

north carolina's
2012

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SHOWSTOPPER plants



Photo credit: JC Raulston Arboretum

VINE: *CAROLINA JESSAMINE* (*Gelsemium sempervirens*)

Born in the South, the **Carolina Jessamine** is a terrific native vine for Carolina landscapes. Admired for its sweetly scented canary yellow flowers, this vine really puts on a show from February to April, depending on weather. The golden trumpet-shaped blooms are 1 1/2 inches long and seen in small clusters with narrow, glossy evergreen foliage.

Carolina Jessamine can be trained to arbors, trellises and is often found in wooded areas growing up tree trunks. The Jessamine has a modest growth rate, and it generally takes three to four growing seasons for the vines to cover an average-sized arbor.

This landscape plant will become 20 feet or taller when allowed to grow untrained. Occasionally older Jessamine vines become top heavy or sparse. This can be remedied by pruning the vines soon after they finish flowering. The Carolina Jessamine is the state flower of South Carolina.

Hardiness Zones: 7 to 9



Photo credit: Dennis Werner

SHRUB: *'MISS RUBY' BUTTERFLY BUSH* (*Buddleja 'Miss Ruby'* PP 19,950)

Thanks to the plant breeding efforts of Dr. Dennis Werner, NC State University has released a series of new and improved butterfly bushes. This year's "showstopper" was selected due to its compact habit and remarkably vivid, rich pink flowers. Some observers say the magenta blossoms on 'Miss Ruby' are more vibrant than any other Buddleja variety being sold.

'Miss Ruby' Butterfly Bush has an upright, globe shape with numerous lateral branches. It should be grown as a specimen plant in the landscape or used in a mixed border of plants. Although compact in habit, don't forget this new cultivar will reach a height of five feet so give it plenty of space to grow.

Butterfly Bushes require full sun and good soil drainage to thrive. 'Miss Ruby' attracts butterflies in abundance. In 2008 the United Kingdom's Royal Horticultural Society plant popularity poll ranked 'Miss Ruby' as its number one (out of 97 varieties) butterfly bush cultivar!

Hardiness Zones: 5 to 10

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The North Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association and North Carolina Cooperative Extension are pleased to announce our fifth year of Showstopper Plants. Nominated by North Carolina nurserymen and selected by North Carolina Cooperative Extension horticulture experts, the 2012 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 Gardener Learning Centers at home and garden shows throughout North Carolina.

SHRUB: *'POCOMOKE' CRAPE MYRTLE*
(*Lagerstroemia indica x fauriei* 'Pocomoke')



Photo credit: JC Raulston Arboretum

"Truly amazing" are words used to describe the dwarf **'Pocomoke' Crape Myrtle**. Released by the U.S. National Arboretum in 1998, this cultivar of crape myrtle features deep rose-pink flowers in mid to late summer. Perhaps the greatest attribute is its mature height. 'Pocomoke' will grow 20 inches tall and have a spread of 35 inches.

'Pocomoke' thrives with the same cultural conditions as that of a typical crape myrtle plant. Transplant in full sun to ensure a beautiful floral display in July and August.

Like all crape myrtles, 'Pocomoke' is a deciduous shrub which drops its foliage each autumn. This drought- and disease-tolerant plant needs a spacing of three feet between shrubs. Ideally suited for residential settings, 'Pocomoke' Crape Myrtle can be included in large mass plantings or in small groups to create a low-growing hedge. If seasonal color and a low growing mature height are important to you then this is the showstopper plant for your garden.

Hardiness Zones: 7 to 9

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SHRUB: *'OAKLEAF' HOLLY*
(*Ilex* x 'Conaf' PP 9487)



Photo credit: John Vining

One of the more exciting introductions into the world of hollies is the **'Oakleaf' Holly**. This evergreen beauty is a chance seedling from another well-known holly called 'Mary Nell'. The 'Oakleaf' cultivar is one of five different hollies introduced as the "red hollies" in the mid-1990s.

'Oakleaf' Holly gets its name from the shape of the plant's leaf, whose shape resembles that of our native Scarlet Oak tree. The evergreen foliage is an attractive medium green color with a lighter colored leaf edge. The overall appearance of the plant is handsome.

This holly cultivar will reach a height of 14 feet with some reports up to 20 feet. The 'Oakleaf' Holly's eight-foot spread makes it ideal for evergreen hedges or planting in mass for screening purposes. This "showstopper" is attractive enough to set out into your garden as a specimen plant. Grow in full sun or in very light shade.

Hardiness Zones: 6 to 9

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TREE: *CHINESE FRINGETREE*
(*Chionanthus retusus*)



Photo credit: Christopher Glenn

What kind of plant is tough as nails, has gorgeous foliage and flowers consistently nearly every year? Why it is the **Chinese Fringetree**. Native to Korea, China and Japan, this deciduous tree displays a showy white, clustered bloom that appears like fringe each spring.

Sometimes grown as a multi-stemmed large shrub, Chinese Fringetree can develop into a modest sized tree ranging in height from 18 to 35 feet. Transplant this Asian native into a location with full sun or partial shade. The lustrous, leathery foliage looks best when grown in some light shade, while the flowering is heaviest when planted in full sun.

The Chinese Fringetree is an excellent choice anywhere a small tree is needed. It is well suited for most Carolina landscapes due to its adaptability to our varied soil types. Use as a specimen tree or in a mixed shrub border. Like many white-flowered plants, the Fringetree looks especially pretty transplanted in front of a dark evergreen backdrop.

Hardiness Zones: 5 to 9