

# New Plants for 2024

They're bright and bold, exciting and different.  
And they're coming soon to a nursery near you.

BY CLAIRE SPLAN

The new plants of 2024 have been bred and groomed, tested and trialed, and now, finally, they're ready to be formally introduced to the world. These plants represent the horticulture industry's best efforts to follow trends and fashions, counter the problems presented by diseases or pests, and, perhaps most importantly, respond to the ongoing challenges presented by our changing climate.

As is always the case when it comes to marketing, the term "new" can have a few different meanings. A plant may be new in this country or new to a particular grower. It could be a new addition to an existing series of plants or an improved variety that blooms earlier or longer, in a different color, or with better disease resistance. No matter. What counts is whether the plant is distinctive enough to earn a spot in your garden.

## ANNUALS

Gardeners most often use annuals for explosions of color, so let's start with a striking shade of a familiar flower. 'Dark Knight' scabiosa (*Scabiosa atropurpurea* 'Dark Knight') from Renee's Garden Seeds is an heirloom variety of a popular cottage garden plant. Its flowers are a deep purple pincushion shape that attract a myriad of pollinators, especially monarch, fritillary and skipper butterflies. The blooms can be air dried to create everlasting arrangements and in mild-winter areas, the plants will survive as short-lived perennials.

Another common plant in uncommon clothing is 'Purple Emperor' trailing nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus* 'Purple Emperor') from Botanical Interests. It has deeply veined petals in shades of purple that fade to lavender and dusty



Archangel™ Ruby Sangria angelonia



'Dark Knight' scabiosa

rose. The trailing form makes it a good groundcover or hanging basket plant, and, as with all nasturtiums, the leaves and petals are edible, but luckily, rabbits and deer don't care for it. Although typically grown as an annual, it is perennial in USDA Hardiness Zones 10 or warmer.

**Archangel™ Ruby Sangria angelonia** (*Angelonia angustifolia* 'Balarcang'), a new addition to Ball Seed's Archangel™ series, is notable not only for its intense red flowers and glossy, dark green foliage, but also for its toughness—it thrives in extreme heat, humidity, and drought and is hardy to Zone 10. Noelle Johnson, author of *Dry Climate Gardening*, is excited to try this one in her Arizona garden. "Angelonias are a great option for those of us who live in hot, dry climates and [they] thrive in the intense heat of our summers," she says. "Red is a color that I love to incorporate in my garden, so this one will be top of my list."

For foliage color, check out **Heart to Heart® caladium** (*Caladium bicolor* 'Rain or Shine'). Its large, bronze pink-red leaves with soft pink speckles and black veining brighten a shady spot but it also has good sun and heat tolerance. The plants are tall and vigorous, growing to 20 inches high so the unique coloration will get all the attention it deserves. While grown as an annual in most areas, it is hardy to USDA Zone 10.

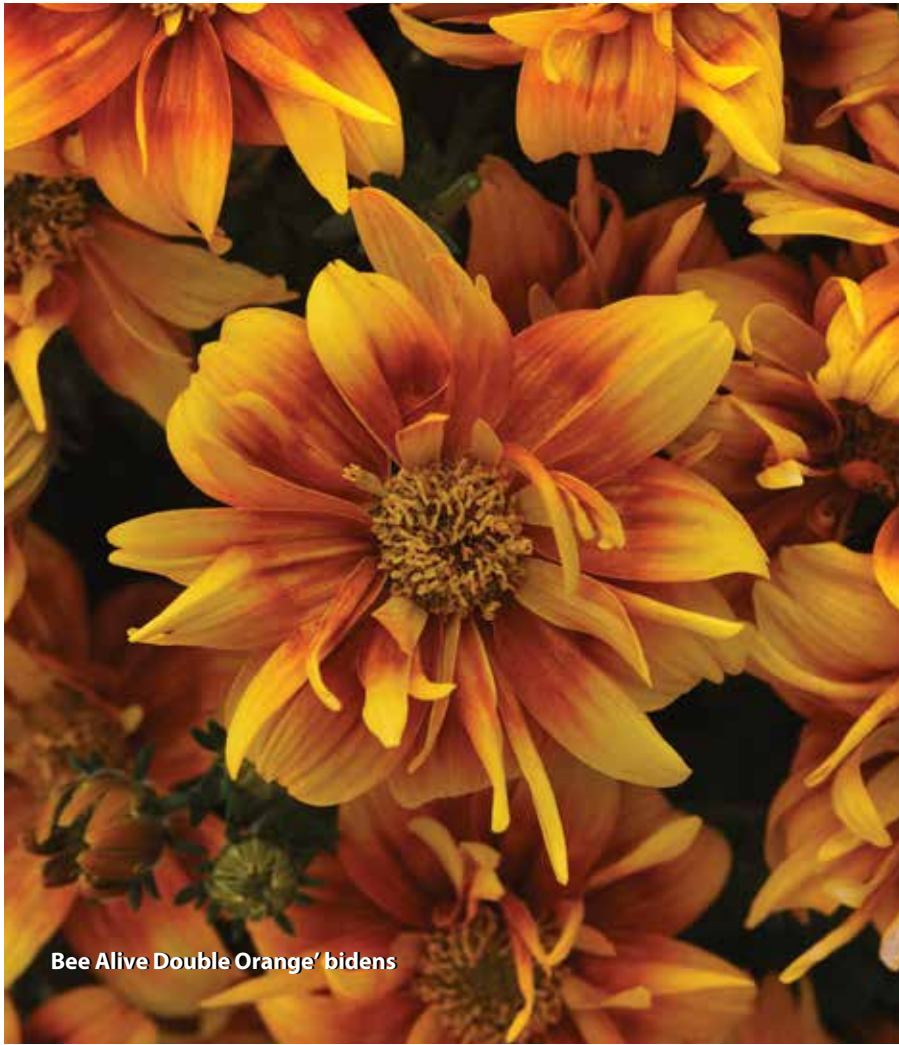
Another foliage-forward option is **Solar Flare coleus** (*Solenostemon scutellarioides* 'UF20-103-6'), a new variety in Ball Seed's Volcanica™ series of coleus. It has deep red leaves with brighter red flowing from the center veins and fringed edges outlined in sunny yellow. The effect is stunning and Riz Reyes, assistant director of Heronswood Garden in Kingston, Washington, is impressed. "Coleus are





Solar Flare coleus





Bee Alive Double Orange<sup>®</sup> bidens

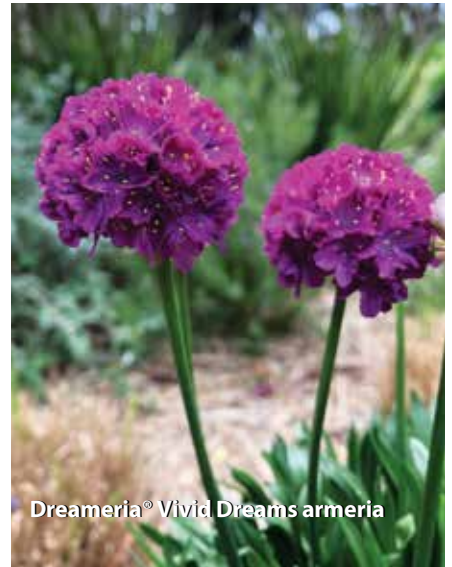
one of my ‘go-to’ summer annuals, and this new selection has the WOW factor I seek out in the overwhelming selection of coleus out on the market,” Reyes says. “Solar Flare can vary in color intensity, depending on light levels and time of year. It is sun tolerant compared to most, but its most dramatic colors show up best in part shade.”

## PERENNIALS

For long-lasting foliage with flair, two perennials are getting a lot of attention. At the California Spring Trials (CAST) last year, **snowflake dusty miller Silver Swirl** (*Centaurea ragusina* ‘Balcentsirl’, Zones 6b–9b) was a standout. With a low-growing, mounded form, its silver-white leaves have wavy edges and a soft texture, making it a great choice for container combos or border edges. It’s best suited to full sun and well-draining soil and will be drought tolerant once established.

For bigger, more audacious foliage, Monrovia’s **Tectonic™ Caldera begonia** (*Begonia silletensis* ‘DJHAP 18001’, Zones 8–11) boasts glossy, heart-shaped leaves up to two feet wide that emerge red and open to bright green. Reyes calls it “a most intriguing container plant [that] requires at least a five-gallon pot to really showcase its bold ‘elephant ears’ foliage.” Noting that Tectonic Caldera is one of Dan Hinkley’s collections from Arunachal Pradesh, India, Reyes advised that it can be overwintered in a garage or brought indoors.

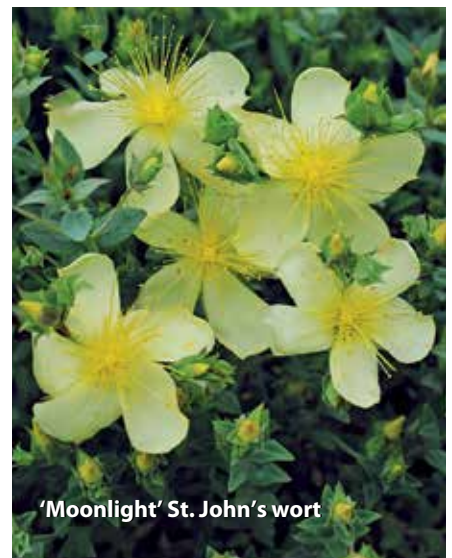
Turning to flowers, sea pinks, also known as thrift, are a common addition to rock gardens, cottage gardens, or meadow plantings, but Darwin Perennial’s **Dreameria® Vivid Dreams** (*Armeria pseudarmeria*, Zones 5a–9a) has deep purple blooms that stand out from the crowd. They flower from frost to frost but are also heat tolerant, deer resistant, and attractive to butterflies.



Dreameria<sup>®</sup> Vivid Dreams armeria



Tectonic<sup>™</sup> Caldera begonia



‘Moonlight’ St. John’s wort



For anyone who wonders why they should give up precious garden space to a plant whose blooms only last one day, Monrovia has a plant for you. See **You Tomorrow™ daylily** (*Hemerocallis* ‘Huhe01’, Zones 4–11) has stunning yellow flowers tinged with green that last for up to five days. This herbaceous perennial has a long bloom season and will adapt to just about any type of well-draining soil. Once established, it’s also drought tolerant.

Jelitto Seed invested 12 years in breeding **‘Moonlight’ St. John’s wort** (*Hypericum olympicum* var. *minus*, Zones 5–8), a beautiful variety that will bloom in its first year. Growing to 10 inches tall, it’s great for rock gardens or any sunny, alkaline site where it will put out sulfur-yellow flowers over blue-green foliage throughout the summer. The flowers show best late in the day or evening, so they’re a great, easy-to-grow addition to patio containers or borders near the house.

For gardeners who are passionate about pollinators, **Bee Alive Double Orange bidens** (*Bidens ferulifolia* ‘Balbidbador’, Zones 9–11) will attract masses of bees and butterflies. The first double orange bidens, it has a burnt orange center with the petals fading to gold at the tips and the narrow top petals create a fringe around the pollen-rich centers. At only 10 inches high, it’s easy to tuck into containers or borders where it will keep blooming and feeding the wildlife from spring all the way into autumn.

## SHRUBS AND TREES

While camellias are typically hardy to Zone 7, one new camellia puts its beautiful evergreen foliage and soft pink blooms in reach for Zone 6 gardeners. **Just Chill Red Tip™** (*Camellia* × ‘FARROWCJRF’, Zones 6b–9b), from Proven Winners, adds fall and winter color with its anemonelike ruffled flowers followed by burgundy new growth to contrast with its dark green mature leaves. It prefers well-draining, acidic soil and part to full sun.

I was resigned to never being able to successfully grow a gardenia in my Northern California garden, but I was able to trial **Pillow Talk®** (*Gardenia jasminoides* ‘SMNGDUO’, Zones 7a–10b) from Proven Winners and the results are



Just Chill Red Tip™ camellia



El Niño™ Desert Orchid chitalpa

truly promising. The evergreen shrub is a well-behaved size, topping out at 3½ feet high and 4 feet wide, and does well in part to full sun. The fragrant white flowers begin in the spring and there were still a few blooms in my garden in October. With good drainage, this low-maintenance plant requires little if any pruning.

One plant that should appeal to southwestern gardeners in particular is **El Niño™ Desert Orchid** (*Chitalpa* ‘NCXC1’, Zones 6a–9b) from Spring Meadow Nursery and Proven Winners. It’s an intergeneric hybrid of two North American natives—

desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis*) and catalpa (*Catalpa* sp.). Its fragrant, purply-pink flowers appear in late spring and then sporadically through the summer. Johnson says catalpa trees grow beautifully in the desert climate, and she’s looking forward to trying this one in her Arizona garden. “I am particularly excited for the intense pink blooms of this new variety,” she says. “Medium-sized trees like chitalpa are a great option for smaller garden spaces.” Growing five to eight feet tall and spreading four to six feet wide, it works in a small garden as well as in larger settings in containers or



in the ground. It withstands even poor soil conditions, dry heat, and deer.

A true southwestern and Texas native, **Gilded Hearts™ redbud** (*Cercis canadensis* var. *texensis* 'NC2014-10', Zones 6–9) from Star® Roses and Plants is a heat-tolerant tree with beautiful golden foliage that can take intense heat without fading. Its pink blossoms attract pollinators and are followed by the glossy, heart-shaped leaves. It spreads to 15–20 feet high and wide, making it a striking focal point tree.

Another tree that will grab your attention is a columnar apple from Plants Nouveau. **Tasty Red™** (*Malus* 'UEB 43054', Zones 5a–8) is one of six varieties in the Fruit Snacks™ series of these skinny apple trees that are perfect for small gardens. Denise Schreiber, horticulturist and author of *Eat Your Roses...*



*Pansies, Lavender and 49 Other Delicious Flowers*, was so impressed when she sampled one of the apples at a garden show that she wants to add a couple of the trees to her Pittsburgh garden. “It was crisp, with great flavor and a good size,” she says. “Not too tart but the even balance between sweet and tart.” The trees will grow well in containers or can be planted in multiples to form a hedge. They’ve been bred to be rust-resistant and virus-free. Remember to get at least two trees in order for them to set fruit.

### For More Information

Many of the plants in this article can be found at your local nurseries. You can also check the websites of the following wholesale sources for information on where plants are available for purchase.

**Ball Flora**, [www.ballseed.com](http://www.ballseed.com). ■ Archangel Ruby Sangria angelonia, Bee Alive Double Orange bidens, Solar Flare coleus

**Darwin Perennials**, [www.darwinperennials.com](http://www.darwinperennials.com). ■ Dreameria Vivid Dreams armeria, Snowflake dusty miller

**Monrovia**, [www.monrovia.com](http://www.monrovia.com). ■ See You Tomorrow™ daylily, Tectonic™ Caldera begonia

**Pan American Seed**, [www.panamseed.com](http://www.panamseed.com). ■ Prism F1 bell pepper  
**Plants Nouveau**, [plantsnouveau.com](http://plantsnouveau.com). ■ Fruit Snacks™ columnar apples

**Proven Winners**, [www.provenwinners.com](http://www.provenwinners.com). ■ Desert Orchid El Niño™ chitalpa, Heart to Heart® ‘Rain or Shine’ Sun or Shade caladium, Just Chill Red Tip™ camellia, Pillow Talk® gardenia, Rosie Posie™ crassula

**Pure Line Seeds**, [purelineseed.com](http://purelineseed.com). ■ Pea Peas ‘N’ Pod Bernard  
**Star Roses and Plants**, [www.starrosesandplants.com](http://www.starrosesandplants.com). ■ Gilded Hearts redbud

### Retail Sources

**Botanical Interests**, [www.botanicalinterests.com](http://www.botanicalinterests.com). ■ Purple Emperor trailing nasturtium

**Burpee**, [www.burpee.com](http://www.burpee.com). ■ Makah Ozette potato

**Costa Farms**, [costafarms.com](http://costafarms.com). ■ Fernleaf philodendron

**Jelitto Seed**, [www.jelitto.com](http://www.jelitto.com). ■ ‘Moonlight’ St. John’s wort

**Renee’s Garden**, [www.reneesgarden.com](http://www.reneesgarden.com). ■ ‘Dark Knight’ scabious, ‘Early Jade’ Chinese broccoli



## EDIBLES

Sometimes the most interesting new plants aren't new at all—they're reintroductions of heritage plants that haven't been in wide cultivation before. Burpee is bringing back a Native American heirloom potato called **Makah Ozette** (*Solanum tuberosum* 'Ozette'). Originating in South America before it was brought north, the long, knobby tubers were once grown by the Makah tribe in Washington state. With gold to light yellow, nutty flesh and thin, flavorful skin, they can be harvested as new potatoes at 10 weeks or grown for 15 weeks to a more mature size.

One trend in edible gardening is the desire for "edimentals"—vegetables attractive enough to grow among ornamentals. Pan American Seed has de-



'Peas 'N' Pod Bernard' pea

veloped a sweet pepper that fits the bill perfectly. Its **Prism F1 pepper** (*Capsicum annuum*) stages a multicolored show on the bush as the fruits mature in 60 to 80 days, changing from light green to orange to red. They can be harvested at any stage and are the perfect mid-size bell for stuffing or eating fresh. The plants are not only highly productive, but also highly resistant to bacterial leaf spot.

Renee's Garden Seeds is introducing **'Early Jade'**, a *gai lan* or Chinese broccoli (*Brassica oleracea* var. *alboglabra*) variety. With a flavor that is sweeter and milder than other fresh broccolis, this cool-season crop is ready to harvest in just 6–7 weeks. After cutting the first



Rosie Posie™ crassula

stalks, a second harvest will appear in just a few more weeks. With successive sowings, you can keep this nutritious superfood on your table for months.

For small-space gardens, Pure Line Seeds has developed a pea vine (*Pisum sativum*) that does well in containers and raised beds. **'Peas 'N' Pod Bernard'** grows to 12–18 inches with afile-type vines, meaning that the leaves stick together and when closely planted can form a neat hedge. With 10 to 12 pods and over 100 peas per plant, this small, disease-resistant plant can really produce—and in just 69 days from seed to harvest.



Prism F1 pepper

## HOUSEPLANTS

As the recently reborn enthusiasm for houseplants shows no signs of abating, let's turn the spotlight on a couple of new plants to liven up your shelves and windowsills.

From Costa Farms comes a fernleaf philodendron (*Philodendron tortum*), native to Bolivia and Brazil. Its lacy, fern-like look is due to its deeply lobed leaves that first emerge in shades of copper before maturing to green. It's an easy-to-grow plant with an other-worldly appearance that grows best in medium to bright light. It needs a sturdy support as it can grow to 6 feet or more.

Proven Winners has a colorful new arrival called **Rosie Posie™ crassula** (*Crassula pellucida*), with a trailing form well suited to hanging baskets. The waxy, heart-shaped leaves are emerald green framed with yellow and lightly tinted with red at the edges. It will do best in medium to bright indirect light.

This list just scratches the surface of all the plants making their debut this year. Talk with your local nursery folk and find out what new plants should grow well in your region. New cultivars, fresh colors, season extenders—these are just part of the reason that plant people never get bored and gardening never gets old. ■

Claire Splan is associate editor of *The American Gardener*.