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the Rainbow



Flowers



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Big Green Marble :: Fabulous plants for spring

by Mike Diamond
EDGE Contributor
Friday Apr 4, 2008

It's that time of year again people- Earth Day! As spring hits its flowery peak, Earth Day (April 18) is a reminder to us that our planet is a living thing, and we are not just squatters here, we are -or should be- the Earth's caretakers. For 24 hours, let's feel terrible about our gas guzzling/hairspraying/plastic using ways, shall we? As my Jewish grandmother (the omnipotent Dee Dee) proved time and time again, guilt is a powerful tool.



Hope is powerful too; and so is action. We *can* do something to help the Earth, by 'greening up' our home environments, both indoors and out. All of the oxygen we breathe comes from plants, and NASA scientists proved that plants remove harmful toxins from the air, including formaldehyde, benzene, and carbon monoxide. The best part of all of course is that while plants are "working," they're also beautiful, ornamental accents, as well as fascinating living 'Earthings' in their own right.



sensation hailing from Papua New Guinea, and thrives with full sun and plentiful moisture. Simply gorgeous.

All you spice girls out there should check out another new offering from the good folks at Logees, *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* "**Cinnamomum zeylanicum**" "**Cinnamon**". That's right, you can grow an actual cinnamon plant right at home! This is a slow growing, warmth loving plant with attractive oval leaves and sprays of delicate white flowers in summer. Byron Martin, co-owner of Logees, appeared on the **Martha Stewart Live** show recently, where he and the domestic diva utilized this curious plant to make 'perpetual cinnamon'. Yum!

While in that culinary state of mind, why not try growing *Olea europaea* "**Arbequina**" "**Black Olive**"? Described as 'self fertile' (I know the feeling honey), this rugged but lovely plant thrives in a Mediterranean climate (think: Cypress, or less glamorously, San Diego), bringing an exotic effect as well as dark, delicious olives!

Tasty!

The incomparable **Logee's Greenhouses** is a treasure trove of fabulous tropical greenery, and my default destination when I'm looking for plants that are uniquely beautiful. Among their new selections for 2008 is the **Begonia bipinnatifida** "**Lace Leaf**". This strange yet lovely little begonia boasts foliage that is fringed, the dissected leaves tinted an ethereal shade of deepest ruby bronze. The overall effect is feathery yet substantial; the pretty pink flowers are a nice bonus!

Logees also has what is sure to be the tropical plant for 2008: **Musa acuminata** "**Siam Ruby**". This fantastic looking banana plant makes a dramatic addition to the garden, its large, reddish bronze leaves liberally splashed with chartreuse. Siam Ruby is a horticultural

Hey, take it outside!

Spring fever has you ready for the great outdoors? **Terra Nova Nurseries**, out of cool, temperate Oregon is world renowned for creating some of the choicest **Heuchera** hybrids available. Their catalog includes some fab selections for those seeking cold



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hardy plants to add to the garden.

Among the new goodies for 2008 (their plants are available at better nurseries and garden centers nationwide) are [Bergenia 'Solar Flare'](#) a beautiful, evergreen specimen with cream edged foliage that tints pink in the cool weather of fall. 'Solar Flare' thrives in part shade and has dainty, rosy hued spring flowers. For a bright sunny spot, nothing can outshine the new [Echinacea 'Tiki Torch'](#). This vigorous sun lover sports dazzling, 'pumpkin orange' daisies all summer long. Like a meadow wildflower on a big hit of acid! My favorite Terra Nova item for 2008 is [Heucherella 'Alabama Sunrise'](#). From spring to mid-summer the foliage is deeply cut, gold with ruby red veins. Come autumn, the

older leaves turn a pink-orange color. Fierce! It's a plant with multiple personalities; believe me honey I relate!

Mike Diamond lives in New York City, requires a nap every day at 3PM, and loves watching Judge Judy, our next Supreme Court Justice.

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