

Community

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Exciting new plants in the 2010 seed catalogs

By now, you may have received one or more seed catalogs in the mail. If not, then you can always check them out online.

However online isn't nearly as relaxing as taking the catalog to the bathtub or to bed for some relaxing reading.

I am going to focus on the first five pages of two popular catalogs and we will review some exciting new plants that may, or may not be, worthy of a place in your next garden.

I have always had good luck with Park Seed, so we will begin here. The cover features a pair of youngsters eating and smiling

In the Garden



Suzanne Cook

Times columnist

about mom's nearby basket full of fresh, home grown vegetables. Hmm ... is that really how kids perceive veggies? Anyway, on page two, there is a gorgeous new Rudbeckia called Cherry Brandy. These daisy-like perennials are a bright shade of red rather than the usual orange or yellow. They bloom for several weeks at a time and are quite easy to grow from seed. They also reseed freely. Definitely worth a try

Next are the colorful packets of Zinnia Profusion. Although these plants are not new on the flower scene, they are the All American Selection Annual of the Year and rightfully so. Profusion is a low-growing and spreading zinnia that will continue to bloom for weeks after your other zinnias have faded away. Mildew is not a huge problem and of course their bright colors and abundant blooms attract the butterflies and hummingbirds. Another must have plant.

On the more challenging list is Lamb's Tail Joey. This new pink plant is very beautiful. However, it grows quite slowly and the seeds take a long time to germinate. Still, if you are a

determined gardener, you may be rewarded with a very unusual plant to show off.

I also struggled with the very interesting Marigold Mumsy. The flowers look like mums and they are really gorgeous. However this variety of marigold needs to be watered twice as much as my old favorites such as Queen Sophia and Disco. If you are a dedicated gardener, then you may wish to give Mumsy a try.

Now we will move on to the Jung Seed catalog. The cover features a new zinnia called Starlight Rose Zahara, and it is quite possibly the prettiest flower I have ever seen. This is a new plant, so I don't have any experience with

it just yet. I did order the seeds, however, and they have arrived, so you will likely see this pretty flower in Mineral Springs Park this summer. New seeds tend to sell out quickly in the catalogs, so be sure to order your Zinnia Zahara's soon.

On the lower bottom corner of page two is another flower not to be overlooked. This is a new variety of petunia called Easy Wave. We all know and love the pink, red, and purple Waves, but now we can grow them with white star patterns. Petunia seeds are very small and they do take a bit longer to get going. I recommend that you start the seeds indoors by April 1. Simply press the seeds gently into the soil

and provide a good light source. Small seeds like these germinate quite well in a deli-style plastic salad container with the clear lid left on. After germination, you can transplant them into a bigger open-air seed cell.

Finally, and we must not forget the vegetable section, we have the perfect looking Canes Hybrid Winter Squash. This new mouthwatering variety boasts a sweet, smooth taste and claims to be a vigorous grower. It's always fun to try something new.

You can order a Park Seed catalog by calling 800-845-3369 or by visiting www.parkseed.com. Jung Seed can be ordered at 800-247-5864 or at www.jungseed.com.