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## Colorful 'calies' liven up landscapes or planters

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I've been "window shopping" in catalogs for hot new plants, and here are a few that are at the top of my wish list.

Proven Winners Superbells calibrachos, "Coralberry Punch" and "Blackberry Punch," are knockouts when it comes to color. These dark-throated lovelies skirted in brilliant coral or fuchsia will make stunning additions to containers and landscape plantings.

The secrets to growing "calies" are keeping their soil consistently moist, and giving them lots of sun and regular fertilization. Don't depend on potting soil that touts the addition of fertilizer that will supposedly last two to six months to do the job. Best to add slow-release fertilizer granules according to package directions. A bimonthly feeding of liquid plant food diluted to half strength will give added oomph. Leaves turning yellow, caused by a lack of iron uptake, can be remedied by adding liquid iron to the mix.

Another hot-ticket item this year will be the new pink flowering Hydrangea Annabelles, *H. arborescens*. Proven Winners Color Choice variety, "Invincibelle Spirit," hardy to zone 3, produces large 12-inch clusters of tiny pink flowers from summer through fall. Rising to just 3-4 feet in height, this pretty lady can be planted in full sun to part shade in moist, well-drained soil. However, hydrangeas are not drought-tolerant plants, so be prepared to keep them well watered if planting in full sun to prevent the flowers from fading. I prefer to site mine in a part-sun location giving them shade in the heat of the afternoon.

This year Bailey Nurseries introduces woody plant guru Michael Dirr's re-blooming pink Annabelle hydrangea "Bella Anna." This compact 3-by-3-foot shrub, hardy to zone 4, has the same characteristics as "Invincibelle Spirit."

The best news about these new pink Annabelles is they bloom on new wood, which is new growth produced in the current season, so flowering is guaranteed even if they die back to the ground over winter, and they need no pruning.

### Timely tip

Kate Middleton chose the delicate and fragrant Lily of the Valley (*Convallaria majalis*) for her bridal bouquet. If you'd like to grow this sweet old-fashioned favorite, now is the time to buy and plant the dormant roots called pips. Site them in part to full shade in rich, moist soil. Lily of the Valley spreads by underground roots and can be invasive so it's best planted in a root barrier — such as a black plastic flowerpot with its bottom removed — before being sunk into the ground. Also be aware, all parts of these plants are poisonous.

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