



## Flowering shrub hybrids add to gardeners' choices for summer

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By **Roxanne Washington, The Plain Dealer**

If you enjoy nonstop garden color during the spring and summer but have neither the time nor the desire to do a lot of watering and maintenance, flowering shrubs could be just what you want.

Flowering shrubs, or ornamental shrubs, are low maintenance, which makes them perfect for homeowners who want to relax after work and do things other than garden on weekends.

Flowering shrubs add curb appeal to a home, lending visual pleasure for you, your neighbors and passers-by. They add a splash of color and provide a welcoming and fragrant atmosphere at doorways, and they make a colorful anchor in a landscape.

Flowering shrubs also soften architectural lines and patios. Shrubs, ornamental or otherwise, usually mean less grass to cut.

Last but not least, as with most mass-market plants, new varieties of flowering shrubs are introduced every year. They're constantly being tweaked to be smaller for folks who don't have a lot of gardening space; to be larger for gardeners who believe that bigger is better; for better color; to bloom longer; to require less maintenance and to be more disease-resistant.

So chances are a trip to a garden center will reveal flowering shrubs that you've never seen before.

There is a new lilac shrub on the gardening scene -- 'Bloomerang Purple' by Proven Winners ColorChoice -- a hybrid that promises to produce a bumper crop of blooms until the first frost.



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Proven Winners

A lilac bush that blooms and has fragrance all summer? Yes, when it's Proven Winners' Syringa 'Bloomerang Purple' dwarf lilac, which blooms until frost.

'Bloomerang Purple' has been a bit controversial, at least in gardening circles, because those who prefer the nostalgia of lilacs as spring bloomers don't want it any other way.

"Some people are real sticklers about things like that," says Ryan McGrath, a marketing specialist for Proven Winners ColorChoice, the flowering shrubs division of the company ([provenwinners.com](http://provenwinners.com)).

If you aren't one of those sticklers, you can enjoy 'Bloomerang Purple' for months instead of weeks. It goes through a rest period in the heat of the summer, but more flowers open after the heat passes.

A new Proven Winners rosebush, 'Oso Easy Honey Bun,' produces an abundance of semidouble blooms with an unusual color that ranges from blush-pink to butter, to creamy white. The plant is also touted as highly disease-resistant and needs no spraying or deadheading.

Proven Winners' 'Snowy Day Surprise' is a Pearl-bush that is covered in large white flowers in spring. It's said to be a stronger grower than old-fashioned Pearl-bush and more compact.



Ball Ornamental

Ball's *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Fire and Ice' appears bright red in summer

Standard *Buddleia* shrubs, or butterfly bushes, generally grow to about 6 feet tall, which can be a problem for smaller gardens. The traditional varieties also tend to be weedy and even invasive in some areas. But recently, Proven Winners ColorChoice introduced a downsized version of the shrub called Lo & Behold 'Blue Chip.'

'Blue Chip' is a miniaturized butterfly bush, so it's compact enough to plant in a pot on a patio. What's even better, it has kept its appeal to butterflies and hummingbirds.

Ball Ornamental ([ballhort.com](http://ballhort.com)) has introduced quite a few new shrubs, says chain manager Tom Foley. *Buddleia* 'Flutterby' petite varieties come in lavender, pink, white and blue. Some grow no more than two to three feet tall, and gardeners will appreciate that the shrubs bloom like crazy.

"Once they begin to bloom, they bloom strong all summer long," Foley says.

Growing 18 to 36 inches tall, *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Bombshell' is very compact.

"Because it's so compact, it needs no pruning," Foley says. "Plant it in the sun or shade, and it's done."

The plant is covered in white flowers from early summer until frost and has more flowers per plant than any other *Hydrangea paniculata*, Foley says.

Another shrub worth mentioning, says Foley, is *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Fire and Ice.' It's an early bloomer that displays creamy white blooms in the beginning of summer, then



Proven Winners

Oso Easy 'Honey Bun' landscape rose has an unusual color that ranges from blush pink to butter yellow to creamy white. The rose has abundant

turns rose-pink in late summer and deep red in autumn.

semidouble flowers that bloom from midsummer to fall, is disease-resistant and needs no spraying.

"So you get three seasons," Foley says.

The newest edition to the Endless Summer ([endlesssummerblooms.com/en/consumer](http://endlesssummerblooms.com/en/consumer)) hydrangea collection is 'Bella Anna,' a *Hydrangea arborescens*. 'Belle Anna' is a re-bloomer that's notable for its magenta-pink color.

"This hydrangea is a color breakthrough for *Hydrangea arborescens*," reads information on the website.

To learn more, go to [endlesssummerblooms.com](http://endlesssummerblooms.com).

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