

## The People Have Spoken (Again)

This past summer, 24 public gardens took part in the 3rd annual American Garden Awards (AGA), sponsored by All-America Selections, based in Downers Grove. The AGA is a national competition in which garden visitors get to vote for their favorite among seven annuals on display at the gardens. In the Chicagoland region, Cantigny Gardens in Wheaton, Boerner Botanical Gardens in Milwaukee and Rotary Botanic Gardens in Janesville, Wis., participated.

The winner this year was SunPatiens® Variegated Spreading white. SunPatiens are impatiens that have been bred with greater sun tolerance than the typical varieties, and this one has the added benefit of variegated foliage as well as large single flowers that keep appearing until frost.

Second place went to a dahlia, Dahlinova Hypnotica® Lavender, whose flowers are a striking lavender-rose.

The third place winner was a petunia, Easy Wave™ Neon Rose, a spreading petunia for containers or garden beds that tolerates both hot and cool conditions extremely well.

— Carolyn Ulrich



SunPatiens® Variegated Spreading white



Petunia Easy Wave™ Neon Rose

## Native Alternatives

We're often admonished to grow more native plants, but then comes a pause. Let's say your garden is full of tawny orange daylilies, which originated in Asia, and you really would like to replace them with some plants that would provide food and egg-laying sites for native birds and insects. But what? Is there a native orange-flowering plant that you could use instead?

Now a book has arrived to answer that question, *The Midwestern Native Garden* by Charlotte Adelman & Bernard L. Schwartz (Ohio University Press, \$26.95). Turn to page 109 and you'll see that our native butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) blooms with orange flowers and, more importantly, provides nectar for monarch butterflies — and is beneficial to eleven other butterfly species as well.

If you're willing to move beyond the color orange, the husband-wife team cite any number of alternatives that bloom at the same time as the daylily while also serving up food and nesting sites for important birds, butterflies and insects: blazing stars (*Liatris*), false sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides*), baptisias, coneflowers, rudbeckias, giant blue hyssop and many more.

The book helpfully cautions you away from cultivars like the 'Goldsturm' rudbeckia and directs you to the desirable species instead. "Birds, butterflies, and other insects are going to go extinct unless we provide them with nesting sites," states Adelman, who has come to regard the ubiquitous tawny orange daylily as even worse than plastic flowers since it doesn't just sit there like plastic:

It spreads and takes up space that should be supplying habitat.

Also helpful are the highly detailed, well-researched sections at the back of the book. There's a glossary of terms, an extensive bibliography and resource guide, plus an index that's color-coded to correspond to the text of the book with non-natives listed in red type and natives in black.

The authors live in Wilmette. After they retired from their careers as lawyers, they began focusing on their lifelong interest in nature, turning their backyard into a prairie-savanna and using what they learned in their writing. A previous book, *Prairie Directory of North America — the United States and Canada*, received two prestigious awards. They have also been instrumental in turning a 1-acre area in Wilmette's Centennial Park into a wetland prairie basin. 🌿

— Carolyn Ulrich

