

## UT Gardens 2012 Best & Beautiful Plants

Prepared by:

Dr. Susan Hamilton, Director of the UT Gardens

James Newburn, Assistant Director

Jason Reeves, Curator of the Jackson UT Gardens

Beth Willis, Trials Coordinator

Holly Jones, Kitchen Garden Manager

Information is also posted on:

UT Gardens website at <http://utgardens.tennessee.edu/>

UT Gardens Jackson at <http://west.tennessee.edu/ornamentals/>

*Note: A 'K' for Knoxville or 'J' for Jackson at the end of each plant description indicates that it is growing only at that test garden. No symbol indicates it is growing at both gardens.*

### Top Annuals of 2012

**Best in Show – *Angelonia Serenita*<sup>™</sup> Lavender Pink** This seed-grown variety bloomed profusely all season. Bright pink blooms were a knockout on tidy, compact plants. (PanAmerican Seed)

**Best New Variety - *Evolvulus Blue My Mind*<sup>™</sup>** The vibrant true-blue blooms on this variety were a standout against the silvery foliage all summer long. A trailing growth habit makes it well suited for borders or containers. (Proven Winners)

**Best Repeat Variety - *Capsicum 'Chilly Chili'*** This ornamental pepper never fails to delight with its long and showy orange, yellow, and red fruits held on top of the plant. Compact growth makes it perfect as a border or container plant. (PanAmerican Seed)

### Top Twenty (alphabetical):

***Begonia Havana*<sup>™</sup> Rose** This seed-grown begonia boasted heavy blooms all season. Attractive pink blooms did not require deadheading. Like most begonias, this variety was well-suited to part shade or shady garden areas. (Takii)

***Calibrachoa Superbells*<sup>®</sup> Dreamsicle** A carefree annual with dense, healthy foliage and numerous blooms, this spreading variety offered a unique and subtle bloom color. (Proven Winners)

***Capsicum 'Black Olive'*** This ornamental pepper demands attention in the garden. Dark purple foliage is a great backdrop for the purple blooms and later for the dark purple fruits which mature to bright red. (AAS Winner)

***Celosia 'Arrabona'*** The unusual pink and orange hues of this annual were hard to describe but wonderful to behold. Lots of blooms on vigorous, upright plants all summer long. (Fleuroselect Award Winner)

***Cyperus Graceful Grasses*<sup>®</sup> King Tut<sup>®</sup>** The foliage texture of this grass-like plant provided a wonderful contrast to neighboring flowers. Bold and striking – these are not for the faint of heart! They can reach up to 6' in height and grow well in wet to average soil. (Proven Winners)

***Euphorbia Diamond Frost***<sup>®</sup> As usual, this was a carefree mounding annual. Profusely covered with tiny white blooms, it was a great filler plant that served as a contrast to annuals with larger, more prominent blooms. (Proven Winners)

***Helichrysum 'Silver Leaf Yellow'*** The clusters of bright yellow-orange blooms on this annual are a great contrast to its silver foliage. The spreading habit makes this a great groundcover option. (Suntory)

***Ipomoea 'Sweet Caroline Bewitched'*** Sweet potato vine is one of those can't miss annuals that works great as a groundcover and as a foliage contrast to flowering plants. This mounding variety boasts dark leaves that resist fading. (Proven Winners)

***Lantana Luscious***<sup>®</sup> **Tropical Fruit** The subtly variegated foliage on this shrubby annual was a great backdrop for the soft pink and yellow blooms. This variety is more compact than many lantanas, staying under 2' tall. (Proven Winners)

***Lobularia 'Blushing Princess'*** (Sweet Alyssum) This ground-hugging annual thrived in both part shade and full-sun locations and was covered all summer long with dense panicles of pale lavender (though it didn't hold its blush as well in the full sun locations during the heat of summer). (Proven Winners)

***Petunia Supertunia***<sup>®</sup> **Vista Bubblegum** A selection that never fails to impress with its vigorous growth, tall mounding habit (up to 18"), and large, soft pink blooms which cover the plants. Sets the standard for vegetative petunias. (Proven Winners)

***Salvia 'Fairy Queen'*** The profuse dark blue and white bicolor blooms on this carefree and vigorous annual were striking in full sun. (Fleuroselect Award Winner)

***Scaevola Surdiva***<sup>®</sup> **White** This spreading, groundcover annual doesn't even reach 1' tall, but it is literally covered with delicate fan-shaped blooms all summer long. (Suntory)

***Scoparia Illumina***<sup>®</sup> **Lemon Mist Improved** Hundreds of tiny yellow blooms give this annual a delicate and airy appearance that belies its rock steady garden performance. Try it in containers or as a groundcover edging. (Proven Winners)

***Solenostemon 'Vino'*** Grown for its foliage rather than its bloom, coleus always provides an excellent contrast to flowering plants in the landscape. This variety had an attractive, bold color and texture. (Ball FloraPlant)

***Tagetes 'Moonsong Deep Orange'*** This is an award winning variety of the popular annual. Remarkably long-lasting in the landscape, it was disease-free all season long and remained liberally covered with large, bright blooms against attractive, lacy foliage. (AAS Winners)

***Torenia Summer Wave***<sup>®</sup> **Large Violet** A mounding variety covered with vibrant blooms that had an unusual 'wishbone' structure formed by joined anthers. This annual performed best in a part-shade location. (Suntory)

**Verbena Temari® Cherry Red** Huge clusters of bright red blooms were a showstopper combined with vigorous trailing growth. (Suntory)

**Zinnia 'UpTown White Wall'** This variety featured masses of bright white blooms with a yellow eye on upright spreading plants that grew to knee height. (Ball FloraPlant)

**Zinnia 'Zahara Double Fire'** The vibrant orange blooms of this variety absolutely screamed for attention. Numerous blooms on mounding plants that can grow to more than 18" tall. (PanAmerican)

### **Top Perennials of 2012**

**Agastache 'Blue Boa'** Large, showy flower spikes of violet blue distinguish this perennial. It attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. (Terra Nova)

**Echinacea 'Cheyenne Spirit'** This variety's claim to fame is its striking mix of blooms colors, from a warm gold to an intense pink and everything in between. (PanAmerican and Fleuroselect Award Winner)

**Gaillardia 'Mesa Yellow'** A wonderful perennial for our region, this offers bright and cheerful blooms with healthy foliage and profuse blooms throughout the summer. (AAS and Fleuroselect Award Winner)

**Geranium 'Blushing Turtle'** This perennial trial didn't bloom in its first year, but it certainly made up for that this year. Covered in profuse purple blooms from spring to mid-summer, with sporadic blooming after that. (Blooms of Bressingham)

**Hibiscus 'Peppermint Schnapps'** A showstopper in the garden, it boasted enormous white blooms with hints of pink. Large leaves complete the tropical look. It reached 3-4 feet in its first year. (Blooms of Bressingham)

**Hypericum Hypearls™ Renu** – This offers a pleasing mounding habit and numerous bright yellow blooms. Attractive pink berries form after the blooms and extend the season of interest. (Blooms of Bressingham)

**Nassella tenuissima "Angel's Hair"** This under-used ornamental grass provided a wonderful fine texture, graceful weeping form, and a sense of movement in the landscape. Useful in mass or as a contrast to flowering plants.

**Pennisetum orientale 'Karley Rose'** Forming graceful, spreading clumps topped by showy pinkish-white flower spikes, this ornamental grass cultivar is distinguished by a deeper foliage color, and darker/larger flower spikes, as well as a longer bloom period than the species form. **K**

**Sedum mexicanum 'Lemon Ball'** Perfect for rock gardens or containers, this selection boasts evergreen golden foliage accented by bright yellow flowers in late spring. **K**

**Tradescantia Lucky Charm™** This dwarf perennial boasted vivid blue blooms against golden foliage. The contrast really livened up a partly shaded area of the garden, although this variety can tolerate full sun as well. (Terra Nova)

### **Top Edibles of 2012**

***Capsicum 'Cayennetta' F1*** (Pepper) This mildly spicy pepper has a wonderful sweet flavor and produces reliably and prolifically on compact attractive plants that don't require staking. (AAS Winner) **K**

***Fragaria 'Toscana' F1*** (Strawberry) Relatively large, deep pink blossoms are followed by medium size sweet berries with true a true strawberry flavor. This everbearing variety will fruit the same year as planting and bears throughout the season as long as temperatures are between 35°F and 85°F. Attractive and delicious. (Fleuroselect Award Winner)

***Ocimum 'Langkuri'*** (Basil) Large mild tasting leaves combined with fluffy deep purple blossoms made this a favorite in the garden last year. It has a relatively short mounding growth habit. It only required one mid-summer cut back to stay looking tidy through the end of October. (Kitazawa Seed) **K**

***Pisum Mammoth Melting Sugar Snow*** (Pea) The light green foliage and sturdy vines of this heirloom variety grow vigorously and have shown no insect or disease problems. As a cool season vegetable, this pea must be started early in the spring or mid to late summer for late fall harvest. Pods are super sweet and tender and can be eaten fresh off the vine. **K**

***Solanum 'Kurume Long'*** (Eggplant) The attractive purple leaves and venation on this robust eggplant make it an enjoyable ornamental through the summer, but the real delight comes with the late summer produce. The fruit has a delicate flavor and smooth texture and contains none of the bitterness found in many other varieties. Plant vigor was not affected by presence of flea beetles. (Kitazawa Seed) **K**

### **Top Roses of 2012**

***Rosa 'Scentimental'*** A fragrant floribunda as its name implies this beautiful AARS winner has rich burgundy red and white striped foliage and was the first striped rose to be designated as such. It has the look of an old-fashioned rose found in impressionist paintings. **K**

***Rosa 'Tournament of Roses'*** This grandiflora rose has the richest pale pink color of any rose. Blooms profusely and is lightly scented. **K**

***Rosa 'Yellow Sunblaze'*** A miniature rose that is blooming profusely now and has a yellow-gold and bright pink bloom that brightens up the gloomiest of fall days. **K**

***Rosa 'Frederick Mistral'*** Another lovely pale pink rose is this hybrid tea that makes a wonderful cut flower and has an old rose fragrance. **K**

### **Top Trees and Shrubs of 2012**

***Albizia julibrissin 'Summer Chocolate'*** (Summer Chocolate mimosa tree) This fast growing, deciduous tree has a wide, spreading canopy with beautiful deep maroon foliage with a very fine fern-like texture. Scented clusters of pink, powderpuff blooms attract butterflies. Open vase shape habit. Grows up to 20' tall x 15' wide. Hardiness Zone 6.

***Callicarpa americana* 'Welch's Pink'** (Welch's Pink American beautyberry) This exciting new introduction gets its name from its pink midsummer flowers and bright pink autumn berries. It does need shade to prevent the berries from bleaching out. It grows 3'-6' tall and just as wide. Hardiness Zone 6.

***Cercis canadensis* 'Appalachian Red'** (Appalachian Red redbud) A great redbud whose blooms are the closest yet to a true red color. Hot fuschia flowers bloom in March and then give way to heart shaped leaves covering this nice vase shaped tree. Prefers full-sun to partial-shade. Grows up to 25' tall and just as wide. Hardiness Zone 4.

***Cryptomeria japonica* 'Gyokuryu'** (Gyokuryu Japanese cedar) This dense, broadly pyramidal growing cryptomeria has short needles that tend to be a much darker green than most cryptomerias. Holds its color quite well through the winter and does not bronze in winter. Makes an excellent specimen planting, or looks outstanding when planted in groups. Grows up to 10' tall x 7' wide. Prefers full-sun to partial-shade. Hardiness Zone 5.

***Cupressus glabra* 'Sulphurea'** (Sulphurea Arizona cypress) The beautiful soft and creamy yellow color of this conifer is what is so striking. Nice columnar form growing 10' tall x 4' wide in 10 years. Thrives in full-sun and a dry, well-drained soil. Hardiness Zone 5.

***Euscaphis japonica*** (Korean sweetheart tree) Named for its heart-shaped vivid cherry red seed capsules, which appear in fall and later unveil round shiny black seeds. It is small tree, only reaching 25'tall x 15'wide. It has some of the finest foliage of any deciduous tree anywhere; thick, glossy and a beautiful emerald green. And in late summer through fall, it has gorgeous heart-shaped fruit, pink gradually turning an intense cherry-red. When fully ripe these fruit open to reveal shiny black seeds. Finally, in winter, as leaves and fruit abandon the branches, the last, but certainly not least of the Sweetheart tree's charms are revealed - its bark; violet-chocolate colored and traced with white stripes. It is really quite stunning and utterly unique. Hardiness Zone 6.

***Hydrangea macrophylla* Twist-n-Shout®** (bigleaf hydrangea Twist-n-Shout®) Produces abundant blooms on both old and new wood all summer long. Lacy deep-pink centers are surrounded by gorgeous blossoms of pink or periwinkle blue, depending on soil type. Sturdy red stems and glossy deep green leaves turn red-burgundy in fall to offer year-round interest in the garden. Hardiness Zone 4.

***Hydrangea paniculata* 'Little Lamb'** (Little Lamb panicle hydrangea) A compact cultivar that typically grows to 6'-8' tall and 6' wide. Thrives in full-sun to partial-shade. It is noted for producing dense, cone-shaped panicles of mostly sterile, small white flowers from mid-summer into September. Each panicle purportedly resembles a little lamb on the foliage. Panicles appear on upright to outward-arching, stiff stems. Hardiness Zone 3.

***Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Munchkin'** (Munchkin' oakleaf hydrangea) This exciting U.S. National Arboretum introduction (from their McMinnville worksite) offers a profusion of large, 6-1/2 inch long flower clusters in summer, showcased against dark green, deeply lobed oak like leaves. Blossoms open white, age to pink, and are robust, remaining upright even after heavy rains. Foliage turns a brilliant mahogany in fall. Exceptional compact form and dense plant habit make it ideally suited for use in small residential landscapes. Grows up to 3' x 4.5' wide. Stunning when used for mass plantings, hedges and in mixed borders. Hardiness Zone 5.

***Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Ruby Slippers'** (Ruby Slippers oakleaf hydrangea) A profusion of exceptionally large flower clusters in summer are showcased against dark green, deeply lobed oak like leaves. Blossoms open white, quickly age to deep pink and are robust, remaining upright even after heavy rains. Foliage turns a brilliant mahogany in fall. Compact form is well suited for small landscapes. Grows up to 3.5' x 5' wide. Ideal used in mass plantings, hedges and mixed borders. An introduction from the U.S. National Arboretum (from their McMinnville worksite). Hardiness Zone 5.

***Lagerstroemia indica* Strawberry Razzle Dazzle®** (crapemyrtle Strawberry Razzle Dazzle®) This truly dwarf crapemyrtle has been selected for its flower color, brilliant foliage, mildew resistance, vigor, and nice compact growth habit. Flowers are neon hot pink in color. Typically blooms a couple weeks before most other dwarf crape myrtles - usually beginning in mid to late June in the southeast. Nice compact growth habit, with dense, dark foliage. Grows 2'-3' tall x 3'-4' wide and prefers full-sun and a well-drained soil. Hardiness Zone 6.

***Loropetalum chinense* 'Daruma'** (Daruma Chinese fringe flower) A compact form growing to 5' tall x 5' wide. Semi-evergreen with purplish-green leaves. Covered with frilly pink blooms in early spring. Thrives in full-sun to partial shade. Hardiness Zone 6.

***Pistacia chinensis*** (Chinese pistache) Long-lived, winter hardy shade tree with spectacular red, red-orange fall color. Outstanding heat, drought and soil tolerance. Extremely pest resistant. A near perfect shade tree. Please note – females will reseed. Grows up to 40' tall x 30' wide and prefers full-sun. Hardiness Zone 5.

***Taxodium distichum* 'Cascade Falls'** (Cascade Falls weeping bald cypress) A highly weeping form of the bald cypress. Can tolerate a well-drained to heavy clay wet soil. If staked, can grow up to 20' tall x 10' wide. It is stunning placed to cascade over a large boulder or retaining wall taking the appearance of a waterfall. It takes the heat and dry spells common across Tennessee. Hardiness Zone 4.

***Thuja occidentalis* 'Degroot's Spire'** (Degroot's Spire arborvitae) A nice columnar form of arborvitae with good, dark green foliage. It has rather short branches which are spirally arranged which is quite unique when compared to other arborvitae. Grows 12' tall x 3' wide. Prefers well-drained soil and full-sun and partial-shade. Hardiness Zone 5.

***Xanthocyparis nootkatensis*** (formerly *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*) '**Van den Akker**' (Van den Akker Alaskan cedar) The Alaskan cedar is hardy from Alaska to the mid-South. Its main features are drooping branches and dark green needles. 'Van den Akker' is the most narrow growing selection of the Alaskan cedar growing just 1'-2' wide and maturing up to 35' tall. The form of this unique and beautiful conifer is sculptural and is really striking in the landscape. Hardiness Zone 3.