

A close-up photograph of a petunia plant with vibrant purple flowers. Some of the flowers have a unique pattern of white speckles, resembling stars in a night sky. The leaves are green and slightly serrated.

'Night Sky' petunia

New Plants for 2017

BY CHARLOTTE GERMANE

Representing a range of regions, those who shared their plant trial feedback include:

Mark Dwyer, Director of Horticulture at Rotary Botanical Gardens (Janesville, WI); **Denny Schrock**, lecturer and Master Gardener Coordinator at Iowa State University (Des Moines); **Susan Morrison**, garden designer and author (Concord, CA); **Irvin Etienne**, Horticultural Display Coordinator, Indianapolis Museum of Art, IN; **Kevin Vaughn**, retired USDA cell biologist, author and plant breeder (Salem, OR); **Kylee Baumle**, garden author (Haviland, OH); **Leslie Bennett** and **Holly Kuljian**, edible landscape designers (Oakland, CA); **Stephanie Cohen**, garden writer and horticulture professor (Collegeville, PA); **Rebecca Sweet**, garden designer and author (Los Altos, CA); **Shawna Coronado**, garden author (Warrenville, IL); **Nan Sterman**, garden writer and television host (Encinitas, CA); and **Susan Martin**, garden writer and speaker (Holland, MI).

Special thanks for their overview of the new plants to **Kelly Norris**, director of horticulture, Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, and **Maria Zampini**, president of UpShoot, LLC.

NURSERIES AND plant companies pump out new introductions every year with much fanfare. Here's a look at the ones for 2017 that have garnered national awards or high praise from the horticulturists and garden communicators (see box, below left) who've had a chance to trial these plants in advance of their release.

This year many gardeners are especially motivated to create gardens not just for their own pleasure, but to support bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. Regionally native plants are sometimes the only food source for pollinators. New cultivars of these plants can also be reliable food sources if the flower structure is similar enough to the species. This year we're spotlighting some of the newest cultivars of native plants that will still support pollinators. These "nativars" have a special mark 🌸 to help them stand out.

There's something for every gardener here, whether you're replacing a lawn, seeking a better tomato, scouting the latest petunia, or looking for a shrub with wildlife value. You'll find photos of all these plants on our Pinterest board (*New Plants for 2017* www.pinterest.com/ambortsociety). Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/americanhorticulturalsociety and tell us which plants most intrigue you.

Charlotte Germane is digital communications manager for the American Horticultural Society.

ANNUALS & TENDER PERENNIALS

If your summers bring hot days and cool nights, consider the splashy new *Petunia* 'Night Sky' (above). The first petunia with a speckled pattern, each violet petal has a unique design of white "stars." Winner of the FleuroStar award, 'Night Sky' can reach one-and-a-half feet tall and three feet wide. In regions with hot summer nights, the petals may turn solid violet. USDA Hardiness Zones 0–0, AHS Heat Zones 10–1. Selecta.

Growing two to three feet tall and wide, *Lomandra longifolia* is a grasslike, clump-forming herbaceous perennial. **Platinum Beauty™** ('Roma13') is the first green-and-white selection in this genus that Nan Sterman describes as "evergreen, bulletproof, drought tolerant, sun tolerant,

and absolutely beautiful in arid gardens." Rebecca Sweet notes, "Like many variegated plants, Platinum Beauty appreciates a bit of afternoon shade." Zones 8–10, 10–7. Sunset Western Garden Collection, Southern Living Plant Collection.



Lomandra longifolia Platinum Beauty™

All photos are courtesy of the sources listed with the plant descriptions.

Lovers of large tropicals will appreciate ***Colocasia 'Fierce Gigante'***, a taro with the added benefit of ornamental flowers. Irvin Etienne reports that of the 10 or so *Colocasia* cultivars he grew, this was his favorite.



While he was impressed by the gray-green foliage highlighted with purple petioles, he describes the large creamy flowers on purple stalks as “stunning beyond measure.” Zones 8–11, 12–1. Plants Nouveau.

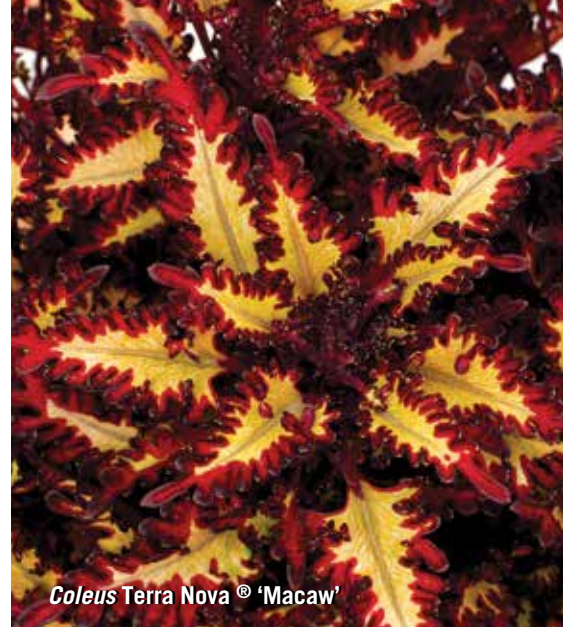
The rich red blooms of ***'Ruby Velvet'***, a new selection of the Australian native kangaroo paw (*Anigozanthos* sp.) are drawing rave reviews. Leslie Bennett and Holly Kuljian “absolutely love this plant because the leaves are broad, so the foliage has enough structural form to hold the space even when the plant is not flowering.” This tender evergreen perennial forms clumps of swordlike foliage two feet tall and about as wide. It extends to four feet in summer



when the tubular red flowers open on spikes above the foliage. Susan Morrison suggests temperate zone gardeners try this fast-growing, prolific-bloomer in containers or as a summer bedding plant. Zones 9b–11, 12–1. Tuffy™ Plants.

Tagetes patula 'Strawberry Blonde' offers flowers in a surprising—for marigolds—mix of shades from pink to red. Mark Dwyer found this pollinator-attracting plant to be “heat tolerant and heavy flowering until frost” with a mounding habit up to 10 inches tall. He adds, “The flowers bud out dark red but open to shades of orange, apricot, and hints of pink.” The pink colors are more pronounced in regions with cooler climates. Zones 0–0, 10–1. W. Atlee Burpee & Co.

Coleus Terra Nova® 'Macaw' has narrow, lobed leaves that offer bold color contrast with dark maroon edges and cream-



colored centers on its narrow, lobed leaves. Growing no larger than a foot wide and tall, its compact, mounded habit makes ‘Macaw’ ideal for small containers in full or part shade. Zones 10–11, 11–1. Terra Nova Nurseries.

More annuals and tender perennials

■ The dwarf three- to four-foot-tall ***Egyptian papyrus (Cyperus papyrus) Prince Tut™*** is suited for tight spaces. Denny Schrock grew it in a container placed in his small water garden. “There’s no need to water it as long as the pond is filled, and its compact size was the perfect scale for my smaller water feature,” he says. Zones 10–11, 11–1. Proven Winners.

■ If you need a two-foot swathe of pink in your annual beds or hanging baskets, try the All-America Selections (AAS) national award winner ***Verbena peruviana Endurascap™ 'Pink Bicolor'***. Mark Dwyer commended this new addition to the heat-, cold-, and drought-tolerant Endurascap series for “excellent flower coverage with superb heat tolerance and a long period of bloom.” Zones 7–10, 11–1. Ball Seed.

■ True, never-fading red was what captivated the judges who gave an AAS national award to ***Zinnia 'Profusion Red'***. Shawna Coronado was likewise impressed when she grew the 14-inch mounding zinnia at home. “It’s a spectacular showy plant all summer long,” she says. “Pollinator-attracting with edible petals, this zinnia has multiple uses and was truly disease resistant as well. It was a surprising delight in the garden.” Zones 0–0, 11–1. Sakata Ornamentals.

PERENNIALS

Gold Nugget™, the newest of the hens-and-chicks in the **Sempervivum Chick Charms®** series, features five-inch rosettes that light up the winter garden in gold with red edges, change to green in summer, and return to red in fall. Stephanie Cohen grew several in troughs and admired the colorful display. Noting the disappointing performance of previous gold or yellow succulent selections, Kevin Vaughn says Gold Nugget™ is “wonderful in the landscape and contrasts beautifully with purple cultivars.” Zones 3–9, 9–1. Garden Solutions.



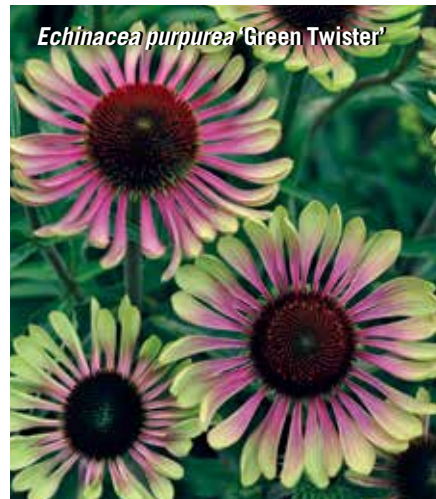
Sempervivum Gold Nugget™



Heuchera Primo™ 'Black Pearl'

Billed as the darkest-ever selection of coral bells, **Heuchera Primo™ 'Black Pearl'** also got kudos for heat tolerance. “Light ruffling on the leaves exposes a showy maroon underside as well,” says Mark Dwyer. It grows 20 inches tall and 30 inches wide, with pink flowers. “Its leaves stayed perfect right up through frost, and even then, it was obvious that it was going to take a hard freeze to stop the show,” says Kylee Baumle, who calls ‘Black Pearl’ the best black heuchera she has ever grown. Zones 4–9, 9–1. Proven Winners.

✿ **Echinacea purpurea 'Green Twister'** features ray petals that are pale green at the ends bleeding into carmine-red in the center around a bronze to brown cone. It grows to just over three feet tall on sturdy stems that sometimes have a burgundy hue. Although most green-flowered coneflowers have not lived up to expectations, the hybridizer reports ‘Green Twister’ has come through extensive trials. Zones 4–9, 9–1. Jelitto Perennial Seeds.



Echinacea purpurea 'Green Twister'

✿ **'Blackhawks'**, a dark-foliaged selection of **big bluestem (Andropogon gerardii)**, is exciting shooting out of a container or adding movement to a landscape. Mark Dwyer appreciated the “dark maroon fall coloration” on this upright grass, which grows two feet wide and up to six feet tall and is tolerant of moist and dry sites. Zones 4–10, 10–1. Intrinsic Perennial Gardens.



Andropogon gerardii 'Blackhawks'

✿ Bigger flowers and longer periods of bloom are hallmarks of the new **Coreopsis Uptick™** series. Mark Dwyer particularly liked the **'Cream & Red'** selection of this hybrid tickseed for its “nice, bicolor look as the dark maroon center transitions to creamy petals.” This plant has a mounding habit and grows at least a foot tall and wide. Zones 5–9, 9–1. Darwin Perennials.



Coreopsis 'Cream & Red'

More perennials

✿ **'Storm Cloud' bluestar (Amsonia tabernaemontana)** has dark stems covered in late spring with periwinkle-blue flowers. The narrow foliage turns yellow in fall. This tough, adaptable selection grows two to three feet tall with a slightly broader spread. It tolerates part shade and moist or dry sites. Zones 4–9, 9–3. Proven Winners.

✿ Winner of a regional prize from AAS (Heartland and Southeast), **Penstemon barbatus 'Twizzle Purple'** offers a novel deep purple flower color. The AAS judges praised the three-foot plant's upright habit and its continuous bloom from mid-to late summer, which attracted diverse pollinators. Zones 4–9, 9–2. Van Hemert & Co. Seeds.



'Patio Choice Yellow' cherry tomato

EDIBLES

'Patio Choice Yellow' cherry tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*) earned a national award from the AAS. Lauded for its compact 18-inch vines, abundant yellow fruits, and sweet flavor, this F₁ hybrid is a good candidate for containers or hanging baskets. Zones 0–0, 10–1. Seeds By Design.

The four-inch heads of 'Katarina' cabbage (*Brassica oleracea*) are ready to harvest one to three weeks earlier than other cabbages. Denny Schrock says that when he harvested the heads properly, leaving the bottom



'Katarina' cabbage

leaves on the plants, "in all cases I got regrowth of three to four even smaller heads for a second round of harvest." The sweet flavor was another factor in this F₁ hybrid winning a national award from the AAS. Zones 0–0, 8–1. Bejo Seeds.

The first strawberry (*Fragaria xananassa*) to win an AAS national award, **Delizz**® is a good choice for containers. It's day neutral, which means it produces throughout the summer. "Although the fruits aren't huge, they are a nice size and quite flavorful," says Denny Schrock, who was still harvesting berries in his USDA Zone 5 Iowa garden in early December. Each plant can grow to two feet tall and wide. Zones 3–8, 8–1. ABZ Seeds.



Delizz® strawberry



'Ghost' apple

'Ghost', developed by the Zaiger family of California with traditional hybridizing methods, is a sweet, sub-acid **apple** that has completely white skin and flesh. To grow this semi-dwarf tree (which can be kept to 12 to 15 feet tall) you need a climate with 500 chill hours and a compatible apple tree as a mid-season pollinizer. 'Ghost' apples ripen rapidly for a very early harvest. Zones not yet available. Dave Wilson Nursery.

Baby Cakes™ blackberry (*Rubus* sp.) is a dwarf, thornless blackberry bush bred by the University of Arkansas. It was awarded the Farwest Best in Show prize. Growing no larger than three to four feet tall and



Baby Cakes blackberry

wide, it is suitable for a container or in a garden bed. Baby Cakes does require at least 400 chill hours, and two summer crops are possible in cool climates. Zones 4–8, 8–1. Bailey Nurseries, Inc.

Winner of an AAS national award, '**Antares'** **fennel** (*Foeniculum vulgare*) grows to two feet tall, producing five inch bulbs that were judged to have a superior, noticeably sweet flavor. A biennial or short-lived perennial, this F₁ hybrid has ornamental and edible airy foliage and flowers, and is a food source for swallowtail caterpillars. Zones 4–9, 9–1. Bejo Seeds.



'Antares' fennel

More edibles

'**Prizm'** **kale** (*Brassica oleracea*) received a national AAS award for its combination of flavor and ornamental appeal. Kylee Baumle grew the F₁ hybrid as a container ornamental for its "ruffled foliage that took on a characteristic blue tint" and ended up enjoying the sweet flavor of this 15-inch-tall kale. Mark Dwyer agrees that 'Prizm' has "excellent color and texture" suitable for

a “wide range of culinary uses but also a true ornamental edible.” Zones 0–0, 8–1. Syngenta Vegetable Seeds.

If your tomatoes have suffered from late blight in recent years, try ‘**Damsel**’. This compact F₁ hybrid produces pink fruits similar in flavor to the heirloom ‘Brandywine’ and is reported to be resistant to late blight, verticillium wilt, and nematodes. Zones 0–0, 10–1. Johnny’s Selected Seeds.

The AAS judges hope that their national award to ‘**Konan**’ kohlrabi will encourage more gardeners to try this crisp, mild-tasting vegetable. The upright leaves of this F₁ hybrid resist insect damage. “It was early to bear, and held up well in the garden, never becoming woody as is so often the case with oversized kohlrabi,” observes Denny Schrock. Zones 0–0, 8–1. Bejo Seeds.

SHRUBS & TREES

‘**Marvel**’ mahonia (*Mahonia eurybracteata*) is a kinder, gentler selection with almost no spines on its compound, evergreen leaves. It grows up to six feet tall and four feet wide with an upright habit. Arching sprays of fragrant yellow flowers bloom in fall to



‘Marvel’ mahonia

early winter; these are succeeded in spring to early summer by attractive clusters of dark blue fruits that have a powdery white coating. Grow in part to full shade. Zones 6–9, 9–6. Southern Living Plant Collection, Sunset Western Garden Collection.

Fans of prickly Lady Violet may covet her namesake rose from the popular Downton Abbey® Garden Rose Collection. **Violet’s Pride™** (*Rosa floribunda*) boasts



Violet’s Pride™ rose

lavender flowers with magenta hearts and a spicy grapefruit fragrance on a rounded, medium-sized bush with dense foliage. Fungal disease resistance is reported to be very good. Zones 5–8, 8–1. Weeks Roses.

🌸 Mark Dwyer praises **Fiber Optics™** (‘Bailoptics’), a compact selection of the eastern native **buttonbush** (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) for its “beautiful fragrant summer flowers,” which attract a variety of pollinators. Denny Schrock says its adaptability to both wet and dry soils makes it a good candidate for rain gardens. It grows to five feet tall and wide. Zones 4–9, 9–3. Bailey Nurseries, Inc.

North Wind® maple (*Acer ×pseudo-sieboldianum*) is the first introduction

in the Jack Frost® collection, a series of crosses between Korean and Japanese maples designed to enhance hardiness of the elegant Japanese maple. Colorful foliage changes with the seasons from springtime red, to summer green, and finally reddish orange in autumn. The tree grows a foot a year and will reach 20 feet tall and 15 feet wide. Zones 4–9, 9–4. Iseli Nursery.

Seaside Serenade® Fire Island hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*) is a mophead selection that produces white flowers edged in pink or blue (depending on soil pH) in spring with repeat blooms in summer. This quick-growing compact shrub reaches about three-and-a-half feet tall and three feet wide. Zones 5–9, 9–6. Monrovia.



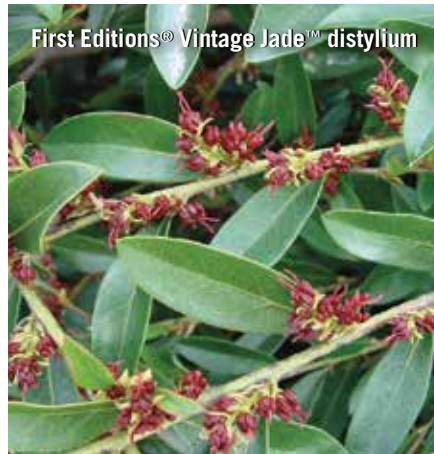
Fiber Optics™ buttonbush



North Wind® maple



Seaside Serenade® Fire Island hydrangea



First Editions® Vintage Jade™ distylium

First Editions® Vintage Jade™ Distylium is the newest selection in this line of evergreen shrubs. Native to China, this four-by-four-foot shrub is a good substitute for boxwood that can take wet or dry soil, sun or part shade. It's reported to be heat tolerant and low maintenance. Small red flowers in winter are a bonus. Zones 7–9, 9–6. Bailey Nurseries, Inc.

More shrubs and trees

First Editions® Sunset Magic™ crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia* sp.) was hybridized by woody plant expert Michael Dirr and others from the University of Georgia. Winner of an honorable mention at Farwest in 2016, this selection reportedly blooms more heavily than other red-flowered selections with dark foliage. Its purple-black leaves maintain their color all summer. It grows quickly to five to 10 feet tall and four to eight feet wide. Zones 7–9, 9–6. Bailey Nurseries, Inc.

Cherry Berries™ wintergreen or teaberry (*Gaultheria procumbens* 'GaulSid5') won an honorable mention at the Farwest Show. This evergreen groundcover native to eastern North America and the Upper Midwest has attractive foliage that turns red in winter. This selection is notable for its large red winter berries, which are ornamental and edible. The six- to 10-inch-tall plant will spread to three feet in part to full shade. Zones 3–8, 8–3. Raintree Nursery.

British rose breeder David Austin claims **'Desdemona'** is his best white English rose to date. Growing to about five feet tall and three feet wide, this shrub rose produces fragrant white flowers with pinkish overtones and is a repeat bloomer from late spring through frost. In trials, 'Desdemona' performed well in both hot and dry and hot and humid climates. Zones 5–10, 10–1. David Austin Roses Limited.

Wholesale Nurseries/ Marketing Consortiums

Visit these companies' websites to locate retail sources for their plants.

- ABZ Seeds**, www.abz-strawberry.nl.
- Bailey Nurseries, Inc.**, www.baileynurseries.com.
- Ball Seed**, www.ballseed.com.
- Bejo Seeds, Inc.**, www.bejoseeds.com.
- Darwin Perennials**, www.darwinperennials.com.
- Dave Wilson Nursery**, www.davewilson.com.
- Intrinsic Perennial Gardens**, www.intrinsicperennialgardens.com.
- Iseli Nursery**, www.iselinursery.com.
- Monrovia**, www.monrovia.com.
- Plants Nouveau**, www.plantsnouveau.com.
- Proven Winners**, www.provenwinners.com.
- Sakata Ornamentals**, www.sakataornamentals.com.
- Seeds by Design**, www.seedsbydesign.com.
- Selecta**, www.selectanorthamerica.com.
- Southern Living Plant Collection**, www.southernlivingplants.com.
- Sunset Western Garden Collection**, www.sunsetwesterngardencollection.com.
- Syngenta Vegetable Seeds**, www.syngenta-us.com.
- Terra Nova Nurseries**, www.terranovanurseries.com.
- Tuffy Plant Collection**, www.tuffypplants.com.
- Van Hemert & Co. Seeds**, www.vanhmertseeds.com.
- Weeks Roses**, www.weeksroses.com.

Retail Sources

- David Austin Roses Limited**, Tyler, TX. www.davidaustinroses.com.
- Garden Crossings**, Zeeland, MI. www.gardencrossings.com.
- Jelitto Perennial Seeds**, Louisville, KY. www.jelitto.com.
- Johnny's Selected Seeds**, Winslow, ME. www.johnnyseeds.com.
- Raintree Nursery**, Morton, WA. www.raintreenursery.com.
- W. Atlee Burpee & Company**, Warminster, PA. www.burpee.com.