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## Show your colors for the 4th of July

By NORMAN WINTER

The Fourth of July holiday is the perfect time to show our colors in the garden. A summer display of red, white and blue is easy to develop either in the garden or in a container. Keep your eyes open for combinations that have already been created for you such as the Old Glory Mix of Mini Famous calibrachoas that are like small petunias.

But if you are the adventuresome, create-your-own-combination type then you will revel in the new choices you'll find at your local garden center.

Why not consider a combination planting with 'Fantasia Strawberry Sizzle' geranium and 'Cloud Nine White' and 'Cloud Nine Blue' ageratum.

There are a lot of great petunias like 'Easy Wave Red', 'Easy Wave Blue', 'Storm Blue' and 'Storm Red' and white flowers such as 'Diamond Frost' euphorbia, and 'Abunda Giant White' bacopa and the fairly new 'Spirit Frost Cleome'

Look also for perennial verbenas in these patriotic colors. The 'Tukana', 'Aztec' and 'Tapien' series offer some of the richest colors coupled with superior flower power. Then don't forget spiky flowers such as 'Mystic Spires Blue', 'Black and Blue' and 'Victoria Blue' salvias and the incredible 'Angelface Wedgwood Blue' angelonia.

If growing for a July 4th party, another option would be to choose a blue or red glazed container in the place of that particular color of flower. In other words, blue pot, red salvias and white verbenas, or some combination that appeals to you.

Prepare the bed before planting the red, white and blue garden. Purchase landscape soil mixes by the bag, cubic yard or truck full. When you look at the price by the cubic yard, you'll see it is a small price to pay for the key ingredient that will give you the green thumb. Whether you want to go with a landscape mix or simply work in organic matter, your flower success starts at ground level. Soil improvement is a continual process and the key to the green thumb may well come from how brown it gets first in soil preparation.

Showing our country's colors in the garden or decorative container will add a festive element as you celebrate the Fourth of July holiday.

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