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FEATURES

2010 Mississippi Medallions

Newest winners are stunning — and showy

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Winners of the Mississippi Medallion Program can be counted on to be high performers in the landscape. They are well-equipped to withstand the high humidity, temperatures and sometimes drought conditions that are just part of every Mississippi summer. Not only are they tough as nails but they must be attractive, colorful, pest- and disease-resistant selections.

The 2010 Mississippi Medallion Plant Winners are guaranteed to brighten any garden with color and include Fireworks gomphrena, Electric Lime coleus, Purple Flash ornamental pepper and Gulf muhly grass.



Developed by PanAmerican seed, Fireworks gomphrena



Fireworks gomphrena

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is nothing like the gomphrena or bachelor button with small round blooms of purple, pink or white that many of us have known as a popular annual choice. This gomphrena has hot pink iridescent blooms with yellow tips that resemble small firecrackers. Taller than other varieties, it can grow to be 4 feet tall and 4 feet wide by the end of the season and blooms nonstop from spring until frost.

It was a super hit at the Mississippi State University Truck Crops Experiment Station at Crystal Springs and is an excellent choice for a butterfly garden. Flower arrangers will also find it to have long lasting cut flowers that work well in arrangements and can be dried.

Southern gardeners love coleus and there have been so many great new introductions added to the market in the past few years. Electric Lime coleus, an All-American Selection, is an outstanding choice for flowerbeds or container plantings.

It captivates gardeners with its bright lime green leaves and yellow veins that resemble a yellow net or window pane throughout the leaf. Growing 14 to 20 inches tall and up to 24 inches wide, the developer, Ball Seed Company, calls them A Simply Beautiful Made for the Shade Plant and a Hot Summer Survivor. They are particularly attractive used in conjunction with purple foliated plants, lavender Sunpatiens, blue petunias or bright yellow rudbeckias.

The iridescent, variegated purple leaves of Purple Flash ornamental pepper make this one of the most attractive and useful ornamental peppers on the market today.

The compact mounded plants will grow to be 15 inches tall and 19-21 inches wide with clusters of small, glossy, deep purple, almost black fruits.

The fruits are extremely hot and not recommended for eating. A layered, scaffolding growth habit makes it a sturdy and somewhat exotic looking plant that fits in well with tropical themed plantings. It, like other peppers, should never be planted any deeper than it is growing in the nursery container when it is purchased.

This is the first year that we have a Mississippi Medallion Native Plant Selection. Many will already be familiar with Gulf muhly grass. It has dazzled all who have attended the October Flower and Garden Feast at Crystal Springs with its cotton candy, pink, fluffy plumes. Native from Texas to Florida and Kansas to Massachusetts, this ornamental grass can be used in perennial beds and as an accent when planted in drifts in sunny spots of a landscape. Ornamental grasses, extremely tough and drought tolerant, can be used in any type landscape. Planted in permanent beds at Crystal Springs next to peachy-pink roses, the muhly grass creates quite a memorable effect.

Earlier this year Mississippians said good-bye to Norman Winter, horticulture specialist with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, author, popular guest speaker and one of the key decision-makers in the selection process of the Medallion Program. Taking a position in Georgia, he will be long remembered in our state for his personality, promotional and educational skills that have helped to establish the Medallion Program as one of the premier programs of its kind in the country. The newest winners live up to the high standards set by the 52 other plants and trees that have obtained this distinction over the past 14 years.

The Mississippi Medallion Program is sponsored by the Mississippi Nursery and Landscape Association, Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, Mississippi State University Extension Service and the Mississippi Plant Selections Committee. Look for these and other Medallion winners at local nurseries.

Mississippi Medallion past winners

The Mississippi Medallion Program aims to identify plants that perform well throughout the state and to promote the proper use of them in landscapes. Past winners:

1996

Blue Daze *evolvulus*

New Gold *lantana*

1997

Melampodium

New Wonder *scaevola*

Little Gem *magnolia*

1998

Narrow Leaf *zinnias*

Victoria Blue *salvia*

Natchez crepe *myrtle*

1999

Indian Summer *rudbeckia*

Biloxi Blue verbena

Tonto crepe Myrtle

Sioux crepe myrtle

2000

Petunia Wave Series

Yellow shrimp plant

Oakleaf hydrangea

Japanese red maple

Panola Panache

2001

Butterfly pentas

Burgundy fringe flower

Kathy Ann Yaupon holly

Bouquet purple dianthus

2002

Shishigashira

Lilac chastetree

Dragon Wing red begonia

Mississippi Summer Sun coleus

2003

Abelia Edward Goucher

Autumn Blaze red maple

Sonset lantana

Costa Rica Blue salvia

2004

"Port Gibson Pink" verbena

"Purple Ruffles" basil

Purple leaf plum

"Mini Charm" tomato

2005

Chinese Snowball

Mona lavender

Purple Knight

2006

Kong coleus

Profusion Apricot and Fire zinnias

Knock Out rose

2007

Frostproof gardenia

Serena angelonia

Tequila bell pepper

Titan vinca

2008

All Around Purple

Diamond Frost

Rush Varieties

Cardoon

2009

"Slim Jim" eggplant

"Senorita Rosalita" cleome

"Flambe" chrysocephalum

"Limelight" hydrangea

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