

Varieties of ornamental plants recommended

One of the major objectives of horticulture research at the LSU AgCenter's Hammond Research Station is to evaluate landscape performance of ornamental plants.

This includes woody shrubs, trees, roses, flowering perennials, warm season bedding plants and cool season bedding plants. Since starting our landscape horticulture research program at Hammond, we have conducted warm season bedding plant trials the past three years. Here are some of the newer, top performers to consider.

A fine textured bedding plant for the summer months is "Breathless" euphorbia. "Diamond Frost" is the industry leading variety of euphorbia and is a good variety.

The new "Breathless" euphorbia series from Ball FloraPlant is available in "White" and "Blush." The "White" has good branching and dense flower production. "Blush" has reddish coloration to the foliage and pink flowers.

The seed propagated "Serena" series of angelonia

has been the best performing of the angelonia series in LSU AgCenter landscape trials the past three years. Angelonias need to be planted a little bit later in the spring than other warm season bedding plants. They will normally stay in bloom through the fall.

"Serena" angelonias have a height of 16-18 inches. These are also called summer snapdragons. Flower colors in the cultivars are lavender, lavender pink, purple and white. There is also a mix available.

"Early Bird Gold" is new selection of rudbeckia. Found as a "sport" of "Goldsturm" rudbeckia at Dupont Nursery in Plaquemine, this cultivars flowers a couple weeks before the "Goldsturm" cultivar. Very hard and very perennial. An outstanding new plant. This may be hard to find at the garden centers right now but it is a great, great new plant.

Foliage for the summer landscape is what coleus provide. The best of the new coleus from Ball Horticultural Company are "Mint Mocha", "Indian

Summer" and "Henna."

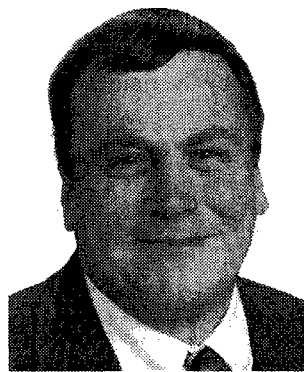
These are 2009 releases and have performed very well in landscape trials. New releases from Ball Horticultural Company for 2010 that have also done well in our trials are "Trusty Rusty" and "Redhead." These five cultivars are much slower to flower when compared to coleus released previously. "Mint Mocha" and "Trusty Rusty" would prefer a partial sun as compared to a full sun planting location.

The top coleus from EuroAmerican Propagators the last 2-3 years in LSU AgCenter landscape evaluations have been "Big Red Judy," "Red Hot Rio," "Mariposa," "Ruby Ruffles," "Pineapple Splash," "Zen Moment," "Lancelot," "Royal Glissade" and "Fishnet Stockings."

Toward the summer, home gardeners begin planting ornamental peppers. The top ornamental peppers cultivars from evaluations the past three years at the LSU AgCenter are "Chilly Chili," "Purple Flash," "Sweet Pickle," "Red

Missile," "Little Elf," "Calico," "Black Pearl" and the "Explosive" series ("Blast," "Ignite" and "Amber").

If you need plants for the shade, caladiums are the plant for you. Cold weather in Florida hurt the caladium crop this past winter so we had fewer caladiums to select from at the garden centers. In our research, the top caladium cultivars from shade landscape trials recently are "Candyland," "Moonlight," "Red Ruffle," "White Delight," "Florida Sweetheart," "White Ruffle," "Pink Gem," "Mt. Everest," "Lance Whorton," and "Raspberry Moon."



LANDSCAPES
Allen Owings

