

Successful Gardener

NC STATE UNIVERSITY NORTH CAROLINA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Helping
Carolinians
Increase Their
Knowledge of
Gardening,
Manage Their
Landscape
Investment &
Protect the
Environment

JC Raulston Arboretum Plant Focus

Use Weeping Blue Atlas Cedar as Landscape Feature

Many gardeners are familiar with the wonderful ornamental attributes and landscape use of deodar cedar (*Cedrus deodara*), with its beautiful blue-green leaves and graceful habit. Its unusual-looking cousin, weeping blue atlas cedar, *C. atlantica* 'Glauca Pendula', deserves recognition as well. This is truly a unique plant. Its branches feature a flowing effect, sometimes described as cascading like water over a bed of rocks. This wonderful weeping conifer has the same evergreen, bluish needles as the common deodar cedar. The weeping, twisting, long branches that are crowded with bright blue needles fall down around the trunk.

Weeping blue atlas cedar, with its unusual characteristics, is a perfect candidate as a specimen plant. The plant deserves a special place where it will be sure to catch the eye and hold the interest of any visitor to the garden. It can be trained, trellised, espaliered and even grown as a bonsai to fit the need and size desired in the garden. Its twisted branch habit gives it year-round interest.

As with most cedars, weeping blue atlas cedar does best in loamy soil and full sun but will tolerate other soils except those with poor drainage. It is a moderate- to slow-growing evergreen, growing to 10 feet tall and 15 feet wide. It is somewhat difficult to transplant so it is best to plant container-grown trees. Staking and training young trees is necessary to establish the desired form.

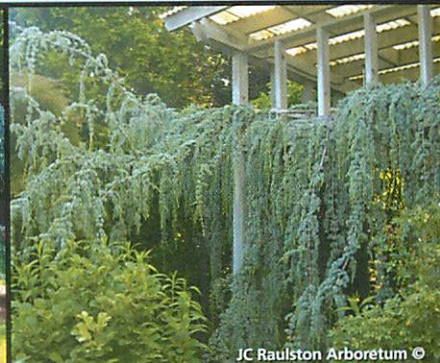
Blue atlas cedar is resistant to serious pest and disease problems. Protect trees from strong winter winds since cold temperatures can injure or kill tops of established trees.

You can find a young weeping blue atlas cedar at the JC Raulston Arboretum on the south side of the visitor center. An older specimen is found in the Klein-Pringle White Garden. *Carl Matyac*

All Photos
Cedrus atlantica
'Glauca Pendula'
Robert E. Lyons ©



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**Mecklenburg
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All-America Selections®

Eggplant F1 'Hansel'



All-America Selections®

Viola F1 'Skippy XL Plum-Gold'



All-America Selections®

Osteospermum F1 'Asti White'

2008 All-America Selections Are Garden Winners

The 2008 All-America Selections (AAS) winners are Osteospermum F1 'Asti White', Viola F1 'Skippy XL Plum-Gold' and Eggplant F1 'Hansel'. Gardeners can rely on AAS winners to perform in their gardens because of the extensive testing across the country.

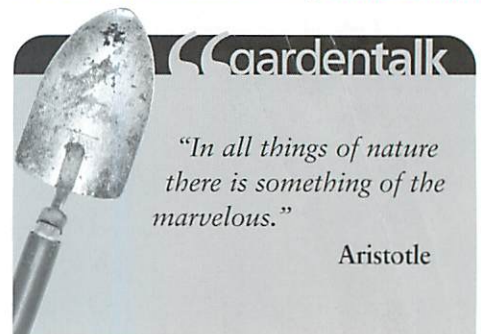
Osteospermum is probably not a plant your grandmother grew but is frequently seen in modern garden centers. Common names include Cape daisy or African daisy. 'Asti White' is the first white Osteospermum propagated from seed. The flowers will remain open under cloudy conditions, which is an improvement over other South African daisies. Once established, it is drought tolerant. Plant Osteospermum F1 'Asti White' in sunny, well-drained soils for the spring or fall garden. It gets about 18 inches tall and wide under good growing conditions. Space it about a foot apart. Expect flowers in about 17 weeks. Although it will tolerate a light frost, it will not overwinter. Plan to grow this as an annual.

Viola F1 'Skippy XL Plum-Gold' was selected because of its interesting color combination and because it will bloom its little heart out. Single blooms have plum shades surrounding the golden center or face, which contains radiating black lines. Flower size is about 1.5 inches. It will grow best as a winter annual, although it persists into early summer. Expect this plant to get about 6 inches tall. Space it about 8 inches apart and provide a generous amount of fertilizer. The flowers are

edible, but no taste reviews are available yet.

Eggplant F1 'Hansel' is a compact eggplant. The plant produces plenty of fruit from 2 to 10 inches long, similar to the 'Orient Express' or 'Little Fingers' eggplant but with more of a teardrop shape. The shiny purple fruit has very few seeds. It will stay tender and doesn't get bitter. Eggplant F1 'Hansel' ripens at around 55 days, which is 10 days earlier than similar eggplants. Space 'Hansel' about 2 feet apart and expect it to get 3 feet high in good conditions. This plant also adapts well to container-growing conditions. The small plant fits on patios or decks and provides high yields of shiny purple eggplants. This eggplant begs not to be breaded and fried. Instead, marinate and grill the young fruit, or cube and fry in olive oil with onions and tomatoes then top with mozzarella or parmesan cheese.

To learn more about the history, testing program, judges and AAS Display Gardens, visit www.all-americaelections.org. **David Goforth**



2008 All-America Rose Selections

Each year, the All-America Rose Selections (AARS) organization chooses one or more roses that represent the best of new cultivars. Evaluations of the roses take place for two years and are based on disease resistance, vigor and fragrance, in addition to several aesthetic attributes. Dream Come True™ and Mardi Gras have been chosen as the 2008 All-America Rose Selections.

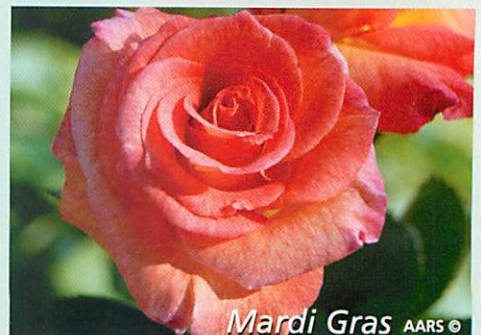
Dream Come True™, introduced by Weeks Roses, is a grandiflora-type rose bearing blossoms that are yellow with vivid pink edges. The blooms, borne on long stems, are reported to reach 5 inches in diameter and have a mild tea fragrance. Disease resistance is said to be excellent. Interestingly, an amateur from Ohio, Dr. John Pottschmidt, made the cross that produced Dream Come True™.

The blossom of the **Mardi Gras** rose, like that of Dream Come True™, has yellow coloration at the base and pink on the edges, but the color change is more gradual. Buds have apricot-orange coloration. Mardi Gras is a floribunda rose with 4-inch blossoms, the scent of which is peppery. Like Dream Come True™, Mardi Gras has an upright form and is described as columnar, whereas the former is said to be shrub-like. The Jackson & Perkins Company introduced Mardi Gras.

Mary Helen Ferguson



Dream Come True™ AARS®



Mardi Gras AARS®

Q&A

Can I manage my lawn naturally?

There are many natural fertilizers that are readily available to the homeowner who would prefer the natural or organic approach to lawn care. Products such as alfalfa pellets, blood meal and composted chicken or cow manure can be applied with good results to the home lawn. As with any proposed fertilizer application, a soil test is recommended to determine the fertilizer needs of the lawn. Soil test kits are available at your local Cooperative Extension Center.

Weed control is a large part of most home lawn care regimens, and there are

some products that are touted as ways to control weeds without the use of synthetic pesticides. One such product is corn gluten. This product controls weeds by preventing sprouting seeds from developing a normal root system, making it more susceptible to dehydration as the new roots don't have sufficient means to search for water.

While research shows that corn gluten does a good job preventing weeds, it also shows that its weed control abilities are short-lived in the soil. Because corn gluten is also a good source of nitrogen fertilizer, lawns treated with corn gluten may actually produce more crabgrass during midsummer.

Donna Teasley

Geranium
'Rozanne'

Steven Still/Perennial Plant Association ©

2008 Perennial
Plant of the Year

ENVIRO- Pesticide Safety at Home

TIP

Whether pesticides are a commonly used product around your house and garden, or only used infrequently, the safe use of these products is of utmost importance. Here are a few questions to ask and answer before you apply any pesticide.

Do you know how to identify problems?

Not all insects are "bad," nor are all plants "weeds." Determine if a problem exists, then find a specific solution.

Do you really need to spray a pesticide?

Many insects, such as aphids, can be removed from plants by a stream of water. Weeds can be smothered with mulches, pulled or mowed down. Diseased parts of plants can be pruned away.

Can you tolerate the damage from the pest?

Just because you see some damage from a pest doesn't mean you need to treat with a pesticide. If the damage is light, you may be able to avoid applying a pesticide.

If you need to apply a pesticide, do you already have something at home to use?

Instead of running to the store for a new pesticide, why not use what you have? Make sure both the pest to be managed and the plant to be treated are on the label of the pesticide.

Have you read the label on the pesticide?

Take a few minutes to read the label before you apply any pesticide. Follow the label instructions. This is the safest thing you can do to protect you, your family and the environment.

Did you know that you are required by law to follow all of the instructions on the pesticide label? You are, so read the label.

How much pesticide do you need and how should you apply it? The old saying "more is better" does not apply to pesticides. Often, using too much, or applying the product incorrectly, can damage the plant you are trying to protect. Remember, you are required to use no more than the amount of pesticide recommended on the label.

What kind of personal protective equipment should you wear? Many gardeners disregard the use of any type of personal protective equipment, especially if the product doesn't smell bad. The odor of the product has no bearing on its toxicity. Read the label to determine what type of protective equipment you must use. The recommendations are there for your safety. Follow those recommendations, and be healthy and safe.

After you apply a pesticide, can you keep kids, pets and others away from the treated area? Most pesticides are more toxic in a liquid state. Once a product dries, it is more difficult to get pesticide residues on clothes or skin. Check the label to determine the re-entry time.

Did you clean up? After every application, clean sprayers and protective equipment. Wash clothes worn to apply pesticides separately from other clothes. After laundering clothes, run a cycle of hot water through the washer to clean it out. This will protect you from any possible contamination.

Asking and answering a few questions before you grab a pesticide and begin to spray can make a happier, safer and more successful gardener. *Jeff Rieves*





Extension's *Successful Gardener*[®] program provides timely, research-based horticultural information. The newsletter is part of the statewide horticulture program which includes Extension's *Successful Gardener*[®] Regional Seminar Series and county workshops. We publish 10 issues per year. Comments concerning *Successful Gardener*[®] may be sent to:

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Gardening in January & February

Lawns

- Fertilize cool-season grasses like tall fescue in February. Use a soil test to determine the proper fertilizer ratio. Try to use a high nitrogen ratio fertilizer like 28-4-4 if the phosphorus and potassium levels are adequate. A rate of 3.5 pounds per 1,000 square feet of 28-4-4 will supply 1 pound of actual nitrogen.
- If you plan on using preemergent crabgrass preventer, apply in mid- to late February. It is better to apply the preventer a little early than a little late. Think about your mowing height. Reduce crabgrass infestation to as little as 10 percent by mowing your lawn at 3.5 inches.

Ornamentals

- Late February is the time to severely prune overgrown shrubs. Cut back Chinese and Japanese hollies 18 to 24 inches above the ground. Thin the remaining branches to make room for the new growth and remove any dead wood. Be prepared to regularly prune these plants this year. They will have very vigorous sprouts that will need to be tipped often to encourage branching.
- Cut back ornamental grasses in February before new growth begins. Do not burn grasses.

Edibles

- January is a good time to browse the garden catalogs to make your selections for this year's garden. Test saved seed before planting.
- Start broccoli, cabbage and other cool-season vegetable seeds indoors in January. Plant many cool-season vegetables in the garden in February.
- February is a good time to prune fruit trees and grapevines. If you only have a few trees, wait until the end of February to do this chore.

Mark Daniele

Garden Spot

The 48th Annual Southern Spring Home & Garden Show runs Feb. 27 through March 2 at the Charlotte Merchandise Mart.

Displays, hands-on activities and workshops provide gardeners with ideas to create color while using "greener" plants. "Greener" plants are those that require fewer pesticides and fertilizers and less pruning to keep them looking good. At this year's show, you will have the opportunity to see garden designs of some of the top landscapers in the area, attend workshops hosted by *Extension's Successful Gardener* speakers and see displays from top orchid growers in North Carolina. Also on display will be "Showstopper Plants," selected by the North Carolina Nursery and Landscape Association members and North Carolina Cooperative Extension horticulture experts. These are promising new cultivars or iron-clad plants that will thrive in a Carolina landscape. *Extension's Successful Gardener* Learning Center will be distributing information on the Showstopper Plants, and will be hosted by horticulture agents and Extension Master Gardeners to answer your gardening questions. For more information, visit www.southernshows.com.

Scott Ewers

TOP AWARDS RECEIVED FROM:

- ▶ North Carolina State Grange/ Extension Foundation
- ▶ Garden Writers Association
- ▶ International Association of Business Communicators
- ▶ N.C. & National Associations of County Agricultural Agents
- ▶ Southern Extension Forest Resource Specialists
- ▶ Mecklenburg County Priority Awards

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