

Hot New Plants: Justin's Faves

BHG garden editor Justin W. Hancock checks in with some of his top new plants.
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Flutterby Petite Blue Heaven Butterfly Bush

It's a bit ironic that Flutterby Petite Blue Heaven butterfly bush has such a long name; it's one of the smallest varieties on the market. Growing 2 feet tall and wide, this stunner has fragrant, violet-blue flowers all summer and fall; it was still in bloom on November 5 in my Iowa garden! The reason: It can't produce seed, so that energy goes into producing more blooms (and it won't be an invasive pest). I've also found it holds up exceedingly well to drought. Pair it with Sombrero Sandy Yellow coneflower and 'Mesa Yellow' blanketflower for a combo butterflies won't be able to resist. Zones 5-9



Begonia 'Gryphon'

'Gryphon' begonia is a seemingly perfect plant for the shade garden. It offers big, bold, hand-shape foliage liberally marked in silver. The texture and color alone make it a standout. I paired this annual with Japanese painted fern, and the two created a delightful combo of silver and green. Even better? It's a fantastic houseplant, so you can dig it up at the end of the season and bring it indoors.



Archangel Purple Angelonia

There's angelonia in my garden every summer because the plant is so tough. It holds up to heat like a champ, doesn't mind drought, and even looked good during week after week of heavy rain. The Archangel series is brand new and noteworthy for its extra-large flowers and sturdy stems. It's awesome with airy plants such as Breathless euphorbia or Lucky Yellow Glow lantana.



3D Purple Osteospermum

Traditionally, I'm not a fan of osteospermums. I love their daisy-shape flowers in spring, but they always disappoint when they stop flowering once summer heat kicks in. 3D Purple, while not fully heat-tolerant, did continue to throw off a bloom or two throughout the summer and has a fun anemone form. The tuft of petals in the center keeps the flowers from closing at night, so you get more enjoyment time from the blooms. I loved it over a carpet of Shock Wave Denim petunias.



Ornamental Pepper 'Purple Flash'

Any plant that has variegated foliage catches my attention, so when I first saw pepper 'Purple Flash', I stopped in my tracks. There's a lot to love about this plant: dark purple leaves splashed with lavender and white, teardrop-shape fruits, great drought tolerance, and a compact (15 inches tall by 20 inches wide) habit. I love planting it with angelonia and silvery licorice plant.



MiniFamous Double Amethyst Calibrachoa

There are so many varieties of calibrachoa on the market that it takes something special to stand out. The MiniFamous series certainly does that: The plants feature ruffled, double flowers that visitors to your garden might mistake for miniature roses. Like other calibrachoa, MiniFamous Double Amethyst is a spreader that will cascade over the edges of container gardens. Mix in some lobelia and an ornamental pepper such as 'Black Pearl' or 'Purple Flash', and you'll have an amazing container combo.