

CLASSIC CITY GARDEN AWARDS SERIES



2020's Best New Plants

from the Trial Gardens at the University of Georgia

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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION



THE BEST PLANTS of 2020 at a glance:

- Begonia Double Up™ ‘White’
- Caladium ‘Snow Flurry’
- Calibrachoa Colibri™ ‘Malibu Pink’
- Calibrachoa Cha-Cha™ ‘Diva Apricot’
- Catharanthus Soiree Kawaii® ‘White Peppermint’
- Echinacea Kismet® ‘White’
- Ipomea Sweet Caroline Medusa™ ‘Green’
- Lantana Gem™ ‘Compact Rose Quartz’
- Petunia ‘Bee’s Knees’
- Rudbeckia ‘Minibeckia Flame’
- Scaevola Surdiva® ‘White Improved’
- Zinnia Preciosa™ ‘Scarlet’

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 days each year. 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.

Begonia Double Up™ 'White' | Proven Winners



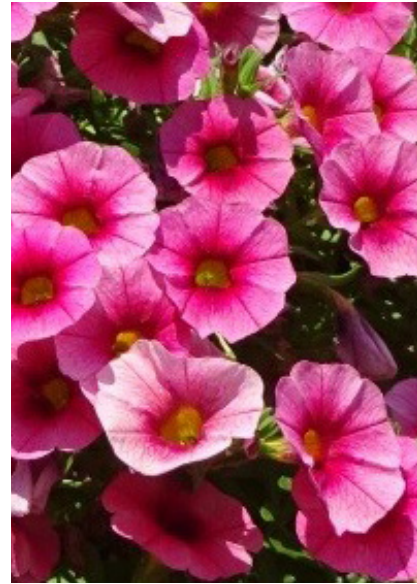
Begonias run the gamut in terms of how they can be used in the vast ocean of leaves, flowers, and sun/shade tolerances. Double Up™ 'White' from Proven Winners expands the possibilities with its small, double, pure white flowers that continuously bloom against dark green foliage. We have this plant blooming in full sun in hanging baskets and planted in ground. In addition to 'White', we are also growing Double Up™ 'Red' and 'Pink'. Each is doing well in the gardens—'White' and 'Pink' in particular. The begonias in the Double Up™ series are sure to make great additions to containers, hanging baskets, or in-ground plantings.

Caladium 'Snow Flurry' | Classic Caladiums



Snow in July? In Georgia? Yep, that's right—snow flurries! This caladium is making an impression in the garden, both in the ground and in hanging baskets. The leaves have pure white veins dotted with specks of pink that flow outward, toward green margins. 'Snow Flurry' is sure to leave a lasting impression at heights of 36 inches and taller, with some leaves in excess of 15 inches long—Classic Caladiums has effectively given us summer snow in Georgia.

Calibrachoa Colibri™ 'Malibu Pink' | Danziger



Hot pink flowers are always a hit in the garden. Day after day and week after week, Colibri™ 'Malibu Pink' has been impressing us with large, hot pink flowers with yellow centers. While the plants have not been the largest of the calibrachoa in the garden, they did not disappoint. They consistently produced larger-than-usual flowers, even during the hottest days. This calibrachoa spreads more laterally, resulting in wider baskets with a denser flower display.

Calibrachoa Cha-Cha™ 'Diva Apricot' | Ball FloraPlant



Calibrachoa Cha-Cha™ 'Diva Apricot' has been an overall favorite this year right from the moment the plants arrived at the greenhouse—big plants with many blooms! We planted four calibrachoa per hanging basket, resulting in a final size of 33 inches wide by 21 inches tall. The yellow and pink flowers call forth the image of a soft sunset right before the sun rolls over the horizon. We have two baskets of these plants and both look identical, which speaks to their overall uniform growth, which will please customers.

Catharanthus Soiree Kawaii® ‘White Peppermint’ | Suntory



‘White Peppermint’ has been a hit right from its arrival to the gardens. It was in bloom when it arrived in March and is still blooming in August! That’s something to write home about. This appropriately named cultivar has a candy red ring at the center of its otherwise solid white, five-petaled flowers clustered at the branch tips. Even at 12 inches tall and with small flowers, they are every bit as showy as their larger vinca counterparts (of the *Catharanthus roseus* species). This can be attributed to the mat-forming effect of having a multitude of self-deadheading flowers open all at the same time. We also have ‘Coral’, ‘Coral Reef’ and ‘Red Shades’, all of which are performing well. Not a brand new introduction, but one worth investing in.

Echinacea Kismet® ‘White’ | Terra Nova



One of the more important factors when selecting plants for the Southeast is whether they last the whole season or not. This medium-sized Kismet® ‘White’ ticks the box on long-lasting color. It was the first echinacea cultivar in full bloom, and it outlasted other echinacea plants that started blooming later. Another winning attribute is that the white flowers fade very well. It’s common for white flowering plants to fade to brown very quickly and for the longevity of the flower to be short, but these are trending in the other direction by maintaining their color and interest for a longer period.

Ipomoea Sweet Caroline Medusa™ ‘Green’ | Proven Winners



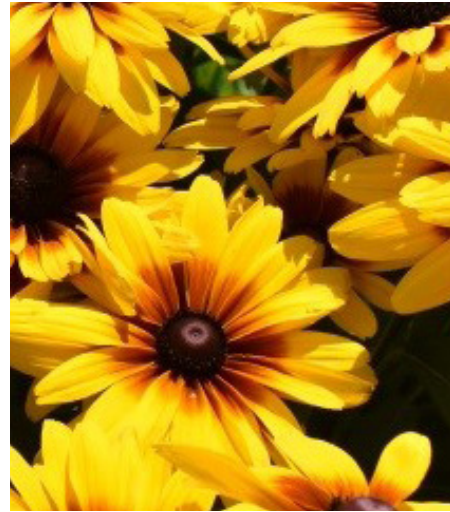
Sweet potato vines are typical love-it-or-hate-it types of landscape plants. However, even the naysayers would have a hard time saying no to Sweet Caroline Medusa™ ‘Green’. The thin, tentacle-like lobes deviate from the typical *Ipomoea* leaf. New foliage emerges as a burgundy-green or green with red edging, and leaves appear to be reaching out. Its habit is tightly branched and compact, but it is a large plant. We planted four ipomoeas to a pot, and this cultivar is now measuring in excess of 36 inches wide and over 30 inches tall—yes, it has our attention!

Lantana Gem™ ‘Compact Rose Quartz’ | Dummen Orange



This award really goes out to the entire line up of the Gem™ series from Dummen Orange’s annual branch: ‘Compact White Sapphire’, ‘Compact Pink Opal’, ‘Compact Orange Fire’, and ‘Compact Rose Quartz’ (our top choice). Each of the plants in the trials kept an excellent compact size at 9 inches tall by 12 inches wide—perfect for a new generation of gardeners. As gardens are getting smaller, patio gardening and container gardening are becoming more popular. Compact plants that produce flowers through the season will become the go-to for everybody. Another important trait for this series is that the flowers stay above the foliage canopy, which tends to hide flowers in many lantana cultivars.

Rudbeckia 'Minibeckia Flame' | Garden Choice



Garden Choice is a newcomer to the gardens this year, and they have delivered one of the most impressive pops in the garden for 2020. Rudbeckia 'Minibeckia Flame' pulled visitors over with ease to warm by its "flame," even in summer! Rudbeckias tend to be an annual here in the Southeast, so we won't place it in the perennial category. Nevertheless, it's still a winning annual. It is in bloom from mid-June to mid-August. 'Minibeckia Flame' would make a good choice for borders or annual beds.

Petunia 'Bee's Knees' | Ball FloraPlant



The petunia 'Bee's Knees' from Ball FloraPlant is an instant hit. A pop of bright yellow flowers ranging from deep yellow to pale yellow at the margins can grace any garden or landscape. The flowers have frilly edges that add to their overall interest. The plants in the pot appear to explode, maturing in perfect mounds of color with healthy green leaves. We encourage gardeners to branch out with bold colors, which should put 'Bee's Knees' at the top of the list when trying to impress the neighbors.

Scaevola Surdiva® ‘White Improved’ | Suntory



Another white flower joining the ranks of the prestigious Classic City Award winners? Yes, indeed. Scaevola Surdiva® ‘White Improved’ from Suntory has earned this honor. Graceful, fan-shaped, and pristinely white flowers bloomed all summer and have truly been a pleasure to watch. Plants remained compact and did not stretch in August. Even the in-ground planting has outdone its rivals by blooming in solid blocks of color—much like a bit of snow on the ground. The other colors in the Surdiva® series, ‘Fashion Pink’ and ‘Blue Violet’, have also performed well.

Zinnia Preciosa™ ‘Scarlet’ | American Takii



Even zinnia lovers admit that not all zinnias are created equal. The Preciosa™ series from American Takii has been excellent all season long. ‘Scarlet’ has taken the cake in terms of overall bang for its buck. The cultivar has stayed compact, with multiple flowers per branch. When old flowers start to fade into the foliage, new flowers are always on the way, as this cultivar continuously produces one after another. We know that red zinnias are about as common as a leaky hose in the garden, but something is to be said when they stand out among bedding plants bred all over the world!

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