

ILLUSTRATION BY GENTRY MULLEN | THE KANSAS CITY STAR; PHOTOS FROM PROVEN WINNERS, BALL HORTICULTURAL COMPANY AND CERAMO

tune in

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q & a

Ahmed Hassan of "Yard Crashers" will be at the Metropolitan Lawn and Garden Show in KC. | C2





Daylily Lady Elizabeth

AMERICAN DAYLILY



Rudbeckia Little Henry





BALL HORTICULTURAL COMPANY **Coneflower Sombrero**



BALL HORTICULTURAL COMPANY **Gallardia Mesa Yellow**



BALL HORTICULTURAL COMPANY **Angelonia AngelMist**

COLOR: Pros lean toward perennials and natives

Cherry Star stands out for its snappy pink and yellow variegated flowers, heat tolerance and non-stop bloom. Calibrachoas can be planted in flower beds, but they're at their best in flower pots and hanging bas-

In a lively panel discussion about new plants, Berg also showed off the compact, trailing Vogue mandevilla vines, which are recommended for hanging baskets and containers. He described Supertunia

White Russian as "an Visit KansasCity plant artsy that goes with .com/home for anything."

a color-filled Justin Hanphoto gallery, cock, the onplus info on line editor of new tools, Better Homes supplies, and Gardens online magazine and resources an enthusiasand apps. tic gardener

himself, picked Angelonia as one of his favorite annual flowers. He particularly likes the Archangel series from Proven

"I've never had bad luck with it," Hancock says. "Archangel has more flowers than any other Angelonia, it tolerates drought or deluge and it smells like sugar cookies."

Hancock's short list of favorite colorful and tough new plants includes native Baptisia Cherries Jubilee and coneflower Southern Belle. He grew the sturdy and showy chartreuse coleus Wasabi last year and declared it "great in sun or shade."

Landscape design professionals are shifting their mixes of plants toward perennials and natives, says Jeff Gibson, the landscape business manager for Ball Horticultural Company in Chicago. He predicts a growing interest in lowermaintenance perennials and native plants.

Water conservation is essential now and will be in the future, he says, and drought-tolerant perennials like Rudbeckia Tiger Eye, Gaillardia Mesa and coneflower PowWow are some of his favorites. Helenium Dakota Gold is "an unsung hero" for landscapers, Ball says. These tough plants are flashy at 35 miles an hour on Kansas City's parkways and boulevards and are nice up close in a home garden, too.

Annuals have not lost their charm, of course. Ball described annual angelonias as "the most exciting class of annual landscape plants" and the Angelmist series as "rock solid - it takes heat and doesn't need extra watering."

He predicts more landscap-

FASHION-PLATE PLANTS

Plants took a turn on the runway last month at the National Green Centre trade show in Overland Park. Pretty and promising varieties (not all of them new this year) were stars of the show. Among the most interesting:

- Reblooming weigela Sonic Bloom Pink grows to a manageable 5 feet tall and blooms from May until frost. Sonic Bloom Red and Pearl also are being introduced.
- Two butterfly bushes, Lo & Behold Lilac Chip and Ice Chip, are dwarf spreading butterfly bushes (Buddleia).
- Lady Elizabeth, a tough, repeat-blooming white daylily, was developed by Kansas City grower R.J. Roberson. The flowers appear to be "diamond dusted."
- In spring, leaves of the variegated weeping redbud Whitewater have flashy, snow-white patches that light up a shady corner.
- Fountain grass Burgundy Bunny is a hardy ornamental grass with red highlights and bottle-brush blooms.
- Bright red coneflower Sombrero Salsa Red proves that the days are in the past when coneflowers were only purple, white or pale yellow. Hot Coral and Sandy Yellow are part of the same series.
- Superbena Peachy Keen is a mounding verbena that blooms all summer.
- Home Run rose is bright red and carefree.

ers will use ornamental pep-

pers as foliage plants, because

they are heat- and drought-tolerant. The colorful coleus vari-

eties Wasabi, Sultana and Red-

head also stand up to tough

conditions without pampering

and look sharp in drive-by

New plants have to work hard; they can't get by on their

looks alone. "We're at an amaz-

ing crossroads," says Ted Spaid, a founding landscape architect

at SWT Design in St. Louis

who studied at Kansas State

University and who specializes

in environmentally conscious

In a discussion about what

gardeners will buy in the fu-

ture, Spaid said gardening will

simply become more popular,

along with an interest in urban

agriculture, healthy lifestyles

and beautiful and sustainable

landscapes. "We have an op-

portunity to make a big difference," he said. "I'm excited

about the next 50 years, and

I'm going to have something to

Marty Ross is a freelance garden

journalist in Kansas City.

landscapes, he says.

design projects.

do with it."

Harvest an abundance of nutrition with Burpee's Boost vegetables. Three tomatoes, a sweet pepper, a cucumber, and a blend of lettuce and greens were hybridized for their high vitamin and anti-oxident values.

GROW YOUR OWN

New high-vitamin vegetables from Burpee Home Garden's Boost series are especially healthy. Three new tomatoes (Cherry Punch, Power Pops and Solar Power); a bell pepper (Sweet Heart); a cucumber (Gold Standard); and a mix of lettuces (Healing Hands) were developed for their high concentration of antioxidants, vitamin C and beta-carotene. They will be available as transplants or seeds.

Interest in urban agriculture is transforming city and suburban gardens, says Matt Bunch, horticulturist in charge of the Heartland Harvest Garden at Powell Gardens. He recommends all kinds of berries for home gardens. Serviceberries (Amelanchier Autumn Brilliance is a good choice) should be in more Kansas City gardens, he says.

Elderberries deserve to be planted more, too, and figs are proving to be hardy in protected sites in Kansas City gardens. Bunch recommends hazelnuts (Rode Zeller has purple leaves), and he likes thornless blackberries, jujubes, currants and Damask roses for their bright red hips, which are packed with vitamin C. They all flourish in the Heartland Harvest Garden, east of Kansas City on U.S. 50.

RETURN OF THE NATIVES

The selection of pretty, hardworking native plants is increasing as growers respond to demand from gardeners, designers and landscaping companies. Forrest Keeling, a wholesale grower in Elsberry, Mo., grows more than 150 native perennials; it also specializes in cultivars of native pawpaw trees. Bohn's Farm & Greenhouses and Kaw River Restoration Nurseries are regional wholesale suppliers with extensive native-plant inventories. Among the top recommendations for home gardens are:

- Perennial plants: Bluestar (Amsonia illustris), butterfly milkweed (Asclepias tuberosa), aromatic aster (Aster oblongifolius), false indigo (Baptisia australis) and purple coneflower (Echinacea purpurea).
- Grasses: Little bluestem (Schizachryium scoparium) and prairie dropseed (Sporobolus heterolepsis).
- Trees and shrubs: Pawpaw (Asimina triloba), beautyberry (Callicarpa americana), fringe tree (Chioanthus virginicus) and witch hazel (Hamamelis virginiana).



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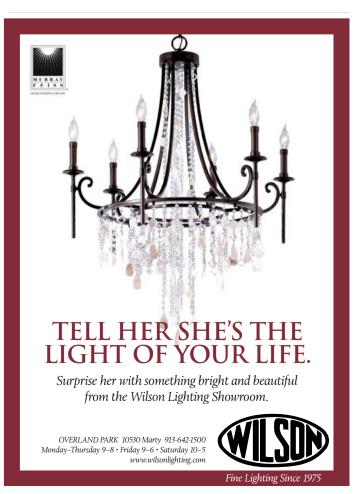




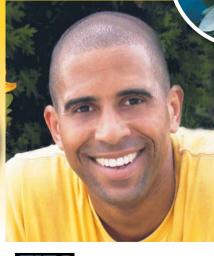
Baptisia Cherries Jubilee

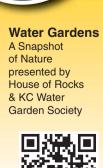














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