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north carolina's  
2009

# SHOWSTOPPER

plants



Photo credit: Head Ornamentals, Inc.



Photo credit: Gilbert's Nursery

## VINE: 'AMETHYST FALLS' WISTERIA (*Wisteria frutescens* 'Amethyst Falls')

Looking for a vine to liven up your garden? 'Amethyst Falls' Wisteria may be just what you are looking for. A superior selection of our little known native Wisteria, this vine is something special.

Unlike the more common Asian Wisteria, you will be pleasantly surprised at the less aggressive nature of this American vine. Considered by some to be a dwarf Wisteria, 'Amethyst Falls' has smaller leaves and smaller flowers than the exotic Asian relatives. Don't be fooled however; once this plant is established, it can climb 15 to 20 feet in a season.

Flowers are lightly fragrant, lavender-purple and borne in cascading 4- to 6-inch racemes in May. Due to the fact our native Wisterias bloom on new growth, vines can be moderately pruned back each winter. This characteristic helps gardeners train 'Amethyst Falls' onto arbors or to most any trellis form.

Best of all, this Wisteria is both deer resistant and drought tolerant. 'Amethyst Falls' Wisteria is an introduction from Head Ornamentals, Inc.

## SHRUB: 'RUBY' LOROPETALUM (*Loropetalum chinense* 'Ruby')

The Chinese Fringe, or Loropetalum, is a versatile plant that can add pizzazz to almost any dull landscape. 'Ruby' Loropetalum is an evergreen shrub that features ruby-red new growth in spring whose foliage darkens to a deep burgundy color by autumn.

Each April bright pink clusters of fringe-shaped flowers appear almost like magic. The combination of colorful foliage plus the pink blossoms makes this Showstopper an exciting addition to almost any landscape.

Loropetalums will grow in sun or part shade. Most will easily grow 8 feet tall and 8 feet wide. However, 'Ruby' is considered to be one of the more compact cultivars, reaching a mature height of only 5 feet.

These special shrubs can be used in a variety of gardening situations. Use them as an informal hedge, to screen an undesirable view or transplanted with other plants in a shrub border. Once established, 'Ruby,' along with all of the other Loropetalums, is very drought tolerant.

**ASK FOR NORTH CAROLINA-GROWN PLANTS AT YOUR FAVORITE GARDEN CENTER.**



The North Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association and North Carolina Cooperative Extension are pleased to announce our second year of Showstopper Plants. Nominated by North Carolina nurserymen and selected by North Carolina Cooperative Extension horticulture experts, the 2009 Showstopper Plants are "must have" plants for any Carolina garden. These featured plants are promising new cultivars or iron-clad plants that will thrive across the region. They are featured in *Extension's Successful Gardener* Learning Centers at home and garden shows throughout North Carolina.

SHRUB: ***KNOCKOUT RED ROSE***  
(*Rosa hybrida* 'Radrazz' PP #11836)



Photo credit: Todd Lasseigne, Paul J. Ciener Botanical Garden

For years disease-resistant roses have been on the market only to disappoint southern gardeners. Now you'll need to look no further because the **Knockout Red Rose** has found its place in the hearts of American gardeners. Unlike its predecessors, **Knockout Red** has the grit to withstand our hot, humid weather.

This exciting rose cultivar is a shrub rose that grows about 3 feet tall and wide. As the weather warms, 3-inch diameter cherry-red blooms appear as terminal clusters of single flowers. As long as the plants continue to grow through spring, summer and fall, this rose will continue to flower.

Like nearly all roses, **Knockout Red Rose** performs best in full sun with fertile, well-drained soil. Prune during the growing season on an "as needed" basis to control plant size. Water during periods of drought to maintain a continual supply of flowers.

Chosen in 2000 as an All-America Rose Award winner, this 2009 Showstopper Plant is truly a knockout!

SHRUB: ***'ROSE CREEK' ABELIA***  
(*Abelia x* 'Rose Creek')



Photo credit: Gilbert's Nursery

Clusters of tubular-shaped, dainty white flowers cover this dwarf form of Abelia. **'Rose Creek'** was selected by the University of Georgia for its low-mounding growth habit, crimson stem color, mildly fragrant white flowers and exceptionally long blooming period (May until frost).

Since its release in 2001, this shrub has excited gardeners and commercial growers with its landscape potential. Growing 3 feet in height and 3 to 4 feet wide, this Abelia can be used as a low hedge, foundation plant and even in decorative outdoor containers.

This evergreen shrub has leaves that emerge in spring with a pinkish cast, turning a lustrous dark green in summer. Wonderfully compact, **'Rose Creek' Abelia** will grow in full sun to partial shade. Once established, it is very drought tolerant.

TREE: ***'KAY PARRIS'***  
***SOUTHERN MAGNOLIA***  
(*Magnolia grandiflora* 'Kay Parris')



Photo credit: Kevin Parris

Considered to be one of the very best of the evergreen Magnolias, **'Kay Parris'** is a relative newcomer in the world of Magnolias. Believed to be a cross between two other fine Magnolia varieties, 'Little Gem' and 'Bracken's Brown Beauty,' this tree can really stand up to any of its competition.

The leaves are a glossy, medium green with wavy leaf margins. Unlike its 'Little Gem' parent, this new selection has a deep orange-brown, almost velvet-like underside to its leaves. The extremely fragrant flowers are a bit smaller than the standard Southern Magnolia and appear from late May to late September.

**'Kay Parris' Magnolia** should have a spot in any sunny Carolina landscape. Use them as a living screen, specimen plant or potentially sheared into a tall hedge. In areas of the Carolinas where winter ice storms are common, this cultivar has great limb structure and appears hold up better than 'Little Gem'.

Don't let this special selection of a southern native slip by. Plant one today! **'Kay Parris' Magnolia** is an introduction from Gilbert's Nursery, Inc.