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north carolina
2008

SHOWSTOPPER

plants



PERENNIAL: *LENTEN ROSE* (*Helleborus x hybridus*)

A plant that flowers in winter has a head start in making it onto any plant lover's list. This year's inaugural Showstopper perennial is one that can grow in Carolina gardens from the mountains and piedmont to coastal areas, making it a plant for all regions. **Lenten Rose** (*Helleborus*) is a 2008 Showstopper Plant due to its ability to thrive over a wide range of climates. Despite its common name, Lenten Rose is not a garden rose at all.

Lenten Rose is a perennial that thrives in shade to partial shade. It prefers above average to rich, well-drained soil with plenty of added compost. Mature plants form clumps 2 feet tall and 30 inches wide. Flowers quickly push up from the ground at the first sign of warmer weather in late winter. Flower colors range from rose, magenta, white, pale yellow or green. Blooms last up to two months. Some cultivars to look for are 'Royal Heritage', 'Silver Lace', 'Ivory Prince' and 'Orientalis Red'.

This perennial is no stranger to publicity. In 2005 the **Lenten Rose** was selected the Perennial Plant of the Year by the Perennial Plant Association.

SHRUB: *'KALEIDOSCOPE' ABELIA* (*Abelia x grandiflora* 'Kaleidoscope' PP #16988)

This new shrub is Carolina born. Discovered as a branch sport or mutation at a piedmont North Carolina plant nursery, '**Kaleidoscope**' *Abelia* offers great excitement to all gardeners. Its name alone indicates the range of color found on the foliage of this low, compact shrub.

The real attraction of '**Kaleidoscope**' *Abelia* is the dynamic color it brings to the landscape. The plant changes color from a wonderful gold leaf margin in the spring, intensifies through summer and bursts into shades of red, orange, yellow and green for late fall and winter. In addition to the fantastic foliage, this plant has numerous dainty white tubular flowers that emerge in summer. Established plants are rather drought tolerant. '**Kaleidoscope**' can be used in a variety of ways. Its low, spreading growth habit makes this evergreen plant a perfect ground-covering shrub.

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AT YOUR FAVORITE GARDEN CENTER.**



The North Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association and North Carolina Cooperative Extension are pleased to announce our inaugural year of Showstopper Plants. Nominated by North Carolina nurserymen and selected by North Carolina Cooperative Extension horticulture experts, the 2008 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: **'LIMELIGHT' HYDRANGEA**
(*Hydrangea paniculata* 'Limelight' PP #12874)



If chartreuse is your color then you're going to love this exciting new hydrangea cultivar. **'Limelight' Hydrangea** has unique light chartreuse blooms in late summer that fade into a rich deep pink. This hardy introduction from Holland has reliable flowers ranging from 6 to 12 inches in length.

Like all hydrangeas, **'Limelight'** prefers good loamy soil with modest amounts of soil moisture. When established this new selection will tolerate brief periods of drought. Grow in full sun to light shade. Give **'Limelight'** plenty of room; this newcomer will reach a height between 6 to 8 feet when mature.

Use **'Limelight' Hydrangea** strictly as a landscape plant or utilize its blossoms in fresh bouquets for inside your home or dried for a special floral arrangement. This hydrangea is a showstopper!

SHRUB: **'CHINDO' VIBURNUM**
(*Viburnum awabuki* 'Chindo')



This year's second evergreen shrub on the list is a true winner. **'Chindo' Viburnum** is a dense, pyramidal shrub with lustrous, dark green foliage. With maturity, this plant will have clusters of tiny white flowers that later develop into bright red berries in early autumn.

Grow this tough, durable plant in sun to partial shade. **'Chindo'** tolerates a wide range of soils. When established, this viburnum can withstand drought-like weather conditions. This evergreen beauty grows to a height of 12 feet and can have a spread of nearly 8 feet. Choose **'Chindo' Viburnum** for your next hedge or evergreen screen.

A Raulston Arboretum Selection since 2003, **'Chindo' Viburnum** will be a terrific addition to any sunny Carolina landscape.

TREE: **'OKLAHOMA' REDBUD**
(*Cercis canadensis texensis* 'Oklahoma')



The final selection is quite the showstopper. Found growing in the wild in 1964 in Oklahoma, this small landscape tree is perfect for most Carolina gardens. **'Oklahoma' Redbud** has spectacular royal purple, pea-like flowers that emerge in early spring before the foliage appears. Perhaps its best trait is the thick glossy leaves that appear to be polished each day. The shiny leaves always draw attention to the tree, even by those unaccustomed to noticing trees.

Grow **'Oklahoma' Redbud** in well-drained soil in full sun or partial shade. This beauty is very adaptable in Carolina landscapes and considered by some to be a "must have" small flowering tree. It is excellent for planting in lawns, woodland gardens or in naturalized areas.

Don't miss an opportunity to dazzle your neighbors with this attractive tree.