

MESSENGER-INQUIRER



December 07, 2024

The New AAS Plant Winners for the Garden

As I look through the seed catalog and online, I wonder what plants are tested and perform well. The All-American Selection Winners for 2025 answer my question! Every year, breeders and companies release flowers and vegetables with improved characteristics for growing in trials. The selected national winners have passed performance tests across the United States for us to enjoy in our gardens.

All-American Selections® (AAS) is a non-profit organization in North America that tests and introduces significantly improved flowering ornamentals (bedding plants) grown from seed or by cuttings. They also trial edibles such as fruits and vegetables grown from seed that have unique and improved qualities. Trials have been conducted every year since 1932. To find AAS winners in catalogs and online, look for the symbol which is a circle with “Winner” written on a red banner inside of the circle

For 2025, the National Winners include six Ornamental and four Vegetable entries. All of these entries prefer well-drained soil.

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Let's begin with the Ornamental Winners. Dahlia Black Forest Ruby (*Dahlia pinnata*) is an annual grown from seed with jet-black leaves and semi-double to double, ruby-red flowers. The flowers are 2.5 to 3.5 inches across. The plant reaches 20 to 27 inches tall and spreads 18-20 inches. This pollinator-friendly plant grows in a container as well as in the ground. A growing location in full sun is best.

Dianthus Interspecific Capitán™ Magnifica (*Dianthus interspecific*) is produced from cuttings. The dark silver-green foliage provides the background for 2-inch pink flowers edged in light pink. The plant reaches 12-18 inches tall. Space plants 10-18 inches apart in the garden. This annual tolerates the heat and grows well in full sun to partial shade. Enjoy cutting the flowers for indoor arrangements throughout the season. This encourages the production of more flowers.

Petunia Shake™ Raspberry F1 (*Petunia multiflora*) produces flowers described as a blend of raspberry with lemon-lime green color mixed together. The flower size is 1.5 to 2.3 inches across. The plant forms a 5-8-inch mound with an 8-10-inch spread. This heat-tolerant annual grows from seed in full sun to partial shade.

Snapdragon Doubleshot™ Yellow Red Heart F1 (*Antirrhinum majus*) is grown from seed. The yellow flowers with a red eye are 1-1.15 inches across and considered semi-double. Surprisingly, the flowers emit a candy-like scent. The plant reaches 18-20 inches tall and should be spaced 12-16 inches apart in the garden. The flower spikes do not require staking or deadheading. Flower production continues from spring through the heat of summer. Cut the flower stems and use them in arrangements indoors.

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Zinnia Zydeco™ Fire (*Zinnia marylandica*) is grown from seed. It yields 2.7-inch, burnt orange flowers on upright plants 18-22 inches tall. It is suggested to space plants 12 inches apart in the garden. This zinnia displays tolerance to the disease of powdery mildew. It is great for a cut flower and continues to bloom into fall growing in full sun.

Marigold Mango Tango (*Tagetes patula*) is a French type of marigold grown from seed. The eye-catching bicolor flower is primrose and red. The semi-double flowers cover the bushy plant habit which reaches 8-10 inches tall. Garden spacing is suggested as 6 inches apart. This marigold grows in full sun to partial shade.

Next are the AAS Vegetable Winners grown from seed. Pepper Pick-N-Pop Yellow F1 (*Capsicum annuum*) produces snack-sized pepper fruits that are 4 inches long with a conical shape coming to a point at the end. At full maturity, the fruits are yellow. Compact plants reach 24 inches tall and yield 50-100 peppers per plant. A bonus is that the plant has good resistance to bacterial leaf spot. Grow in full sun for the best production.

Squash Green Lightning F1 (*Cucurbita pepo*) is a pattypan-type squash with a scallop shape. The small 2.5-5-inch fruits are green with a dark green stripe. Harvesting the fruit before it reaches larger than the palm of your hand provides the most tender fruit. The bushy plants reach 24 inches tall and spread 36 inches in full sun for best results.

Squash Thriller F1 (*Cucurbita pepo*) is a dumpling type squash with bright green, yellow cream, and a little orange color at harvest. The 1-2-pound fruits are produced on plants 15 inches tall with a vining habit. Space plants 36 inches apart in the garden. The flavor of the fruit is described as rich and creamy. About 8 fruits are produced per plant. Grow it in full sun.

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Kohlrabi Konstance F1 (*Brassica oleracea*) is crack-resistant and long-lasting. The round globe-shaped stem and petioles of the upright leaves are purple. The leaves above the bulb-like stem reach 12-16 inches tall. The round globe is 4 to 5 inches in diameter and becomes woody the longer they are left to grow. The flavor of this kohlrabi is sweet and peppery with a crisp texture. An additional bonus is its resistance or tolerance to Fusarium and black rot. It grows in full sun during the cool season.

For more information about AAS Winners, contact the Daviess County Cooperative Extension Service at 270-685-8480 or email annette.heisdorffer@uky.edu.

Annette's Tip:

Often, I am asked where to locate the seed for the AAS Winners. Look for the All-America Selections® Winners logo in catalogs, at the local garden centers and nurseries on the plant tag, and through websites. Have fun growing these plants!

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