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GARDENING: Organizations announce champion flowers to try in your garden

The All-American Rose Society and All-America Selections have announced their 2010 winners. Here is some information about five champions:

The Easy Does It rose is the only All-America rose for 2010. Its refreshing colors of mango orange, peach pink and ripe apricot mixed with the glossy green foliage provide "a flamboyant fruit salad for the landscape," according to the All-America Rose Selections Web site. The flowers appear in fragrant large clusters atop the bushy plant. The vigorous plant also is disease-resistant. Harkness New Roses hybridized it and Weeks Roses introduced it.

Rosarians Dick and Jackie Jackson tested Easy Does It last year and found it to be a beautiful and prolific floribunda. Its ruffled petals became an attraction for the Jacksons. It will make a great rose for those not wanting to grow showcase roses.

Mesa Yellow gaillardia is the first hybrid blanket flower that does not get tall, loose and floppy and yet has a proliferation of blooms. The three-inch daisylike flowers and globe-shaped seed heads offer a colorful display that continues into summer. The blooms can be harvested for bouquets. Let the remaining flowers attract butterflies to your landscape. It adapts to smaller space gardens, and when planted in containers, it cascades down. Pan American Seed Co. developed this beauty, and observers found it blooms two to three weeks earlier than other comparisons.

Twinny Peach snapdragon is without the snap because HEM Genetics -- which introduced this new variety -- took the snap out of it. They developed a double or butterfly flower form that does not have the jaws or joints to snap. "Twinny" refers to this double flower form. Another unusual quality is the blend of its peach tone shades of yellow and light orange. No other snapdragon offers this range of colors. Match Twinny Peach with blue salvia or purple foliage plants and your landscape will be a knockout with an abundance of flower spikes to gather for indoor bouquets.

Endurio Sky Blue Martien viola comes with clear blue flowers. This unusual mounding viola may look delicate, but it is a strong performer. Plant it early and it will cover your planter and landscape with delicate sky-blue blooms into summer. This spreading plant creates a bright spot in window boxes, hanging gardens and patio planters. Syngenta Flowers Inc. introduced it.

"Zahara Starlight Rose" zinnia is a dramatic combination of new and old-fashioned flowers. These rose and white blooms are a new bicolor for this sun-loving annual. They are heat and drought tolerant, providing generous amounts of color all season. They also make a bold statement in containers or patio urns. Their undemanding nature make them a good choice for inexperienced gardeners. Pan American Seed Co. introduced this beauty.

FRUIT AND TREE PRUNING WORKSHOP

Learn how to prune fruit and landscape trees and eliminate overwintering insects during a

workshop at 11 a.m. Friday at Sweet Tomato Test Garden. The program also will include demonstrations on irrigating trees, easy composting and purchasing recommended fruit trees and desert plants from the College of Southern Nevada.

Workshop presenters include host Leslie Doyle, First Choice Tree Service, The Garden Coaches and me. Experts will be available afterward to address your garden issues. Phone 658-7585 for reservations and chip in \$1 for refreshments and workshop incidentals. Sweet Tomato Test Garden is at 5910 Sheila Ave. off Jones Boulevard, one-half mile south of Cheyenne Avenue.

DR. GREEN THUMB'S PRUNING CLINIC

It's time to spruce up your plants for spring. Poor pruning ruins more plants each year than pests. Pruning is vital to the training, maintenance, quality and improving growth of desert plants in your landscape, yet it's such a mystery to people.

Come to Dr. Green Thumb's pruning clinic and experience "hands-on demonstrations" by some of the top professional pruners in Southern Nevada, along with Springs Preserve horticulturists. They will demonstrate how to take the mystery out of pruning trees, fruit trees, shrubs, ornamental grasses and sprucing up perennials and herbs. The program runs from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Jan. 9 in the Springs Preserve Gardens at 333 S. Valley View Blvd. For more information, call 822-7786.

Linn Mills writes a garden column each Sunday. You can reach him at linn.mills@springspreserve.org or call him at 822-7754.

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<http://www.lvrj.com/living/organizations-announce-champion-flowers-to-try-in-your-garden-80158562.html>

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