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It's time for a fresh crop of gardening catalogs

Garden catalogs are more than pages and pages of pretty pictures for casual enjoyment. They inspire you to improve or reinvent your yard. They describe each plant down to the number of petals on the *flowers* or how the leaves are arranged on stems. They also introduce you to the latest and greatest in plant development, whether it's a new color in a coneflower or a bigger and better *tomato*.

For 2012, *Burpee's* catalog introduces its *Boost* Collection of six nutrient-rich *vegetables* designed exclusively for home gardens. All were naturally bred by traditional hybridization, with no genetically modified organisms, or unwanted GMOs, according to a *Burpee* spokeswoman.

*Burpee* claims its *Boost* veggies provide higher levels of disease-fighting antioxidants. For example, a half cup of *Cherry Punch tomatoes* delivers 90 percent of the recommended daily dose of Vitamin C, and *Sweet Heat peppers* produce 65 percent more Vitamin C than the average garden *pepper*. Its *Healing Hands* salad mix with four *greens* – mustards, radicchio and *lettuce* – can be harvested every three weeks for several salads. Home gardeners can purchase *Boost* via the print catalog or online at *Burpee.com*. The *Gold Standard hybrid cucumber* with five times the beta-carotene and *Healing Hands Salad Mix* are available as seeds only; the *tomatoes* and *peppers* in the collection come as seeds or plants.

Here are 5 more catalogs, all free, worth getting because they offer a wide selection of growing material for Zones 3–10 and they do double duty as educational material:

#### Brent and Becky's Bulbs

Always known for spectacular spring- and summer-flowering bulbs, Brent and Becky Heath have added a few perennials to their summer catalog. This year, Becky recommends a Veronica called Royal Candles with royal blue spikes that look showy in the full-sun summer border; it grows 10 to 15 inches tall and is cold hardy Zones 4–9.

The catalog also includes a couple new Colocasias, or elephant ears that add a touch of the tropics to your warm-weather gardens no matter where you live. They grow in the ground or look stunning in large pots on your patio or porch. One of the new ones is Bikini-Tini with bluish gray leaves with dark purple veins and leaves that face upward and fill with water when it rains; they stand on sturdy stems in full sun or partial shade and are rated cold hardy to Zone 6.

The Heaths, who live and garden in southeastern Virginia, also like *Eucomis*, nicknamed pineapple lily, because its fresh and finished *flowers* give the garden beautiful structure. The Heaths introduce the new Twinkle Stars with pink *flowers* that feature stamens that almost "glitter" with pollen; it grows 24 to 30 inches tall and is cold hardy Zones 7–9. To get the free print catalog, visit [www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com](http://www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com) or call toll free 877-661-2852.

#### High Country Gardens

Brakelights *red yucca*, a plant known to be a hummingbird magnet, is a new introduction for this company which specializes in perennials, ornamental grasses and shrubs that require little water. Cold hardy in Zones 5–10, the yucca produces narrow strips of foliage with dark-*green*, grassy non-spiny leaves that are compact and evergreen. Its nectar-rich *flowers* keep hummers coming all summer long. High Country Gardens, located in Santa Fe, N.M., also unveils its Harvest Booster Perennial Collection with small- and medium-sized flowering perennials that, when planted into and around *vegetable* gardens and potted *vegetables*, attracts bees for pollination. The 12-plant selection is cold hardy in Zones 5–9 and includes Pink Lace beebalm, Select Blue cat mint, Blue Fortune agastache, purple coneflower, Little Lemon goldenrod and Rotkugel oregano.

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