



Posted on Thu, Jan. 28, 2010

New euphorbias will leave you breathless

BY NORMAN WINTER

Sometimes the competition in the world can leave you breathless. In the plant world it's certainly no exception as a new euphorbia series, Breathless, is making its debut in 2010.

It seems it was just a couple of years ago Diamond Frost euphorbia entered the gardening world and won every award imaginable. It also became widely recognized as just about the toughest flower you could find from spring through frost.

Breathless is much like Diamond Frost though perhaps a little tighter in habit. Diamond Frost reaches 20 inches tall and Breathless a little shorter, closer to 15 inches. The big difference however lies in the Breathless variety gives gardeners a choice in colors.

Breathless Blush displays white flowers which are actually bracts, blushing with pink. The leaves are a deep red tones. You may find the leaf color reminiscent of the shrub burgundy loropetalum. Breathless has the same controlled habit reaching about 12 inches tall with a spread 20 to 24 inches.

Like Diamond Frost they ruggedly perform in the landscape all summer. But don't limit them to just the garden bed will also adore their mounding habit in mixed containers. While Diamond Frost has been used as a focal flower in open pockets the Breathless habit allows it to take on a slightly more prominent role if desired.

The competition doesn't stop with the Breathless series however as Hip Hop and Whiten Manasus make their debut. The Hip Hop is very similar to Diamond Frost in bloom and habit but White Manasus offers the pristine white blossoms and giant structure.

White Manasus was not only a prolific flower producer but also approached 3 feet in height. It literally flowers white all growing season. This opens the door for using effectively in the middle of the border.

The euphorbia is an environmentally friendly addition to the landscape, drought tolerant and virtually "pest free" you can also include deer, making for one of its most outstanding traits.

For best blooming, select a location with as much sunlight as possible, although some shade is acceptable. The bed well so this persevering plant will establish quickly and get happy in your flowerbed. If you are preparing the bed suitable for making bricks, incorporate 3 to 4 inches of organic matter such as compost, humus or peat moss to loosen, but also improve drainage and aeration. Soggy wet soil is your enemy. Plant at the same spacing as growing in their container, 10 to 12 inches apart, even 14 inches if you find White Manasus.

The white flowered selections make great partners with Intensia phlox such as Neon Pink, Orchid White. Use also tall blue salvias such as Mystic Spires, Victoria Blue or Cathedral Deep Blue to give a splash of color. When designing your bed use some ornamental grass with gold to chartreuse foliage. But to be honest, white flowered they will go with any other color you choose.

The Breathless Blush combines well with pink flowered selections of salvias, burgundy leaved grasses. A touch of a lime green foliaged plants such as coleus or lamium will add some extra zest.

No matter your choice of landscape style the euphorbia will prove to be a terrific addition offering a splash of color coupled with interesting difference in texture.

(Winter is vice president for college advancement, Brewton Parker College, Mount Vernon, Ga., a highly acclaimed "Tough-as-Nails Flowers for the South" and his release "Captivating Combination for the Garden.")