

# All-American winners include four new flowers

In dog shows the winner is hailed as "Best in Show." In the plant world the "best in show" in new flowers and vegetables grown from seed is given the All-American Selection (AAS) award annually.

AAS winners are the best performing varieties in designated display gardens throughout the country. The 2010 winners include four exciting new flowers.

**Gaillardia "Mesa Yellow"** is touted as the first hybrid blanket flower with a controlled plant habit and prolific flowering. This blanket flower blooms two to three weeks earlier than other gaillardias. 'Mesa Yellow'

has 3-inch daisy-like, all yellow flowers on 20 to 22 inch compact mounding plants.

The long-stemmed blooms are excellent for cutting. They enjoy full sun and don't ask for much except occasional deadheading. This is a great



## Tip of the Trowel

By Pete Rankin

plant to attract butterflies. Recommended spacing should be 12 to 28 inches.

**Snapdragon "Twinny Peach"** is named for its unique double flowers in peach tones of yellow and light orange. Although double-flowered snapdragons are not that uncommon, "Twinny Peach" is described by AAS as the first double-flowering with a compact growth habit. This plant reaches just under 12 inches tall and will flower all season and has good heat tolerance.

Plant in full sun, spacing 6 inches apart. This makes a great front border plant and the blossoms are excellent cut

flowers.

**Viola "Endurio Sky Blue Martien"** was selected for its vigorous performance and its unique mounding and spreading habit. The pale blue flowers bloom from spring well into summer. The plants form nice spreading mounds up to 6 inches tall and 10 to 12 inches wide. They are good plants for edging garden beds, for use in container gardens and hanging baskets; also use as a groundcover, in mass plantings, rock gardens and mixed borders.

**Zinnia "Zahara Starlight Rose"** is the last of the AAS Winners. This zinnia

has unusual rose and white bi-colored flowers. It has good resistance to heat, drought, powdery mildew and leaf spot. The plant grows 12 to 14 inches tall and wide and is covered with 2 1/2 inch flowers all season long.

Surprisingly, this year there are no vegetables on the AAS Winners' list for 2010.

These AAS Winners should be available through local garden centers and mail-order catalogs next spring.

## Odds and ends

Buy a holiday cactus to enjoy for the holidays and for many years to come.

Protect your hybrid tea, floribunda, and grandiflora roses for the winter by covering the bottom 12 inches of the canes with soil. If soil is unavailable, try hardwood mulch in its place.

It is time to stop fertilizing houseplants until spring. Remember to rotate houseplants regularly to prevent one-sided growth.

Plant a windowsill herb garden.

Enjoy the comforts of your home, digest your garden accomplishments of the year, and make plans for next year's horticultural endeavors.