

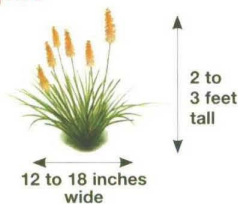
plant PICKS

Red-hot pokers might need a new name

NAME: 'Toffee Nosed' red-hot poker
(*Kniphofia* 'Toffee Nosed')

USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 6 to 10

CONDITIONS: Full sun; well-drained soil



IF YOU HAVE BEEN turned off by the eye-popping colors of red-hot pokers, you might want to reconsider them—especially the cultivar 'Toffee Nosed'. This plant's blooms are not as strong as other cultivars, with blossoms that are cream colored below and a toasty reddish brown on top. It's a combination that never visually overpowers its neighbors.

A bonus to growing 'Toffee Nosed' is that it is in flower for up to two months in midsummer. An older plant will send up stalk after stalk of pokers. Once established, this perennial will thrive without much fussing. Its flowers will be more plentiful if the plant is fed regularly, although it is tough enough to withstand poor soil and neglect.

► **They grow farther north than once thought:** A tip for getting red-hot pokers to survive in Zone 6—and even to Zone 5—is placing them in a spot where they will get full sun during the summer but also be protected from the direction of the prevailing winds during winter (but not too close to any building where the runoff from a gutter might keep the plant too soggy). Another tip is to place a basket turned upside down over the plant in winter. Be sure the basket is slatted on the sides to let in a bit of air and light. Weigh down the covering to keep winds from blowing it away.

► **Companions should have a similar height but a contrasting shape:** Tall, sun-loving plants, such as Frikart's aster (*Aster* × *frikartii* and cvs., Zones 5–8), Shasta daisy (*Leucanthemum* × *superbum* and cvs., Zones 5–8), and taller garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata* and cvs., Zones 4–8), would be great choices. Even some medium-size ornamental grasses, such as 'Yaku Jima' miscanthus (*Miscanthus sinensis** 'Yaku Jima', Zones 4–9) or pheasant-tail grass (*Anemanthele lessoniana*, Zones 8–10), would be an excellent highlight to 'Toffee Nosed' red-hot poker.

—Roger Pierce and his wife own and operate Sequim Rare Plants in Sequim, Washington.



• • SOURCES

Joy Creek Nursery, Scappoose, Ore.; 503-543-7474; www.joycreek.com

Plant Delights Nursery, Raleigh, N.C.; 919-772-4794; www.plantdelights.com

continued on page 24 ►

PLANT PICKS

continued from page 23

New plants for 2010

Spring has sprung across much of the country, and no doubt, you're itching to know what's new in the wide world of plants. We've spent the past few months scouring press releases, garden shows, and new catalogs to narrow down the slew of new varieties to the top 10 that we're most excited to try. It's still too soon to know which mail-order companies will carry these options, so look for them this year when you hit your local nurseries—and let us know what you think.



'Lord Clayton' phlox



'Rhino Hide' hosta

PERENNIALS

NAME: 'Rhino Hide' hosta (*Hosta* 'Rhino Hide')

ZONES: 3 to 9

SIZE: 18 inches tall and 30 inches wide

CONDITIONS: Partial sun to full shade; moist, well-drained soil
DYNAMIC DETAILS: Thick, leathery leaves form puckered cups, and best of all, slugs won't touch it. (Introduced by Walters Gardens)

NAME: 'Lord Clayton' phlox (*Phlox paniculata* 'Lord Clayton')

ZONES: 4 to 8

SIZE: 2 to 3 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; well-drained soil
DYNAMIC DETAILS: Foliage emerges a deep purple with lime green stems and veins, and is topped off by cherry red blossoms. (Introduced by Plants Nouveau)

NAME: 'Dragon's Breath' ligularia (*Ligularia przewalskii* 'Dragon's Breath')

ZONES: 4 to 9

SIZE: 13 inches tall (31 inches when in bloom) and 22 inches wide

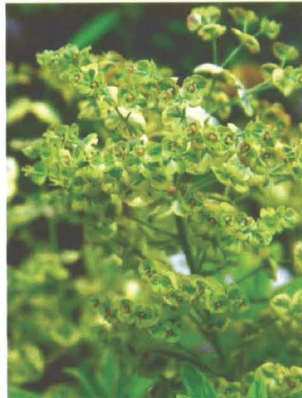
CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; fertile, moist, well-drained soil
DYNAMIC DETAILS: Leaves are extremely dissected, looking like the flames that shoot out of a dragon's mouth. Bright yellow flowers contrast with dark stems. (Bred by Terra Nova Nurseries)

NAME: 'Ascot Rainbow' euphorbia (*Euphorbia* × *martinii* 'Ascot Rainbow')

ZONES: 7 to 10 (maybe 6 with some winter protection)

SIZE: 20 inches tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; well-drained soil
DYNAMIC DETAILS: Amazing tricolor foliage will turn pink in cool temperatures. And the unique flowers are cream and green with a stunning red eye. (Developed by PlantHaven)



'Ascot Rainbow' euphorbia

NAME: 'River Mist' variegated sea oats (*Chasmanthum latifolium* 'River Mist')

ZONES: 5 to 9

SIZE: 3 feet tall and 2 feet wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; fertile, moist, well-drained soil
DYNAMIC DETAILS: Voted best perennial grass at the 2009 Farwest Show. This is a well-behaved grass with pronounced white stripes on the leaves and bright white seed heads. (Developed by ItSaul Plants)



'River Mist' variegated sea oats

ANNUALS

NAME: 'Fireworks' globe amaranth (*Gomphrena* 'Fireworks')

SIZE: 4 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; well-drained soil

DYNAMIC DETAILS: Beautiful in the garden and fantastic for fresh- or dried-flower arrangements, 'Fireworks' boasts excellent drought



'Dragon's Breath' ligularia

Photos (p. 23 and p. 24): p. 23, courtesy of Sequim Rare Plants; p. 24 (top left), courtesy of Plants Nouveau; p. 24 (top right), courtesy of Danny Van Eecheute; p. 24 (center right), Danielle Sherry; p. 24 (bottom left), courtesy of Terra Nova Nurseries, Inc.; p. 24 (bottom right), courtesy of Walters Gardens, Inc. Illustration (p. 23): Chuck Lockhart

tolerance. (Introduced by PanAmerican Seed)

NAME: 'Benary's Giant Wine' zinnia (*Zinnia elegans* 'Benary's Giant Wine')

SIZE: 3 to 4 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; well-drained soil

DYNAMIC DETAILS: This is a new color of a popular cutting flower. Blossoms are roughly the size of a softball. (Introduced by Benary Seeds)

• • **TREE**

NAME: 'Mikazuki' Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Mikazuki')

ZONES: 5 to 8

SIZE: 8 feet tall and 4 feet wide (in 10 years)

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; well-drained soil

DYNAMIC DETAILS: Its truly unique coloring sets this maple apart from all others. The narrow foliage looks tie-dyed and holds its hue even in the summer heat. (Introduced by Buchholz & Buchholz Nursery)



'Fireworks' globe amaranth



'Benary's Giant Wine' zinnia

• • **VEGETABLES**

NAME: 'Naga Jolokia' chile (*Capsicum annuum* 'Naga Jolokia')

ZONES: Annual

SIZE: 2 feet tall and 1 foot wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; well-drained soil

DYNAMIC DETAILS: Officially recognized as the world's hottest chile by Guinness World Records, 'Naga Jolokia' measures in at just over 1,000,000 SHU (Scoville Heat Units)—so handle and taste with care. (Available from Thompson & Morgan, www.tmseeds.com)



'Mikazuki' Japanese maple



'Naga Jolokia' chile

NAME: 'RSVPea' sugar snap pea (*Pisum sativum* 'RSVPea')

ZONES: Annual

SIZE: Vining to 40 inches

CONDITIONS: Full sun; fertile, well-drained soil



'RSVPea' sugar snap pea

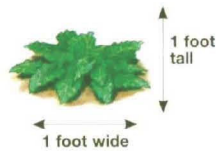
DYNAMIC DETAILS: This variety is adapted for the cooler climates of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. (Available from Burpee, www.burpee.com)

A perennial that provides cool foliage and magical fall berries

NAME: 'Pictum' variegated arum lily (*Arum italicum* 'Pictum')

ZONES: 6 to 10

CONDITIONS: Full shade; moist soil (under drought conditions, will go dormant sooner)



I RECENTLY FOUND MYSELF at five o'clock in the morning, drinking a cup of coffee and thinking about the newest, latest-and-greatest plants for a speaking engagement I was preparing. By definition, when one talks about "new," it is difficult to talk about "proven." That's why I added the painted 'Pictum' variegated arum lily to the talk.

Arums are great woodland plants that provide a long season of interest. The new foliage of 'Pictum' appears late in fall and remains evergreen over winter, assuming it's not covered by snow. The waxy leaves look like someone has carefully outlined the veins with clean white paint. In late spring, partially hidden, creamy yellow spathes appear. As summer moves on, the entire plant starts to decline and, in fact, looks like it has died.

Then, just when you have forgotten you even planted the darn thing, bright orange-red columns of berries appear, like magic, in fall.

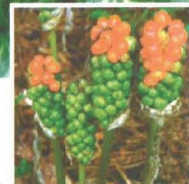
➤ **Long-lasting buddies are best:**

If 'Pictum' is combined with the winter foliage of bergenia (*Bergenia* spp. and cvs., Zones 3–9) and heuchera (*Heuchera* spp. and cvs., Zones 3–8) or with the architectural forms of ornamental grasses, the garden will be enjoyed 12 months of the year. Of course, these handsome scenes are not quite as handsome if 3 feet of snow covers the ground.

➤ **Division is the easiest method of propagation:**

Arums can be divided in fall after the leaves appear. Seed must be stratified (provided with cool, moist conditions) in fall and left until spring, at which time germination should occur. But be aware—seed often requires a year to germinate.

—Allan Armitage runs the trial gardens at the University of Georgia in Athens.



• • **SOURCES**

Forestfarm,
Williams, Ore.;
541-846-7269;
www.forestfarm.com

Niche Gardens,
Chapel Hill, N.C.;
919-967-0078; www.nichegardens.com

Photos (p. 25), except where noted: Danielle Sherry, top right, courtesy of Buchholz & Buchholz Nursery; second from top right, courtesy of Thompson & Morgan; third from top right, courtesy of Burpee; bottom right and inset, Allan Armitage. Illustration (p. 25): Chuck Lockhart

REGIONAL PICKS

northeast

2010 SHOPPING LIST
plants to buy this year



Lynn Felici-Gallant is owner of Indigo Gardens, a garden-design company in Raymond, New Hampshire.

'Stairway to Heaven' Jacob's ladder

NAME: *Polemonium reptans* 'Stairway to Heaven'
USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 3 to 8
SIZE: 15 to 18 inches tall and 12 to 15 inches wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; moist, well-drained, loamy soil

'Stairway to Heaven' is slated for stardom in my garden. With its emerald green leaves and ivory margins that display an occasional tinge of pink, this native beauty is so showy as a foliage plant that you almost forget it flowers until the blossoms appear in early summer. And flower it does:



'Stairway to Heaven' boasts clusters of sky blue blossoms that hover for weeks above the foliage, attracting numerous, nectar-loving pollinators. I can't wait to add this spectacular performer to my new green-and-white garden.



'Sophia' false lupine

NAME: *Thermopsis chinensis* 'Sophia'
ZONES: 5 to 9
SIZE: 18 to 24 inches tall and wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun; average to dry soil

This sweet, floriferous, truly compact cultivar of false lupine takes center stage in early spring. Abundant, pealike, canary yellow flowers bloom in sunny spikes alongside spring ephemerals and bulbs before most other perennials awaken. The pearly, bluish green foliage of 'Sophia' remains neat long after the flowers give way to attractive seedpods. While I have always loved the early yellow flowers of the native Carolina lupine (*T. villosa*, Zones 4-8), I'm looking forward to designing with this compact beauty from China.

'Chocolate Wings' rogersia

NAME: *Rodgersia pinnata* 'Chocolate Wings'
ZONES: 6 to 9
SIZE: 3 to 4 feet tall and 2 to 3 feet wide
CONDITIONS: Partial shade; consistently moist soil; may be grown as a bog plant

The quilted, propeller-shaped, serrated leaves of 'Chocolate Wings' rogersia emerge the color of deep cocoa, transforming as they mature into various shades of bronze, olive, and woody green.

Clusters of light pink flowers rise above the foliage in early to midsummer, morphing into fleecy, ruddy plumes by autumn; however, the plant is grown primarily for its tropical-looking foliage. Used as a specimen or planted en masse, 'Chocolate Wings' is an attention-getting architectural conversation piece. My clients with bog gardens or ponds simply love this plant.



'Blackout' heuchera

NAME: *Heuchera* 'Blackout'
ZONES: 4 to 8
SIZE: 12 to 18 inches tall and wide
CONDITIONS: Partial to full shade; moist, well-drained, loamy soil

'Blackout' is the latest in a series of exciting dark-leaved heucheras. It features glossy, wavy, chocolate-colored leaves with deep wine-colored undersides. Creamy flowers shower the plant in early to midsummer, providing a contrast to the ebony foliage. 'Blackout' can be grown in sun as long as it receives adequate moisture, and its foliage holds up well in summer heat and humidity. Simply put, this deer-, rabbit-, and disease-resistant, plant-anywhere heuchera is a stunner and a perfect addition to my ever-expanding collection of dark-leaved heucheras.



Photos, except where noted: courtesy of Walters Gardens, Inc.; top left, courtesy of Lynn Felici-Gallant; top right, Jennifer Benner; bottom right, courtesy of Skagit Gardens

midwest



Gene Bush is owner of Munchkin Nursery & Gardens in Depauw, Indiana.

Fringed bleeding heart

NAME: *Dicentra eximia* and cvs.
USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 3 to 8
SIZE: 2 feet tall and 12 to 18 inches wide
CONDITIONS: Partial shade; moist, rich, well-drained soil

There's no need to look any farther than fringed bleeding heart for continuous blooms from spring through fall. I adore it for keeping my midwestern garden in full bloom from early April through mid-October. The secret to longevity is not to let plants dry out severely, thereby preventing early dormancy. Blooms are heart-shaped lockets of rose-pink carried well above lacy, blue-green foliage. From cultivars, expect blooms of white, cherry, or red.



Japanese forest grass

NAME: *Hakonechloa macra*
ZONES: 5 to 9
SIZE: 1 to 3 feet tall and wide
CONDITIONS: Partial shade; moist, rich, well-drained soil

The species of this richly varied grass remains my favorite must-have plant for shade performance. It provides stunning good looks, as well. Japanese forest grass reaches about 2 feet in height and then arches gracefully for another foot. All of the bamboolike blades point in the same direction, flowing like bright green water. I love using this forest grass in raised beds among stones, where it can spill over edges. Large-leaved perennials are great companions.

Mourning widow hardy geranium

NAME: *Geranium phaeum* and cvs.
ZONES: 4 to 8
SIZE: 32 inches tall and 18 inches wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; well-drained soil

I love foliage, and this hardy geranium does not disappoint. It lights up borders with its green leaves dotted with brownish red freckles. The blooms are small but



large in number. Somewhat nodding, the purple-black flowers need to be close to a path to be fully appreciated. It tolerates dry conditions and root competition, performing well from April through the first frost. My favorite cultivars are 'Samobor' (pictured), with its prominent chocolate-colored markings on the foliage, and 'Lavender Pinwheel', carrying blooms of light lavender with brushstrokes of dark lavender on veins and edges.

Variegated Solomon's seal

NAME: *Polygonatum odoratum* 'Variegatum'
ZONES: 3 to 8
SIZE: 24 to 34 inches tall and 1 foot wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; moist, rich, well-drained soil

When I want a shade-tolerant showstopper, I go with variegated Solomon's seal. Its egg-shaped leaves are more than 5 inches long and close to 3 inches wide, and they bear a creamy white border and tip. Each leaf has a heavy substance, with prominent veins that add texture to color as the leaves alternate up arched stems. The rhizomes branch to form close colonies that block out weeds.



Photos, except where noted: Jennifer Benner; top right, Gene Bush; center left, Michelle Gervais

REGIONAL PICKS

south



Greg Grant is a horticulturist with SFA Mast Arboretum at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. He is coauthor of *The Southern Heirloom Garden and Home Landscaping: Texas*.

Turk's cap

NAME: *Malvaviscus arboreus* var. *drummondii* and cvs.
USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 7 to 11
SIZE: 4 feet tall and wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun to full shade; tolerates most soils

There are two reasons why I have to have Turk's cap. First, it can't be killed; native to the coastal southeastern United States, this perennial is as tough as they come. Second, it attracts more hummingbirds than all of the other flowers in my garden combined. Hummingbirds and sulfur butterflies flock to its turbanlike flowers, especially in fall. It also doesn't hurt that Turk's cap has a profusion of twisted, red-orange flowers from late spring until frost. When the foliage dies back after the first frost, cut the entire plant to the



ground. Although Turk's cap is adapted to sun and shade, plants in the sun tend to grow taller and more dense.



Sweet olive

NAME: *Osmanthus fragrans*
ZONES: 8 to 11
SIZE: 15 feet tall and 10 feet wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; loamy, well-drained soil

This native of China boasts tiny cream-colored flowers in fall and spring. Though small, it is one of my favorite fragrant plants—most beloved of all southern flowers—requiring only a few to scent an entire garden. This evergreen makes an excellent small specimen tree or can be sheared into a fine hedge. In cold climates, it can be grown in containers and brought in for winter.

Coral honeysuckle

NAME: *Lonicera sempervirens*
ZONES: 4 to 9
SIZE: Twining to 15 feet
CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; tolerates most soils

This hardy, twining vine has tubular, red-orange blooms in spring and scattered blooms throughout the remainder of the season. It is native to the eastern United States and is less vigorous than the invasive Japanese honeysuckle, which is gobbling up its former habitat. Though not fragrant, it's a must-have plant for nature lovers like myself because the flashy flowers attract hummingbirds and then form showy, red-orange berries that feed bluebirds and other songbirds. Its attractive semievergreen leaves are blue-green (shaded purple with new growth).



American wisteria

NAME: *Wisteria frutescens*
ZONES: 5 to 9
SIZE: Twining to 30 feet
CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; tolerates most soils

Most gardeners are only aware of the aggressive and sometimes invasive Chinese and Japanese wisterias, but I love their less aggressive counterpart: the American wisteria. This twining, deciduous vine is native along rivers and in swamps of the southeastern United States, flowering after spring foliage appears, with occasional repeated blooming throughout the growing season. The typical lilac-purple flowers have a light fragrance. It's an excellent plant for fences, arbors, and pergolas.



Photos, except where noted, courtesy of Greg Grant; top right and bottom right, Jennifer Benner

southern plains



Dee Nash has been gardening in the red dirt of Oklahoma for more than 20 years and lives outside Guthrie, Oklahoma.

'Welch's Pink' American beautyberry

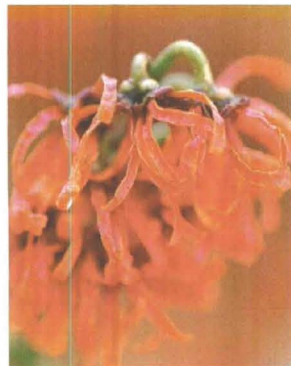
NAME: *Callicarpa americana* 'Welch's Pink'

USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 5 to 9

SIZE: 3 to 5 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Partial shade; well-drained soil

If Barbie designed a shrub, this would be it. 'Welch's Pink' has wonderfully large, bubblegum-colored berries, which is why I'd love to have it. The fruit is arranged in tight bunches along the stems, like rounded rock candy, and looks sweet enough to eat. The berries also attract birds that feast upon them in late fall. 'Welch's Pink' is found growing in the forests of east Texas and is slightly daintier than the species. It will tolerate dry shade and some sun, but sunnier areas may cause leaf burn and the berries won't be as pink.



'Diane' witch hazel

NAME: *Hamamelis* × *intermedia* 'Diane'

ZONES: 5 to 9

SIZE: 8 to 12 feet tall and 10 to 15 feet wide

CONDITIONS: Partial shade; moist, well-drained soil

'Diane' is considered one of the best cultivars of witch hazel because of its unusual, fragrant red blossoms and prolific winter-bloom display—and this is why I want it in my garden. The flowers are borne along the stems of this small, open-habit tree. In fall, the foliage of 'Diane' turns yellow-orange and eventually changes to maroon before falling off. It would look great planted near the yellow-blooming 'Arnold Promise' witch hazel (*H.* × *intermedia* 'Arnold Promise', Zones 5–9).

Lead plant

NAME: *Amorpha canescens*

ZONES: 2 to 9

SIZE: 2 to 3 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; well-drained, sandy soil with no amendments

A small deciduous shrub, this prairie native doesn't get enough respect—perhaps because lead plant may need up to three seasons to mature. But I'm willing to be patient because, once it gets going, racemes of vivid purple flowers with orange-tipped stamens appear from May to July.

These blooms attract many different types of native bees, which is beneficial for the entire garden. Silvery gray foliage indicates its preference for dry soils, and lead plant stays attractive even during severe drought. Being a member of the legume family, this plant may need some protection from deer, rabbits, and other grazing animals.



'Prairie Fire' New Zealand sedge

NAME: *Carex testacea* 'Prairie Fire'

ZONES: 7 to 10

SIZE: 18 inches tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; well-drained soil but will tolerate moist areas

This easy-to-grow evergreen is native to New Zealand but loves the red clay and sandy soil of the Southern Plains, so it's a natural choice to be a new addition to my beds. 'Prairie Fire' has brilliant red-and-orange foliage in the fall, which sets it apart from other native grasses. The narrow bronze-and-green foliage during the warmer months adds grace to the front of a perennial bed and also to a container as a spiller.



Photos: top left, courtesy of Debra Prinzing; top right, Michelle Gervais; center left, Clive Nichols; center right, Bill Johnson; bottom right, courtesy of Dee Nash

REGIONAL PICKS

southwest

2010 SHOPPING LIST
plants
to buy
this year



Judith Phillips is a landscape designer from Vegeta, New Mexico, who prefers working with native and xeric plants.

'Ultra Violet' salvia

NAME: *Salvia* 'Ultra Violet'

USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 6 to 9

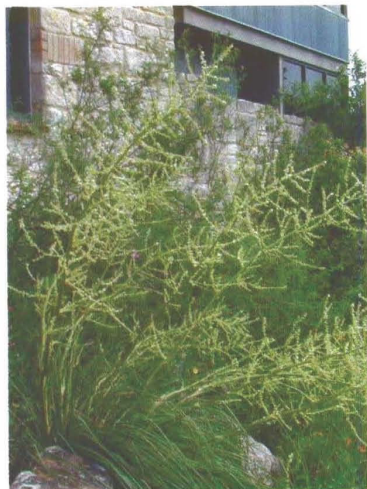
SIZE: 18 to 24 inches tall and 24 to 32 inches wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; well-drained, lean soil

'Ultra Violet' salvia is at the top of my shopping list this year. This hybrid of two shrubby *Salvia* species has small, dark green leaves, similar to its parents, but its flower spikes are a deep violet-purple and are produced profusely from midsummer through fall. Hummingbirds love it, but rabbits and deer usually ignore it once it's established; so



the rich color of this sage can be used in exposed desert gardens as well as in more protected courtyards.



Dwarf beargrass

NAME: *Nolina lindheimeriana*

ZONES: 6 to 10

SIZE: 2 to 3 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; lean, well-drained soil

Dwarf beargrass is also known as ribbon grass because its long, narrow evergreen leaves have a hard satin finish that offers subdued, year-round interest. Massed for a dramatic effect, it will have the texture of ornamental grasses with less maintenance. Its froth of creamy white flowers on arching stalks provides the summertime fireworks. Unlike most desert succulents, dwarf beargrass is unarmed, so it won't snag or spear unsuspecting passersby. This makes it an easy fit in small gardens; along paths; and in any hot, sunny spot in need of a cool accent.

Southwest flattop buckwheat

NAME: *Eriogonum fasciculatum* var. *polifolium*

ZONES: 7 to 10

SIZE: 2 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; well-drained, lean soil

I love how Southwest flattop buckwheat looks cool and cultivated in the harshest hot and dry places. The mounded form and narrow evergreen leaves are reminiscent of rosemary, but its foliage is woolly—especially on the underside of the leaves—and its lacy clusters of pink or white flowers appear anytime from spring through fall. Flattop buckwheat is also a favorite host plant of several butterflies, which bring added color and movement to the garden. It needs only light pruning in spring and occasional deep watering.



Flame flower

NAME: *Talinum calycinum* (syn. *Phemeranthus calycinus*)

ZONES: 6 to 9

SIZE: 10 to 12 inches tall and 1 foot wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; lean, well-drained soil

Flame flower is a short-grass prairie native, which loves heat and drought so much that it will also thrive in my southwestern garden. Bright pink flowers dance on wiry gold stems above its tuft of ground-hugging succulent leaves. Equally at home softening the prickly presence of cacti, between boulders in rock gardens, or at the edges of paths and patios, it blooms during the heat of the day from June through September. Flame flower self-sows easily, and it will make graceful sweeps in my garden.



Photos: top left, courtesy of Judith Phillips; top right, courtesy of PlantHaven; center left, Joseph A. Marcus; center right, Jason E. Willard; bottom right, courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden PlantFinder

mountain west

2010 SHOPPING LIST
plants to buy this year



Mike Higgins, owner of Gecko Landscape & Design, gardens—when it's not snowing—in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Turkish speedwell

NAME: *Veronica liwanensis*
USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 4 to 9
SIZE: 2 inches tall and 18 inches wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; well-drained soil

Turkish speedwell is always at the top of my shopping list because it is as tough as it is beautiful, is drought tolerant, survives light foot traffic, and will thrive in altitudes as high as 8,500 feet. This low creeper will root as it spreads to create a dense carpet of small, glossy green leaves. Vibrant, cobalt blue flowers cover the lush, low-growing foliage for six to eight weeks from spring to summer. The performance never seems to fade, so it's a great first-impression, front-line plant. It softens walkways and boulder gardens, and it is the best ground cover for western gardeners.



'Magdalena Sunshine' pineleaf penstemon

NAME: *Penstemon pinifolius* 'Magdalena Sunshine'
ZONES: 5 to 9
SIZE: 8 to 10 inches tall and 15 inches wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun; dry, well-drained soil

A high-mountain garden is not complete without a good penstemon; I recommend 'Magdalena Sunshine'. True to its name, this penstemon has needlelike foliage. It is somewhat evergreen in our region, which is a welcome extension to our short growing season. Instead of red or orange blossoms, this compact cultivar sports a blanket of bright yellow flowers from early to midsummer. The blooms are attractive to hummingbirds. This native of the mountains of New Mexico is hardy to 8,000 feet and is a perfect investment for gardens in dry, mountainous areas.

Hopflower oregano

NAME: *Origanum libanoticum*
ZONES: 5 to 9
SIZE: 8 to 18 inches tall and 10 to 20 inches wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun; well-drained soil

As my personal favorite multi-purpose plant, hopflower oregano is always on my shopping list. I use it in garden borders, along low retaining walls, or in patio boxes. This vigorous trailing herb suspends lots of Chinese lantern-like pinkish flowers (bracts, actually) on wiry stems; just a slight breeze makes its airy flowers dance. Though it looks delicate, it is deer resistant, drought tolerant, and hardy to 7,000 feet. Because our growing season is short, I love that its flowers are extraordinarily attractive when they dry and turn brown in fall. They add extended interest to the landscape and also look amazing indoors in dried arrangements.



'Purple Dragon' nettle

NAME: *Lamium maculatum* 'Purple Dragon'
ZONES: 4 to 8
SIZE: 4 to 8 inches tall and 12 to 20 inches wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun to full shade; well-drained soil

All summer long, a profusion of snapdragon-like purple flowers cover this plant's green-edged silver leaves. 'Purple Dragon' is deer resistant and can be grown up to 7,500 feet—important characteristics in our rural, mountainous region. It is a perfect solution for challenging spots, like dry shade. But it's best to provide moisture in full sun. I love to plant this as a ground cover on the north side of many of our dense, high-mountain evergreens. It will spread quickly in one summer without becoming invasive. You can also easily divide it to plant in other areas of your garden, which makes it a great value.



Photos, except where noted: courtesy of Mike Higgins; top right, Saxon Holt; center left and bottom right, Bill Johnson

REGIONAL PICKS

northwest



Rizaniño "Riz" Reyes, a plants-person and landscape consultant, owns RHR Horticulture & Landwave Gardens in Shoreline, Washington.

Bonfire® begonia

NAME: *Begonia boliviensis* 'Bonfire'
USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 8 to 10
SIZE: 18 inches tall, trailing to 2 to 3 feet
CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; average to moist, well-drained soil

This sizzling-hot little number is a must-buy for its intense color and sultry pizzazz. 'Bonfire' is best grown in a container, where it will flaunt its fiery orange-red flowers all summer long as it flows over the edges. It also shows sass and an explosion of color when planted in beds. Whether it's planted in a



container or in the ground, keep it well watered and fertilize monthly. You'll never regret a cent spent on this stunner.



Ivory Prince hellebore

NAME: *Helleborus* 'Walhelivor'
ZONES: 4 to 9
SIZE: 10 to 12 inches tall and 12 to 18 inches wide
CONDITIONS: Partial shade; prefers slightly acidic, well-drained soil

Who wouldn't buy a plant that looks amazing all year with little or no maintenance? Hellebores have long been treasured as winter-flowering wonders, and this variety is no exception. With lightly marbled, blue-green foliage that always looks fresh, it is handsome when it comes into bloom, with burgundy-green buds bursting open to white blooms with a hint of green and pink. It is durable, pest- and disease-free, and easy to grow.

Plumose soft shield fern

NAME: *Polystichum setiferum* 'Plumoso-multilobum'
ZONES: 6 to 9
SIZE: 18 inches tall and 2 to 3 feet wide
CONDITIONS: Full to partial shade; prefers rich soil

Ferns are regaining popularity in the Pacific Northwest. If you have room for only one, seek out this variety. It is hard to find, so nab it when you spot it. It is absolutely out of this world: The mature specimen has an alien-starfishlike quality. Plant it where you can appreciate the frilly, finely textured fronds up close. Though evergreen, it could use some tidying up in winter and early spring.



'Hedgerows Gold' variegated redtwig dogwood

NAME: *Cornus sericea* 'Hedgerows Gold'
ZONES: 3 to 8
SIZE: 6 to 8 feet tall and 5 to 6 feet wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; rich, well-drained soil

This dogwood developed on the West Coast offers year-round interest without a lot of work, which is why I put it on my shopping list. 'Hedgerows Gold' is an outstanding variegated, multistemmed shrub. Mature plants have a dense, rounded habit, but you can cut the entire plant back each winter or spring to encourage new, bright red stems.



Photos: courtesy of Rizaniño "Riz" Reyes