

EXTENSION'S

Successful

Gardener

NC STATE UNIVERSITY NORTH CAROLINA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Helping
Carolinians In
The Piedmont
Increase Their
Knowledge of
Gardening &
Manage Their
Landscape
Investment

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1999 All-America Selections

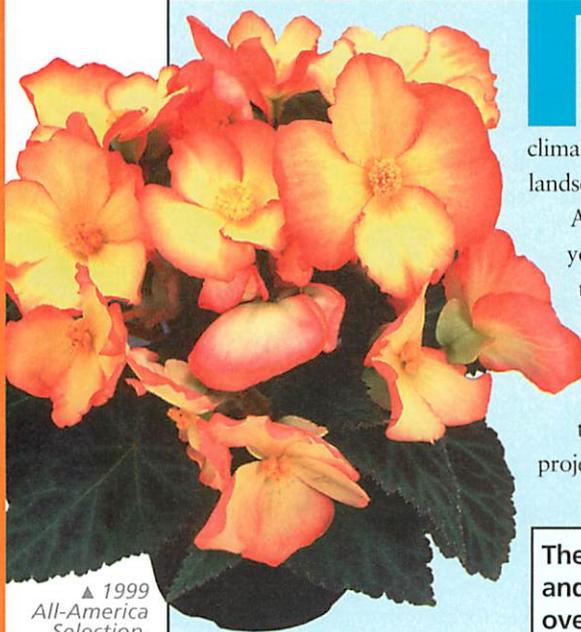
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Enjoy a Symphony of Color



▲ 1999 All-America Selection, Pin-Up Flame

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lowering plants add a symphony of color and interest to our home landscapes. In the Piedmont region, we're fortunate to have a climate that enables us to enjoy flowering plants in our landscapes most of the year.

A wonderful starting point to help you choose plants for your garden is the All-America Selections. Read the page two article, *1999 All-America Selections Are Superior Performers*, for information on plants to consider.

In addition to the great source of pleasure and enjoyment they bring us, flowering plants add to the value of our landscapes and communities by projecting beauty and interest to the passing public.

- The Editor

The floriculture industry helps beautify our state and enriches our economy. Floriculture added over \$148 million to our state last year.

Fill Your Garden with Fragrance

J

ust the mention of a gardenia evokes the pleasure of the flower's wonderful fragrance.

Though this glossy-leaved evergreen shrub with the velvety white flowers has grown in the South since colonial times, our colder winter temperatures in the Piedmont can be hard on gardenias.

An alternative is the 'Kleim's Hardy,' a gardenia cultivar which has proven itself in trials at the J.C. Raulston Arboretum at N.C. State. This N.C. Association of Nurserymen Raulston Selection Plant is one of the hardiest of garde-

nias and can withstand temperatures that drop to 10 degrees F. It has the wonderful gardenia fragrance and its rich green leaves are characteristically 2- to 4-inches long. The flowers are single and 1- to 1½-inches across.

Kleim's Hardy is a dwarf variety, which grows to about 3 feet, and is an excellent choice for the home landscape. It performs best in organically amended soils, and even though it withstands cold temperatures better than the traditional gardenia, it will be happier in a location where there is some winter protection.





profusion orange



profusion cherry



passion mix



sundial peach



wee-b-little



juliet

1999 All-America Selections Are Superior Performers

The 1999 All-America Selections award winners are chosen as the best performers from test gardens across the country. Look for these 12 varieties of flowers and vegetables at your garden center.

Flower Award Winners

▪ The first to win AAS Gold Medals in 10 years, **'Profusion Orange'** and **'Profusion Cherry'** are two zinnias that raise the standard. Planted in full sun with well-drained soil, these zinnias can reach 12 to 18 inches high and produce flowers 2 to 3 inches wide. These beauties are disease tolerant, flower all season and require no deadheading!

▪ **'Pin-Up Flame'** is the first begonia to ever receive an AAS Award. Its 2- to 4-inch large, single flowers are bicolored yellow with red-orange edging. This unique tuberous begonia loves the shade and will reach about 10 to 12 inches in height.

▪ Tritoma **'Flamenco,'** *Kniphofia uvaria*, also known as Red-Hot Poker, is an old fashioned perennial with long, narrow leaves. It produces spikes of creamy white, yellow, orange or red flowers. In well-drained soil, it can reach 36 inches tall. Great for cut flowers, this plant is also a favorite of hummingbirds.

▪ With an irregular bicolor pattern of gold with red tips, the double flowers of **'Bonanza Bolero'** are about 2 inches across. This dwarf French marigold blooms early, and can reach 8 to 12 inches high and spreads 12 to 24 inches in full sun with ample water and nutrients. It's easy to grow and looks great in containers!

▪ Drought and heat tolerant, osteospermum **'Passion Mix'** produces a profusion of 2-inch, daisy-like flowers in shades of pink, purple, lavender or white with azure blue centers. At 12 to 18 inches, the branching habit makes it great for the garden or for containers. This carefree annual loves lots of sun and is relatively free of pests.

▪ The 2-inch, semi-double or double coral-colored flowers of **'Sundial Peach'** almost glow in the garden. They open early and stay open longer than other portulacas typically do. Also great for containers, they are heat and drought tolerant upon establishment and spread 8 to 12 inches. This is the first portulaca to ever receive an AAS Award.

▪ The verbena **'Quartz Burgundy'** stands out with a velvety, deep red wine color enhanced by a small white eye. An annual that thrives in full sun, it will flower early and continue to flower all season reaching 6 to 8 inches tall and 15 inches wide when provided with the appropriate nutrients and moisture.

Vegetable Award Winners

▪ **'Eight Ball'** is compact, growing only to 3 feet in width making it ideal for gardens with limited space. It is ready early, about 5 to 6 weeks after planting, and is the first summer squash with dark green skin. After removing the flesh inside, it even makes a great serving bowl!

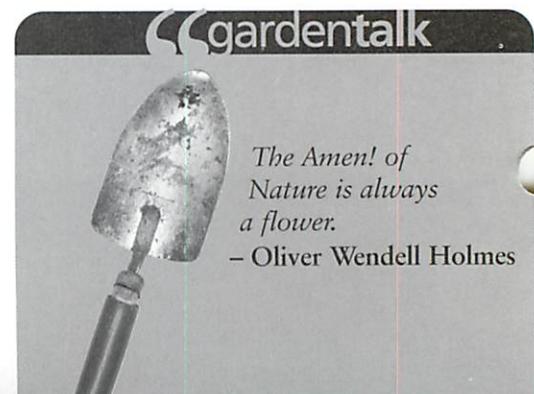
▪ **'Wee-B-Little'** is a deep orange-colored miniature pumpkin. It is shaped like a typical pumpkin, but only weighs 8 to 16 ounces. These pumpkins are easy to grow from seed and are produced in abundance from bushy plants that spread about 6 feet. They make great fall decorations that the whole family will love.

▪ **'Juliet'** is an elongated cherry size tomato that is produced in grape-like clusters on long vines. Only about one ounce, this tomato is glossy red and sweet. It resists cracking and holds on the vine longer than other cherry tomatoes. An abundance of high quality tomatoes will be ready for harvest within about 60 days from planting!

▪ **'New Queen'** watermelon is ready in as little as 75 days from seed or 63 days from transplant, weighing about 5 to 6 pounds. This gourmet watermelon has remarkably sweet orange flesh with little interior rind. Leave lots of room for this one, as its vigorous vines will spread up to 9 feet.

For more information on gardening, contact your county Cooperative Extension Center.

Carl Matyac





I have some old pesticides. Are they still usable?

Do not use a canceled pesticide.

The canceled pesticides most likely found at home are DDT, chlordane, heptachlor, dieldrin, aldrin, creosote, penta, Paris green and silvex. Only use pesticides that are in original undamaged containers. Only use chemicals labeled "warning" or "caution." Don't use chemicals labeled "danger." Danger chemicals were probably designed for commercial use. Don't use pesticides if physical changes are noticed. For example, dry pesticides may lump, or discolor, while liquid pesticides may crystallize. Make sure liquids

have not separated. Pesticides are more likely to degrade if frozen during storage. Pesticides can't be saved after they have been mixed with water. Water with high pH may degrade some chemicals, especially Sevin, in four hours. If you can't use the pesticide, check with the landfill for disposal guidelines. Pesticides in original containers stored according to their label will last several years. Older labels will not mention gloves and goggles, even when they should. If possible, avoid future pesticide problems by using an alternate control method.

David Goforth

Halt Those April Bug Attacks

Unwanted insects usually appear this month. Use this guideline to stop them in their tracks.

Tent caterpillars – Large black caterpillars make large white tents on tree members of the rose family such as wild and ornamental cherry, apple, peach and plum. Pull tents out by hand or with a pole. Spray with liquid Sevin or Dursban.

Cool weather mites – These nearly microscopic insect-like bugs give a bleached appearance to junipers. Cut off a twig and hit the branch hard against a white piece of paper. Drag your hand across the paper and if red smudges appear, you've got spider mites.

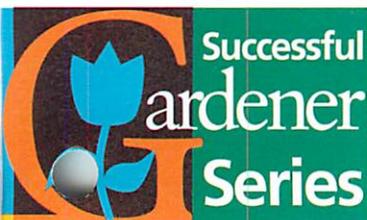
Control with Kelthane or dormant oil in two treatments 10 days apart.

Lace bugs – Winged, but normally stationary, bugs hide on the underside leaves of azalea and rhododendron. Leaves will have bleach specks above and pepper spots on the underside of the leaf. Spray with insecticidal soap or Tame in April, twice, 10 days apart.

For pictures and descriptions of these and other pests, access <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/resources/>.

For more information on controlling pests and pesticide use, contact your county Cooperative Extension Center.

John MacNair



Successful
Gardener
Series

Saturday, April 10

Tree Selection and Maintenance

- ▶ 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- ▶ Hal Marshall,
700 N. Tryon St., Charlotte
- ▶ Free and open to the public
- ▶ For more info: 704-336-2561

ENVIRO- TIP

Proper Steps to Pest Control

The first and most important step in pest control is to correctly identify the culprit. Some pests, or their signs, are unmistakable while others are not. Some plant "diseases" are actually indications of insufficient nutrients instead of an attacking pest.

To choose the appropriate pest control method, one must accurately identify a pest to determine whether control is needed. Use reference books such as insect and weed field guides or bring the insect or plant to your county Cooperative Extension Center for proper identification.

The next step is to determine what level of treatment or control is appropriate. Are you or a family member sensitive to chemical pesticides? Does the lawn really need to

be totally weed-free? Can a plant be replaced with a species or cultivar more resistant to pests?

Keep in mind that total elimination is impossible and trying to do so will only result in extensive, repeated and increasingly more toxic means for control. Next month, we will look at the basics of prevention, and non-chemical and chemical controls for pests. *Royce Hardin*





1999 All-America Selection, Red-Hot Poker

Garden Spot

The J.C. Raulston

Arboretum in Raleigh is planted in over 9,000 species of rare and unusual plants from over 45 countries. Two of the more popular collections are the white garden and the perennial border. Rose, Japanese and magnolia gardens are a few of the others you'll see. The garden serves as an outdoor classroom for horticultural students at N.C. State University and as a demonstration garden for the community.

The Arboretum's mission is to enrich and expand urban landscapes by promoting a greater diversity of superior and better adapted landscape plants for creative, environmentally sound landscapes. The Arboretum grows and evaluates numerous species and cultivars and then distributes them to the N.C. Association of Nurserymen for more testing. A J.C. Raulston Selection plant is featured monthly in this newsletter.

Visit the Arboretum daily from 8 a.m. to sunset with no fee. For more information, call (919)515-7641 or access <http://arb.ncsu.edu/arboretum.html>.

Karen Neill

Gardening in April

What to Fertilize

- Fertilize all early spring-flowering plants, like forsythia, and evergreens, like holly, in early April. Deciduous plants like viburnum and dogwood also benefit from feeding this month.
- Fertilize azaleas and rhododendron in early April when you are fertilizing your other landscape plants.
- Fertilize blackberries, grapes, blueberries and raspberries.

What to Plant

- Set out flowering perennials after last average frost date.
 - Annual flowers can be planted outside in late April after the danger of frost is past.
 - Plant gladiola corms this month and continue through mid-June.

What to Prune

- Prune spring-flowering shrubs like azalea, lilac and weigela after the flowers fade.
- Prune holly and pyracantha while they are flowering so you won't remove all of next winter's berries.

Pest Outlook

Check the following landscape plants for these insects and spray if needed: leaf miner on boxwood, tea scale on camellia, and scale on euonymous.

Lawn Care

- Plant warm season grasses like Bermuda this month. Plant zoysia in May.
- Do not fertilize cool season lawns such as tall fescue until next September.

John Vining



The *Successful Gardener* provides timely, research-based horticultural information to help Carolinians make wise landscape investment decisions and gain greater enjoyment from their lawns and gardens. The newsletter is part of an overall horticulture program which includes Extension's Successful Gardener Workshop Series in various counties throughout the Piedmont region. We publish monthly except January and July. Comments concerning *Successful Gardener* may be sent to:

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Ask for Extension's *Successful Gardener* at one of your local garden centers each month!

For a list of garden centers where you can find *Successful Gardener*, please call (704)336-2561 or look on our Home Page at <http://mecklenburg.ces.state.nc.us/>

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Tune in to "Making It Grow!" – a gardening show featuring Extension agents from the Carolinas. Saturdays, 1 p.m. WTVI 42, Charlotte

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