

MESSENGER-INQUIRER



December 6, 2025

AAS Plant Winners to Consider for the Garden

What should I look for when choosing reliable plants for my garden? I watch for the All-American Selection Winners. The winners are selected from flowers and vegetables with improved characteristics released by breeders and companies, which are tested in trials across the United States. The national winners are the best performers across the nation. Regional winners are best suited for that area.

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 containing the AAS logo with “Winner” written on a red banner inside the circle

For 2026, there are five National Ornamental Winners, one National Perennial Winner, and two National Edible Winners-Vegetables winners. One Regional Winner for the southeast is also included. All of these entries prefer well-drained soil.

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Zinnia Profusion Double White Improved (*Zinnia hybrida*) is an Ornamental Winner, and Gold Medal Winner, started from seed. This annual received an additional award for its breeding breakthrough in superior performance, with exceptionally sturdy, disease-resistant plants. The plants produce numerous 2.5-3-inch white, double star-shaped flowers from spring through frost on plants reaching 14 inches tall and 20 inches wide. It tolerates high temperatures. Deadheading the flowers is not required. It is a pollinator friendly plant.

Dianthus Supra Cherry Picotee F1 (*Dianthus interspecific chinensis x superbus*) is an Ornamental Winner produced from seeds. The green foliage provides the background for 1.5 to 2-inch dark cherry flowers with soft pink fringed edges in a picotee pattern. The upright plant reaches 12 inches tall and spreads 12 inches. This annual is heat and drought-resistant and grows well in full sun to partial shade. The flowers are pollinator friendly. Enjoy this plant in a container.

Rudbeckia Claire™ Orange F1 (*Rudbeckia hirta*) is an Ornamental Winner produced from seed. The 3-inch flower has a dark brown center surrounded by bright orange petals. This annual is pollenless. The plant is compact with green foliage reaching 12 inches tall. Space plants 12 inches apart in the garden. The plant is vigorous and tolerates heat and diseases. Enjoy this in a container as well. This annual requires full sun for best performance. Deadheading the flowers is recommended. It blooms from late spring through fall.

Coreopsis SunGlobe F1 (*Coreopsis grandiflora*) is an Ornamental Winner started from seed. The 1.5-2.5-inch double rosette, golden yellow flowers cover the plant. It blooms from late spring through fall. Deadheading is suggested. The tidy, compact plant with green leaves

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reaches 12-14 inches in height and spread. Plant it in full to partial sun. Since it is a perennial, it may return without planting the next growing season.

Sedum Spectacular (*Sedum spectabile*) is an Ornamental Winner grown from seed. The 3-inch pink flower clusters are produced in late summer to fall. The foliage color is chartreuse green. The upright, mounded plant habit does not flop over and reaches 12-14 inches tall and spreads 14-16 inches. The plant needs full sun.

Heliopsis Sole Giatto (*Heliopsis helianthoides*) is a Perennial Winner. The 3-inch bright yellow daisy-type blossoms are long-lasting. The plant forms a mound and reaches 20 inches in height. It blooms from spring to frost. This false sunflower tolerates heat and requires full sun. Deadheading the flowers is not recommended. Plant it where it will be wanted for the next year, since it came back up in the test trials.

Kale Rubybor F1 (*Brassica oleracea*) is an Edible-Vegetable Winner from seed and the first Edible-Vegetable Gold Medal Winner. This kale has a compact habit that fits into any garden or container. It can reach a height of 36 inches with a 24-inch spread. The foliage is deep purple and uniform. The leaves stay tender and delicious from spring until frost despite the heat of summer.

Basil Treviso (*Ocimum basilicum*) is an Edible-Vegetable Winner from seed. The plant has a mounded habit with a height of 15-18 inches tall and a spread of 12-14 inches. This sweet basil type has green leaves that remain tender for a longer period of time compared to other cultivars, allowing for better leaf quality and flavor through the season. The plant is heat tolerant

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and slow to flower. It is disease-resistant or tolerant to down mildew and powdery mildew.

Great to grow in a container near the house for easy access while cooking.

Tomato BadaBing! F1 (*Solanum lycopersicum*) is a Regional Edible – Vegetable Winner, which includes the Southeast Region. This red cherry tomato is less than 2 inches in size with great flavor. This cultivar has a high resistance to Tomato mosaic virus, bacterial speck, root knot nematode, Fusarium wilt race 1/2, species of Verticillium wilt, and late blight with Ph2 and Ph3 genes. The plant is upright with an indeterminate growth habit that requires staking.

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 seed for the AAS Winners. It is best to look for the All-America Selections® Winners logo in catalogs, at local garden centers and nurseries on the plant tag, and through websites. Have fun growing these plants!

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