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Perennial Performers

Battling Whitefly

Culture Report: Salvia

MAY 2019

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PERPETUAL *Perennial Performers* — 2018 TRIALS —

Entered into numerous trials across the country in 2018, these varieties stood out with impressive color and performance.



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The quantity of perennials in summer trials has increased substantially. This is the culmination of years of breeding and selection, with significant advances in breeding techniques and a focus on interspecific hybrids. Many of the varieties I selected have been in trials for two to three years and are currently in production and a few are new for 2019. These varieties consistently exhibited the following attributes: durability, robust architecture, heat tolerance, stable flower color, disease resistance, long flowering window and floriferousness.

We envision perennial color as short lived and transitory, but these perennials demonstrated a protracted flower cycle. Future breeding goals include improved habit, day length neutrality, minimal vernalization requirements, first year flowering, new and improved flower color, textures and leaf patterns, and maybe, most importantly, extended blooming periods.

As I have mentioned in previous articles, the entry and trialing of seed and vegetative perennials in nationwide trials is proliferating every year, and the varieties I am highlighting in this article were perpetual performers in last year's summer trials from early summer through September.

1. AGASTACHE 'MORELLO'

Terra Nova Nurseries

I described the beauty of this herbaceous perennial in an earlier article. It was entered in multiple trials again last year and did not disappoint. This agastache has been one of the most floriferous and eye-catching varieties in the trials the past two years. The prodigious and colorful burgundy rose inflorescences rise impressively above the foliage canopy.



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There are only a few agastache varieties that can match its flower power. 'Morello' began blooming in early summer and continued until early fall. It is extremely heat and humidity tolerant and an excellent pollinator, growing 28 to 36 inches and hardy to Zone 5. 'Morello' has been an award winner in multiple trials the past two seasons.

2. ALLIUM 'MILLENIUM'

Mark McDonough

This was named Perennial Plant of the Year for 2018 by the Perennial Plant Association, and the recognition is well deserved. Many articles have been written about the attributes of this herbaceous perennial. There are more than 700 species



10. LEUCANTHEMUM 'COCONUT'

Terra Nova Nurseries

Over the years, Terra Nova has introduced numerous outstanding and unique leucanthemum, and 'Coconut' demonstrated in

multiple trials last summer why it should be in every perennial program. The vivacious fringed double daisy flowers have yellow petals which gradually fade to white from the center. The compact habit and prodigious

stems and flowers produced a canopy that was stunning. This variety will have multiple flowers the first year based on the field and container trials. 'Coconut' is hardy to Zone 5 and matures to 18-24 inches. *gpn*

9. RUDBECKIA 'AMERICAN GOLD RUSH'

Intrinsic Perennial Gardens

This rudbeckia was introduced in 2018 and is offered by many perennial suppliers for 2019. It was in southern and northern trials and undoubtedly was the most floriferous and impactful Black Eyed Susan I observed all summer. This new hybrid produces a compact, dome-like habit with a flower canopy unrivaled in rudbeckia varieties last summer. Most importantly, this hybrid is resistant to Septoria Leaf Spot and manifested disease free foliage. The abundance of recurved yellow flowers with black cones was striking with minimal spent flowers visible. This variety has outstanding application in mass plantings or large containers. The plant matures to 24 to 30 inches and is hardy to Zone 3.



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