

By BARBARA LINDHOLM - Master Gardener

## How Does Your Garden Grow?: 2010 gardening trends

Welcome to the new season of "How Does Your Garden Grow?" articles prepared by the DeKalb County Master Gardeners. This year, as in past years, there are many new and interesting garden trends and a great selection of wonderful new plants to consider for our gardens.

Gardening trends for 2010 remain very similar to the trends of a year ago. Going green, creating environmental sustainability and the use of native plants are the three most mentioned goals for success in our gardens this season.

The main component for "going green" and saving money is the continued practice of at-home vegetable gardening. The Garden Writers Association Foundation records show that 7 million new households were actively growing vegetable gardens in 2009. In addition to vegetable gardening, there has been a substantial increase in the growing of fruits and berry plants.

The new buzz words appearing in many of the garden information sources are "environmental sustainability." The focus of this movement involves water-wise landscapes, mulching practices, the use of drought-resistant plants and the use of chemicals only when absolutely necessary.

Tied to the "environmental sustainability" concept is the very important issue of the use of native plants and grasses. Plants that are indigenous to our area of northern Illinois will grow with less water, less need for chemical intervention and less maintenance. Natives and grasses offer the home gardener a large selection of color, size and choice of plants.

There are many new and attractive annuals available for our consideration this season. By far the most frequently mentioned in all the catalogs and gardening magazines is the Zahara series of zinnias. This 18-inch plant comes in a variety of colors and has very good heat tolerance. "Zahara Starlight Rose" is one variety receiving a lot of praise.

"Snow Princess" white alyssum has a new trailing form and the added benefit of all-season blooming. This plant should be great for both containers and hanging baskets.

Two new petunias are generating a lot of interest this year. "Shockwave Denim" has numerous, small, spreading blue-purple flowers that are very heat tolerant. This plant will be effective in the ground or in a hanging basket. "Pretty Much Picasso" is a very unique trailing petunia featuring a deep violet center with an unusual chartreuse rim around each flower.

The perennial plant of the year for 2010 is *Baptista australis* or, as it is more commonly known, Indigo. This is not a new plant, but improved breeding practices have produced a very attractive, 3-to-4-foot plant with blue-green leaves and an intense blue flower. This is an easy plant to grow as its ancestors grew and continue to grow commonly in our local prairie areas.

"Purple Rooster" is a much improved beebalm for sunny portions of the garden. This variety can be planted even in the middle of a flower bed and still perform with great mildew resistance.

And finally, a very frequently mentioned perennial this year is the small, 6-inch viola named "Endurio Sky."

In a normal year, the All American Rose Selection Committee selects several winning roses representing the different types of roses. This year, a single rose has been selected by AARS to receive the award. This honor has not been bestowed on a single rose since 1990. The rose that has everyone in the rose world so excited is a floribunda named "Easy Does It." This rose was hybridized in England and will be introduced by Weeks Roses of California. A kaleidoscope of orange, pink and apricot colors, with ruffled, double petals make this rose a beautiful addition to any garden. "Easy Does It" has a fruity scent, is disease resistant and has survived in 23 test gardens and many different temperature zones across the nation for the past two years.

There is a saying – "What goes around, comes around" – and this is especially true in the garden world. From early times, gardens were a means to grow food for family use. We again find modern families engaging in the same activity. In the late 1700s and early 1900s, families were exploring gardening and botany as a hobby. The acquiring and cultivating of new plants were an integral part of this activity. In 2010, our quest and curiosity about new and unique plants continues.

The Master Gardeners wish you a happy and successful growing season.

- If you have any questions or comments about this article, home gardening or about the Master Gardener program, call the Master Gardeners c/o University of Illinois Extension, DeKalb County office at 815-758-8194 or e-mail [dekalb\\_mg@extension.uiuc.edu](mailto:dekalb_mg@extension.uiuc.edu).

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