

## The Best of the Test Garden: 2010

*These 10 plants proved outstanding in our variety trials.*

By Doug Hall

### **'Double Zahara Fire' Zinnia**

Source: All-America Selections winner; widely available



This compact [zinnia](#) fits our definition of easy. After sowing the seed directly in the garden, all we had to do was water and mulch—and enjoy several months of nonstop flowers. 'Double Zahara Fire' and its sibling, 'Double Zahara Cherry', gave us plenty of color all summer long, although the flowers fade as they mature. The foliage remains strong and healthy, unlike that of lesser zinnias.

“The two zinnias are definite winners. They bloom like gangbusters—no deadheading required—and are self-branching. They also last well as a cut flower.” —*Andres Mejides, Homestead, Florida*

### **'Red Pearl' Cherry Tomato**

Source: [Johnny's Selected Seeds](#)



A surprise standout in our blind taste tests was 'Red Pearl', a grape-shaped cherry [tomato](#) that our tasters praised as rich and tangy, though not especially sweet. It's nearly seedless and as meaty as a paste tomato, which makes it a good candidate for bruschetta or grilled kebabs. Unlike the other cherries we trialed, 'Red Pearl' didn't crack after heavy rains, yet its skin is relatively tender.

"Despite the cool, cloudy growing season, 'Red Pearl' produced lots of small, bright red, meaty tomatoes by late fall. They had a good savory tomato flavor. Very pretty." —*Debbie Leung, Olympia, Washington*