

# CLASSIC CITY GARDEN AWARDS SERIES



## 2017's Best New Plants

from the Trial Gardens at the University of Georgia

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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
**EXTENSION**



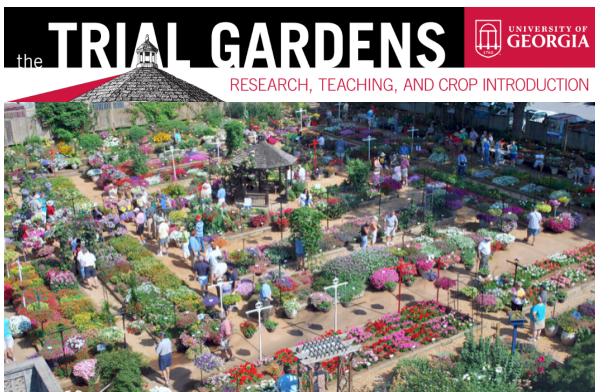
The University of Georgia Trial Gardens were established in 1982 with the mission to provide teaching, research, and new plant introductions. The gardens are an essential trialing site for heat and humidity tolerance for many of the world's annual and perennial ornamental breeding companies because of the number of days that temperatures reach 90 degrees Fahrenheit and above (between 50 and 60 annually). The research and trialing garden works with many of the major ornamental breeding companies from around the world. Each year, UGA Cooperative Extension publishes the current year's best performers.



Director of the Trial Gardens at UGA and Allan Armitage Endowed Professor of Horticulture, Dr. John Ruter.

In the last 20 years, several plants have been introduced to the trade through the gardens ([www.ugatrial.hort.uga.edu](http://www.ugatrial.hort.uga.edu)). The tradition continues as Dr. Ruter releases plants from his ornamental breeding program at UGA.

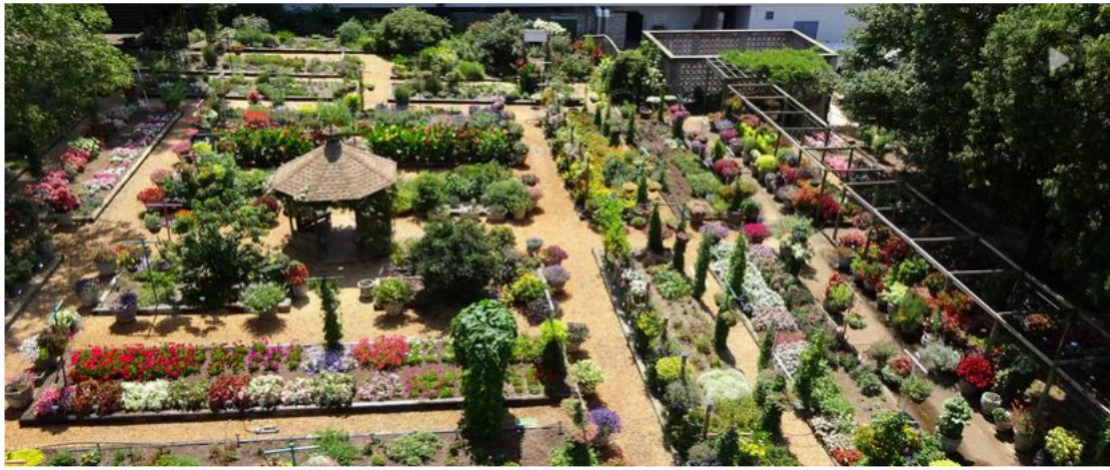
## Trial Establishment and Data Collection



An aerial image of the Trial Gardens at UGA. The area depicted in this photograph is roughly three-quarters of an acre and houses 2,000 trial plants seasonally.

Plants for the Trial Gardens are produced from seeds and cuttings sent to UGA. Seeds of slower-growing crops, such as begonias and geraniums, are received and sown during January, with most other seed crops sown in February and March. Cuttings for propagation are generally received during the first two weeks of March. Propagules are transplanted into 4-inch containers and grown in the greenhouse using standard cultivation protocols. Growing substrate is a custom mix from OldCastle Lawn & Garden. Hanging baskets that are made from recycled newspaper (Western Pulp, OR) are also planted and grown-out during this time. In-ground trial beds are rototilled in March and April, with appropriate soil amendments added based on soil tests. In-ground beds are covered with pine straw mulch before planting. Pelargoniums and cold-tolerant annuals, such as petunias and calibrachos, are placed in the garden at the end of April with all other plants going out during the month of May. Plants are liquid-fed with several different fertilizer products during the growing season.

Data collection begins in June and occurs every two weeks until the end of September. Brandon Coker, Trial Gardens supervisor, collects all data. A single evaluator is essential for consistency in data collection. Data is entered into Excel and uploaded to the Trial Gardens website ([www.ugatrial.hort.uga.edu](http://www.ugatrial.hort.uga.edu)). Plants are rated on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being best) on overall vigor, appearance, flower production, and pest resistance. All evaluation data can be found on the trial garden website and is graphically tracked for each variety being evaluated. Performance data is graphed by date to show how the plant performed from early summer until fall. Data is also shared with the National Trials Database ([www.planttrials.org](http://www.planttrials.org)).



We welcome you to The University of Georgia Trial Gardens! The Gardens trials the newest varieties of annuals from the top plant breeders from all over the world and puts perennials to the test to find those that stand up to southeastern heat and humidity. The Gardens at UGA is open all year and is a great source of ideas and information for students, gardeners and industry professionals. We invite you to visit anytime!

Screenshot of the Trial Gardens at UGA homepage, located at [ugatrial.hort.uga.edu](http://ugatrial.hort.uga.edu).

Each year during the first week of June, ornamental breeders and growers are invited to attend an industry open house. In mid-July, there is a public open house. These events allow industry professionals and the gardening public to see a variety of plants all growing at the same location. During each event, attendees are asked to select five outstanding plants in the garden. This data is collected and shared on the website and through email communication.

Every week, 10 to 12 plants are selected as “Plants of Distinction” for their extraordinary performance in the gardens. These plants are featured on the website and information about them is emailed to interested parties. At season’s end, the “Classic City Awards” are given to the best 10 plants that exhibited excellent performance all summer. The best cultivars for each genus also are listed under the “Best of the Best” link on the website.

In this publication, we will showcase the plants that were honored with the Classic City Award in 2017.

## The best plants of 2017 at a glance:

- Caladium ‘Candyland’
- Calibrachoa Colibri™ ‘Plum’
- Canna Toucan™ ‘Scarlet’
- Catharanthus ‘Mega Bloom Strawberry’
- Celosia ‘Asian Garden’
- Colocasia Royal Hawaiian® ‘Aloha’
- Echinacea Sombrero® ‘Granada Gold’
- Petunia Supertunia® ‘Hot Pink Charm’
- Salvia Cathedral® ‘Sky Blue’
- Scaevola Scampi® ‘Blue’
- Solenostemon Flame Thrower® ‘Spiced Curry’

## Caladium 'Candyland', Classic Caladiums



It is not uncommon to find caladiums in gardens and in planters around businesses, and the reason for that is pretty simple—they complete the landscape. 'Candyland' from Classic Caladiums holds true to its namesake with its ruffled leaves that have either light or heavy pink dapples of color in its white and green leaves. Usable in both filtered and full sun, this plant was a delight to behold and worthy of many second looks. 'Candyland' will also be a valuable plant where deer frequent.

## Calibrachoa Colibri™ 'Plum', Danziger



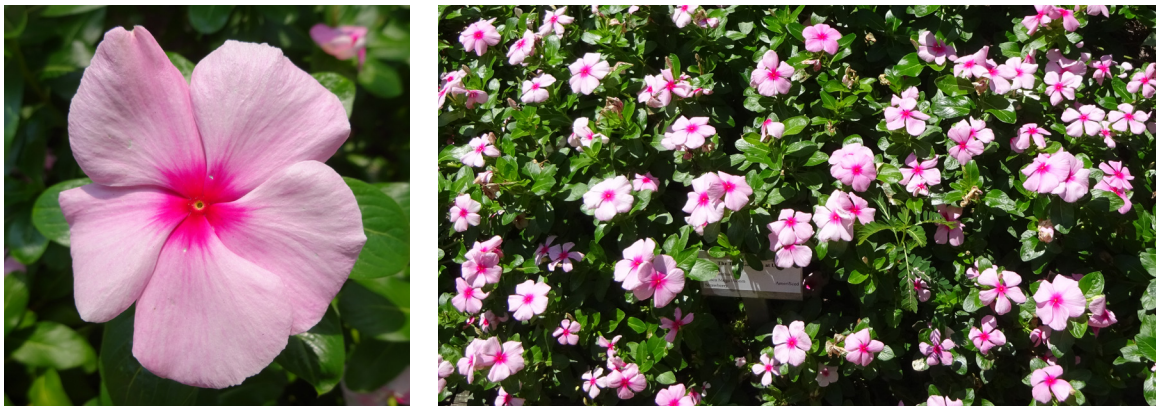
Calibrachoa Colibri™ 'Plum' from Danziger was the first million bells to come into full bloom, and it stayed that way all summer. This plant has larger-than-usual flowers that feature dark-plum corollas with large, yellow centers that were both showy and prolific. Most of the calibrachoa this year hit their peak toward late summer, but 'Plum' was in full bloom and hanging over the edges of its pot by the first week of June, which makes it an excellent, long-lasting container plant.

## Canna Toucan™ 'Scarlet', Proven Winners



Canna lilies have come a long way and one of the standout plants for showy blooms is this impressive deep-red Toucan™ 'Scarlet' from Proven Winners. It may have started out slow in the season, but once it produced a bloom, the plants exploded with a continuous floral display that has been going on since July. The dark, almost-black foliage has given this flower even more pop—it stops people in their tracks. The large flower heads also bloom well above the foliage line so that they are all clearly visible, and when one flower is done blooming, there is another bud ready to open.

## Catharanthus 'Mega Bloom Strawberry', AmeriSeed



Vinca is a highly regarded plant for the Southeast U.S. because it does not shutter at the thought of a hot Georgia summer. 'Mega Bloom Strawberry' by AmeriSeed is a plant worthy of special recognition because it will make all of your neighbors jealous. Large pink flowers with an electric pink center attract more than just hummingbirds and butterflies. You'll find people wondering how you are keeping this plant so tidy and how it is that you manage to have it in constant bloom every single day.

## Celosia 'Asian Garden', All America Selections, grown by Murakami Seed



Celosia 'Asian Garden' from All America Selections, grown by Murakami Seed, is a far cry from its taller 6+-foot-tall cousins, staying at about 2 to 3 feet tall. Large, vibrant pink spikes emerge in dense clusters on this super showy, compact plant. Uses for this cultivar are almost endless because it makes a great cut flower, works well in a garden bed, is a perfect thriller for containers, and is one of the top pollinator plants in the garden. It also stands up very well to heat, humidity, rain, and pruning, making this plant well suited for any Southern garden.

## Colocasia Royal Hawaiian® 'Aloha', Proven Winners



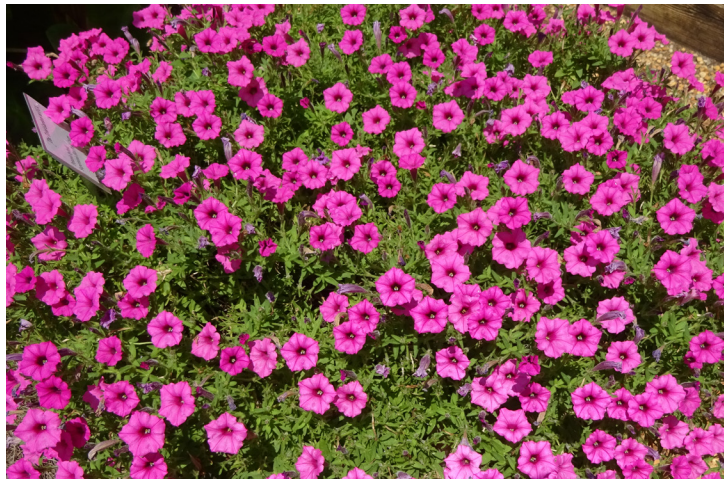
Foliage plants play a role in the garden that is just as important as flowering plants. Colocasia Royal Hawaiian® 'Aloha' from Proven Winners has shown us that leaf color can be just as bright as any flower with its large, glossy, black leaves that mature to glossy, black leaves with green veins. Its compact form is also highly valuable for corporate and residential planting beds where a bold thriller is needed.

## Echinacea Sombrero® 'Granada Gold', Darwin Perennials



We had three echinacea in the Sombrero® Series from Darwin Perennials this year. All performed wonderfully with vibrant colors and long bloom periods that would make any garden pop. The 'Granada Gold' stood out among the bunch with its perfectly rounded yellow cones and deep gold petals. The plant also produced a prolific amount of blooms with some plants having 13 flower heads open all at once. In addition to a stunning floral presentation, the flowers on this cultivar lasted much longer than the two other plants in the series.

## Petunia Supertunia® 'Hot Pink Charm', Proven Winners



Ask 20 gardeners what makes a flower or plant special in their garden, and you are likely to get 20 different answers. Supertunia® 'Hot Pink Charm' from Proven Winners has a clear purpose in life and that's to bloom without ceasing and to just be perfect. Medium-sized hot pink flowers have adorned this plant ever since April when it was planted. This petunia does not have the largest flowers and it is not the most exotic color but if you do not plant this in your garden you will be missing one of the most prolific and best mounding petunias you'll ever own.

## Salvia Cathedral® 'Sky Blue', Green Fuse Botanicals



Blue is a popular color in any garden or landscape. With Salvia Cathedral® 'Sky Blue' from Green Fuse Botanicals, you get a plant that helps draw out all of the other colors in the garden, like your reds, pinks, and whites. This lower-growing form salvia stayed in constant bloom from May until September, which in itself is an above average trait for any blooming plant. Potential uses for 'Sky Blue' include mass planting, containers, bedding, and accent plants, and it also adds great texture to cut flower arrangements.

## Scaevola Scampi® 'Blue', Green Fuse Botanicals



Green Fuse Botanicals has given us a super long-lasting scaevola that provides the garden with a burst of color throughout the growing season. Scampi® 'Blue' stayed a height of 12 inches from June until late August and retained its vibrant blue color the entire time. Many gardeners have an abundance of white, pink, and red in their gardens, so having a great low-mounding blue flower finishes off any flower bed or container.



Solenostemon Flame Thrower® 'Spiced Curry', Ball  
FloraPlant®



Of all of the year's new plants, one of our personal favorites is the 'Spiced Curry' coleus from Ball FloraPlant®. This wonderfully vibrant foliage plant is the total package, having both wildly attractive green, orange, and purple foliage color and a nearly perfect growth pattern. This plant is also very stylish with its purple veins and serrated purple margins, giving it a one-of-a-kind color configuration in any garden or landscape.

[extension.uga.edu](http://extension.uga.edu)