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New Plants for 2010

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A lot of folks suffer the blues at this time of the year. The hustle and bustle of the holiday will soon have passed and the cold gray days of winter can be a drag. But if you're a gardener, it's time to research new plants for the garden and begin the hunt.



Wave Petunia

Plant breeders are churning out new varieties at a record pace so there will be lots of new choices at garden centers this spring. Two years ago I toured the trial gardens of the Ball Seed Company in West Chicago, Illinois and saw more than 400 new varieties of plants. Granted, a relative few will make it to market this year, but multiply that number by the dozens and dozens of plant breeders and propagators of new found varieties around the world and the numbers of new plants for 2010 sky rockets.



Flower Carpet
Rose

Not every plant that is introduced will be a winner. Some will not perform as promised and others will be overlooked – either by the growers, the green buyers or the general public. A few, such as the Flower Carpet Roses and the Wave petunias have gone over the top and become legends in their time. Others, such as salvia 'Victoria' and Achillea 'Moonshine' have quietly become staples in America's gardens.

In the coming months, you will be reading more about the real hotties for 2010, but some may be in short supply. So if you want to be the first on your block to grow these hot new plants, now is the time to make out your wish list and begin the hunt. Here are some of reliable plants that have recently been released.



Golden Spirit
Smoke Tree

The Golden Spirit Smoke Tree (*Cotinus coggyria* 'Ancot') a recent introduction from Monrovia that showers the garden with golden yellow foliage throughout the summer. This versatile shrub is a vigorous grower and left to its own devices, will reach 10-feet in height and six-feet in width after a decade in the garden. However, with yearly pruning it can be maintained as a small shrub or trained into a small tree, making it perfect for use in a mixed border, a large container on a patio or in a courtyard. Hardy to zone 4, this golden beauty will perform well in full or part sun when grown in well-drained soil.



Amazon
Dianthus

Dianthus, both annual and perennial have been staples in the American garden forever, but never quite made headlines. However, all that may change with several new introductions released last year. Once relegated to the front of the border newer varieties are taller and are making their way to center stage. The Burpee Seeds catalog (800) 888-1447; www.burpee.com/new, is featuring the new 'Amazon' Rose Magic, a perennial dianthus hardy to Zone 5 that sports a tri-color summer display from white to pink that towers 18 to 24-inches above a soft bed of glossy leaves. Their sweet fragrance, reminiscent of clove, makes them valued in the vase as well as the garden bed.

Dianthus devotees will also want to check out the 'Dynasty' series, the first double flowering variety. Plants reaching up to 20 inches in height are covered with large one-inch to an inch and a half flowers red or white or purple.



Guardian
Delphinium

Delphiniums are the quintessential cottage garden flower and a favorite of mine, so and I can't wait to grow the new perennial 'Guardian' series from Ball Seed, rated as a top performer in the 2003 Illinois trial gardens by Jim Nau, New Product Manager. Along with white and lavender are two blue varieties that flower at different times that will help extend the bloomtime. These beauties will flower in June and with dead heading should repeat in August. 'Dynasty' dianthus and Solstice snapdragons will make good bed partners.

There literally dozens of new flowers and shrubs coming to market next spring. My advice is when you find a plant that turns you on, start trying to acquire it in February. The plants with the most hoopla are going to sell out quickly.

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