

# CLASSIC CITY GARDEN AWARDS SERIES



## 2019's Best New Plants

from the Trial Gardens at the University of Georgia

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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
**EXTENSION**





In 1982, the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences established the Trial Gardens at the University of Georgia with the mission to facilitate 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 due to the number of days that temperatures reach 90 degrees Fahrenheit and above, which is between 50 and 60 annually. The research and trialing gardens work with over 20 of the major ornamental breeding companies from around the world. Each year, UGA Cooperative Extension publishes the current year's best performers.

## THE BEST PLANTS of 2019 at a glance:

- Agastache Poquito™  
'Butter Yellow'
- Caladium 'Clowning Around'
- Calibrachoa Lia™  
'Bubblegum'
- Calibrachoa Superbells®  
'Honeyberry'
- Celosia Kelos® Atomic  
'CESP 1889'
- Cuphea 'Honeybells'
- Echibeckia™ Summerina®  
Sizzling Sunset™
- Gaillardia Heat It Up™  
'Yellow'
- Gaura 'Graceful White'
- Hollywood™ Hibiscus Rico  
Suave™
- Petunia ColorRush™ 'White'
- Portulaca Hot Shots™  
'Grapefruit'
- Salvia Skyscraper™ 'Orange'



## Agastache Poquito™ ‘Butter Yellow’

Terra Nova



The Poquito™ Agastache series from Terra Nova included ‘Dark Blue’, ‘Lavender’, ‘Orange’, and our winner featured here, ‘Butter Yellow’. While each of these cultivars was very good, ‘Butter Yellow’ brought its A game to the garden with showy, strong, yellow flower spikes. While many hyssops (shrubs in the mint family) tend to blend into their surroundings because of their wispy stems and leaves, this plant did not. Despite it being the shortest of the seven cultivars we trialed this year, ‘Butter Yellow’ stood out from the rest of the cultivars with its bold visual appeal.

## Caladium ‘Clowning Around’

Classic Caladiums



Some people call it how it is, and Classic Caladiums was clearly seeing this plant for what it is. ‘Clowning Around’ caladiums have curvy, uneven, green leaf margins, wild green spots, hot pink veins, and pink filler. Although no two leaves quite match up, all of the oblong heart-shaped leaves flow together to form a plant worthy of a second look. This will be a cultivar that is sure to be seen “clowning around” in pots or in the ground in both sun and shade.



## Calibrachoa Lia™ ‘Bubblegum’ | Danziger



You may recall that last year, Calibrachoa Lia™ ‘White’ was one of the winners, and this year another Lia™ has captured our hearts. There are plenty of pretty pink flowers out in the world, but Calibrachoa Lia™ ‘Bubblegum’ by Danziger has got to be the leader of the pack. Large, bright pink flowers with creamy yellow eyes make this plant show up from across the garden. The Lia™ series commonly has the largest single flower compared to other Calibrachoa (million bells) series. Lia™ ‘Bubblegum’ will easily turn heads when combined with other bold colors for your container combinations.

## Calibrachoa Superbells® ‘Honeyberry’ | Proven Winners



One of our personal favorites for the 2019 trialing season is Calibrachoa Superbells™ ‘Honeyberry’ from Proven Winners. Why? It is amazingly tolerant! This cultivar exhibited consistent uniformity from April to September, no matter how hot nor how humid it got, this cultivar kept blooming. While other Calibrachos tend to shut down in a heatwave, ‘Honeyberry’ did no such thing. All summer, these plants kept pushing out flowers with iridescent pink petals accompanied by honey yellow throats.



## Celosia Kelos® Atomic 'CESP 1889' | Beekenkamp



We love this celosia from Beekenkamp for its showy, hot pink, erect flower spikes. In September, Kelos® Atomic 'CESP 1889' was standing at 36 inches tall with no lodging. This is no doubt due to its slender flower spikes that did not need to be trimmed or maintained through the course of the summer. We have many celosia from the Kelos® Atomic and Kelos® series that performed well here in Athens, Georgia, this year, but this variety is, without doubt, a standout from the rest of the group. This cultivar is also a strong pollinator plant, with regular visits from honey bees and bumblebees. Kelos® Atomic 'CESP 1889' is an excellent, midrange-height plant, with the pizzazz to earn it a place in gardens and planters all over the Southeast U.S.!

## Cuphea 'Honeybells' | Ball FloraPlant



In Georgia and the rest of the Southeast, we have a super-long growing season that can easily last 6 months! Ball FloraPlant has delivered 'Honeybells' as a season-long interest and pollinator plant. We have planted 'Honeybells' both in the ground and in hanging baskets, and all performed exceptionally well over the course of the summer. At first, we did not take to the small flowers, but this cultivar quickly grew on us. It produced hot pink and yellow flowers in such volume that we could not help but fall in love with this selection. For anyone who has not yet discovered the wonderful world of cupheas, this cultivar would make a great starter!



Echibeckia™ Summerina® Sizzling Sunset™ | Pacific Plug & Liner



Can't choose between a cone flower and a black-eyed Susan? No worries! Pacific Plug & Liner has your fix: Echibeckia™. We had the privilege to trial the entire Summerina® series for the 2019 season. Sizzling Sunset™ takes the cake with its large yellow and red flowers, with the traditional black “eye” in the center and foliage much like Rudbeckia. Early in the season, we thought this cultivar would never bloom. Then—bam—our plants exploded and put on a spectacular show for the rest of the summer.

Gaillardia Heat It Up™ ‘Yellow’ | Proven Winners



Gaillardia Heat It Up™ ‘Yellow’ was indeed hot this summer! Bright yellow flowers—and lots of them—were the talking points for this selection from Proven Winners. Deadheading is usually required to keep blanket flowers blooming, but this cultivar required minimal deadheading, which was a huge relief to our volunteers. Heat It Up™ ‘Yellow’ started blooming in May and never slowed down.



## Gaura 'Graceful White' | Dummen Orange



We often talk about the importance of having white flowers in gardens because they act as a backdrop for all of the other colors in the garden. Gaura 'Graceful White' from Dummen Orange fits this bill nicely, sporting large white flowers. As the flowers fade, shades of pink appear. An extended season is an important factor when dealing with perennials. This plant gave us an excellent first flush early in the season. Then following a hard prune, it had the audacity to bloom even more lushly the second time! 'Graceful White' makes keeping season-long interest look easy.

## Hollywood™ Hibiscus Rico Suave™ | J. Berry Genetics



The J. Berry website defines a 'Rico Suave' as a "confident, self-assured, impeccably dressed fitness fiend." I can just see this Hibiscus strutting his pure yellow flowers with hot pink to red centers through the garden, saying, "That's right, petunias!" A sure stand-out, it had flowers daily from May until September. Foliage remained deep green without any special care outside of normal watering and feeding. We would recommend this plant for both containers and in-ground plantings because of its strong stems and bold colors.



## Petunia ColorRush™ 'White' | Green Fuse Botanicals



You could rest in the shadow of Petunia ColorRush™ 'White' from Ball FloraPlant. Large, pure white blooms cover the plant with a bold, mounding habit. Constant blooms and a consistent mounding habit helped this plant to become the best in our petunia trials in 2019. We plant four plants to a pot for evaluation, and ColorRush™ 'White' is coming in with a width in excess of 48 inches per pot.

## Portulaca Hot Shots™ 'Grapefruit' | Proven Winners



Another "Hot Shot" Portulaca joins the 2019 winner lineup! Hot Shots™ 'Grapefruit' from Green Fuse Botanicals will be an easy sell at any garden center, with very healthy foliage, heavy flower count, and vibrant pink and yellow flowers. This cultivar will add a popping spiller to any container or will work easily in a border or rock garden in-ground. It could even be skillfully planted in a vertical garden. Hot Shots™ 'Grapefruit' is a versatile plant that attracts pollinators as soon as the flowers open around mid-morning. It's easy to connect Hot Shots™ 'Grapefruit' to an earlier Classic City winner, Hot Shots™ 'Tangerine Glow', which was also a stellar cultivar..



## Salvia Skyscraper™ 'Orange' | Selecta



A staple plant for all gardeners should be the pollinator and sun friendly salvias. Salvia Skyscraper™ 'Orange' from Selecta is a more compact version of Skyscraper™ 'Pink', staying at 12 inches in height. We love this compact plant, with its huge presentation of large, vibrant pink flowers and orange calyx. We were able to get two heavy bloom sets out of this selection. With our extended growing season here in the Southeast, there may even be a third heavy bloom before the season is over.

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