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## ON GARDENING: Groundcover: Snow Princess simply unbelievable

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Snow Princess just may be the all-time winner when it comes to sweeping awards. I first wrote about this new hybrid alyssum in July 2009, mainly based on how it had done in trials in Mississippi.

Now looking back over the two years since, it is obvious Snow Princess is a thoroughbred in the world of flowers. It has garnered more than 60 awards in the United States and has become highly recognized overseas as well.

If you somehow have escaped reading about Snow Princess and wonder what all of the fuss is about, ask yourself this question. Can you imagine a sweet alyssum blooming all summer in the south where temperatures are torrid, sweltering and off the charts?

To be honest most of us involved with plant trials could not either. We took it upon ourselves to put them in the trials with what we believed to be the probable outcome -- turning Proven Winners into Losers, if you will.

We planted it in our Mississippi State University trials in the spring of 2009, and it literally exploded into blooms. Then it stopped, and I thought to myself, "See, I knew it wouldn't last." But then it started growing and spreading and I remembered hearing one representative say the Snow Princess ate a Supertunia in a basket.

In our trials it started blooming and kept growing. Our June temperatures were hot enough to act like a flame thrower on most lobularias. We had no rain, and we struggled with water and water pressure at our trials. But the blooms increased.

When nurserymen visited the trials and found that it was snowing in July, they took pictures of the 4-6 inches that had accumulated. Snow Princess had reached about 6 inches high, filled out its allotted space since planting in April and cascaded over the edge of the box.

So now after two years of trialing we know Snow Princess prefers fertile, well-drained soil with plenty of sun, although many have started raving about it in part shade too. While unbelievably heat tolerant, it is not a xeriscape type plant, it does need water and it will reward your efforts.

In the landscape it forms a sea of white making it unbeatable as a long-blooming groundcover. Since it is white it will complement whatever color you choose to partner it with. Be sure to give it room as it will spread 12 to 24 inches.

It should be obvious that in addition to the landscape, Snow Princess will dazzle everyone in mixed containers, falling over the edge like a blanket of snow. Plant it where you can enjoy its sweet honey aroma.

Snow Princess is different from other sweet alyssum or lobularia in that it is not as cold tolerant. It will be a perennial in zone 9 and higher but the rest of us will enjoy it as an annual that is the most prolific blooming groundcover in the market.

So from north to south, east to west and overseas Snow Princess has ranked at the top. Plant it when spring arrives and you'll see that it will do the same in your garden too!