydrangea, Little Lime sports the same great flowers and coloration as 'Limelight' but in a smaller package. At one third the size of traditional hardy hydrangeas, this new variety fits well into any landscape. Summer flowers open soft green and turn pink and burgundy in fall. Full-sun to part-shade.

***Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Little Honey'** is an unusual yellow-leaved form of the oakleaf hydrangea. It begins to bloom in June and continues throughout the summer. Best sited in morning sun and afternoon shade. It seems to be a slow grower, but once established will grow 5' tall. Has the same great fall colored red leaves as other oakleaf hydrangeas. Also, as with other oakleaves, the bark peels and is quite attractive. 'Little Honey' is a branch sport of *H. 'Pee Wee'*.

***Illicium parviflorum* 'Florida Sunshine' – Anisetree.** Has chartreuse gold foliage during the spring and summer that brightens to screaming yellow in the fall becoming a bit more muted in winter with the upper stems taking on a red cast, contrasting with the leaves. Best grown in average to moist soil in light shade to prevent leaf scorch. Its mature size is unknown but expect it to reach 5' tall x 3' wide in 7 years.

***Juniperus x media* 'Daub's Frosted' Juniper** – This sun loving, drought resistant, spreading shrub is sure to delight in the landscape. 'Daub's Frosted' grows low to the ground, stays around 2' and spreads 4 to 6' wide. Foliage is yellow in the spring fading to a green/yellow in the summer with bluish undertones. During winter it becomes a soft blue green with subtle gold frosting, making this a great juniper for four season interest.

***Osmanthus heterophyllus* 'Goshiki'- 'Goshiki' False Holly.** *Osmanthus* are similar in appearance to holly, but the leaves are opposite, while holly leaves alternate. This species of osmanthus is proving to be hardier than first supposed, and can be successful as far north as Zone 6 if carefully sited. 'Goshiki' is a variegated form, with new foliage emerging surprisingly pink, then becoming generously splashed with white and green speckles. It is a densely growing form that is described by Michael Dirr as a "robust haystack" and will slowly reach 6 feet, and half that in width. One of its assets is its adaptability to shade, and in fact prefers shade in hotter regions. Another is the slow growth habit, making it a good candidate for sites where an evergreen shrub of small stature is preferred. Pest free and easily grown, provided the soil is well drained.

***Liquidambar styraciflua* 'Slender Silhouette' - Sweetgum.** Truly an exclamation point in the landscape, this very narrow form is a stunning columnar tree perfect for garden accent. Fall foliage is typically yellow. Grows to be about 50 feet tall at maturity with a spread of 8 feet.

***Xanthocyparis nootkatensis* (formerly *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*) 'Glauca Pendula' and 'Green Arrow'.** The Alaskan cedar is hardy from Alaska to the mid-South (hardiness zone 5). Its main features are drooping branches and dark green needles. 'Green Arrow' grows only 3' wide and matures at 35'. 'Glauca Pendula' grows 10' wide and up to 15' to 25' tall. Will grow in full sun to part shade. The form of this conifer is sculptural and really sticks out in a landscape.

Best Roses

'Carefree Marvel'TM Shrub Rose - A beautiful no spray shrub rose that is showy all season. This bright, deep pink rose gets 2-3' tall and can be somewhat of a ground hugger. It would be ideal spilling over a rock wall or ledge and with a profusion of blooms steadily flowering throughout the growing season it makes for a low maintenance high performing show.

'My Girl' Shrub Rose – This rose from the Easy Elegance collection from Bailey Nurseries was outstanding in our no-spray rose trials. It's in near constant flower, maintains a tidy form and is quite disease resistant. It has a beautiful deep pink full bloom.

'Pink Double Knockout'[®] Shrub Rose – The Knock Out roses continue to be one of the most spectacular performers in the UT Gardens. The double pink with its full bloom is extremely heat tolerant and once established drought tolerant as well. Very uniform in height and bloom making it ideal for massing.

'Legends' Hybrid Tea Rose - This hybrid tea has huge blooms that have tremendous staying power. One of the largest blooms of any plant in the garden. A beautiful ruby red color on a nice sturdy stem the bloom is delicately fragrant. Ideal for cutting, this rose was developed with the help of Oprah Winfrey in honor of the women of her Legends series.

'Vavoom'TM Floribunda Rose – We always need orange flowers in Tennessee and this really fits the bill. It keeps the color even as the flower begins to decline. The bloom contrasts nicely with the mahogany red new foliage growth. From Weeks Roses.

'Love and Peace' Hybrid Tea Rose – This rose drew lots of favorable comments from our visitors. It is bicolor with golden-yellow petals fading to pink margins. Vigorous growth without becoming spindly.