

PLANTS OF MERIT

Run by numerous garden specialists in Missouri, the Plants of Merit program (plantsofmerit.org) serves to promote plants that are proven to be well adapted to the lower Midwest.

1. Zahara Double Fire zinnia

Zinnia marylandica Double Fire ('Pas553645'). The bright red-orange flowers of this fully double zinnia bloom profusely and densely from spring to frost. These gorgeous blooms sit above a mound of medium-green foliage. Plants are tolerant of heat, humidity and drought, and they display good resistance to leaf spot and powdery mildew. Full sun. Annual.

2. 'Autumn Magic' black chokeberry

Aronia melanocarpa 'Autumn Magic'. This suckering six-foot deciduous shrub is distinguished by the magic of its exceptionally fine purple-red autumn foliage. Additional ornamental features include dense clusters of five-petaled white flowers in spring, glossy dark green leaves in summer and black berries in fall. Full sun. Zones 3–8.

3. Señorita Rosalita spider flower

Cleome Señorita Rosalita ('Inncleor'). Lavender-pink flowers bloom continuously from spring to frost atop rigid stems. The plant lacks thorns, sticky foliage, unpleasant aroma and unsightly seedpods, placing it a cut above many of its relatives. Plus, hummingbirds and butterflies love the flowers! Full sun. Zones 9–10, or grown as an annual.

4. Lemon grass

Cymbopogon citratus. Lemon grass is a popular ingredient in the kitchen, and it also serves as an attractive ornamental plant. Upright clumps of arching light green leaves emit a lemony fragrance when brushed. Harvest the bulbous lower leaf sections for cooking! Zones 10–11, or grown as an annual.



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PERENNIAL PLANT OF THE YEAR

The nationwide Perennial Plant Association singles out one plant each year. Winners suit many climates, require little maintenance and exhibit multiple seasons of interest. Past winners include 'David' phlox, 'Rozanne' geranium, 'Becky' Shasta daisy and 'Moonbeam' coreopsis.

5. 'Jack Frost' Siberian bugloss

Brunnera macrophylla 'Jack Frost'. Its airy, pale blue forget-me-not flowers add cool but striking color to the spring garden, and its distinctive variegated foliage give this plant a season-long ornamental display. Part shade. Zones 3–8.



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WALTERS GARDENS, INC.