

# All America Selections recognizes new annual flowers for 2010 growing season

Each year, All America Selections (AAS) introduces new annual flowers that are seen as unique and have proven themselves superior in replicated test gardens in the United States and Canada, said a University of Illinois Extension horticulture educator.

"New for 2010 are Gaillardia Mesa Yellow, Snapdragon Twinny Peach, and Zinnia Zahara Starlight Rose," said Greg Stack.

"Recently, AAS has changed its policy in the way new varieties are introduced. Now, when a new variety meets the criteria for introduction and AAS approves, it will be introduced immediately. Previously, there was a one year lag between AAS designation and introduction."

Snapdragon Twinny Peach, Gaillardia Mesa Yellow, and Zinnia Zahara Starlight Rose were all introduced in September 2009 and became available to gardeners in the spring of 2010. But, with the changes, gardeners can look forward to four more AAS winners for

2010.

"So get ready to make room in the garden for some new and exciting introductions," he noted.

"Echinacea 'Pow Wow Wild Berry's name alone makes you want to go and buy it. It is the first of the new introductions. This purple coneflower differs from all the others because of its color, branching habit, and size," said Stack. "The deep rose purple three- to four-inch flowers retain their color longer and remain on the plant longer. This first year, flowering from seed perennial is hardy to zone 3.

"It also branches from the base and as a result produces more flowers per plant. Growing to about 20 to 24 inches tall, this coneflower blooms continuously without deadheading. Like all Echinacea,

'Pow Wow Wild Berry' prefers a full-sun garden location and soil that is well drained."

Second on the new list of winners is a marigold called Moonsong Deep Orange. The intense, deep orange, fade-resistant

flowers are what caught the judges' eyes. Flowers are large at 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 inches and fully double. Although Moonsong Deep Orange is a vigorous grower, it will only reach 12 to 15 inches tall, making it great for container gardening. Another feature is that old blooms are covered over by new foliage, resulting in neat-looking plants that don't need deadheading. Moonsong Deep Orange should be planted in a full-sun site for best performance.

"Rounding out the new additions to the 2010 list are two zinnias that are the result of breeding work on the Zahara series of zinnias," he said.

Zinnia Double Zahara Cherry and Double Zahara Fire bring to the garden excellent garden performance of the original Zahara Fire and Zahara Cherry but with fully double 2 1/2 inch flowers. Both of these zinnias are outstanding in their performance in the garden as they both have excellent resistance to leaf spot and powdery mildew, two very troublesome leaf diseases



common to zinnia.

“Both of these new zinnias grow to 12 to 14 inches tall and do best in full sun. They are also

very easy to grow from seed, making them great choices even for first-time gardeners,” he said.

“With these latest introductions, the number of

2010 AAS winners grows to seven. Look for them at the garden center and try a few. You won’t be disappointed.”