



Flowers Worth Growing

by
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As of September 15, the frost still hasn't settled on the flower garden, and many plants are providing a spectacular show of blooms and colorful foliage. Below is a list of plants that are still in full bloom and can be used to extend the season of an unfrosted garden. Many plants simply exhaust themselves by this time of year, and flowering declines, leaves turn strawy brown, and plants look awful, even without a frost. Many like the marigolds will be mush as soon as frost appears. However, in those nice years when frost is held at bay, the following plants can provide some welcome late season color.

African Marigold Sweet Cream

Ageratum Blue Bouquet

Blue Mink

Red Top

Southern Cross

Asclepias Red Butterfly

Amaranth Elephant Head

Pygmy Torch

Calendula Green Heart Orange

Pink Surprise

Touch of Red Mix

Centaurea Alaska

Chilean Glory Vine Fireworks

Cleome Colour Fountain Mix

Cosmos Sensation Mix

Versailles Mix

Chrysanthemum Charmer

Silver Spoons

Dahlia Figaro Mix

Dianthus Floral Lace Crimson

Floral Lace Lilac

Floral Lace Violet

Melody Pink

Flowering cabbage Tokyo White

Tokyo Pink

French Marigold Safari Red

Bonanza Bolero

Nugget Supreme Yellow

Gaillardia Burgundy Wine

Gazania Daybreak Pink Shades

Red Stripe

Gypsophila Gypsy

Helichrysum Chico Orange

Lavatera Beauty Mix

Mexican Sunflower (*Tithonia*)

Mignonette White Mignonette

Monarda Lambada

Nasturtium Apricot Trifle

Cherry Rose Jewel

Creamsicle

Jewel Mix

Moonlight

Nicotiana Hummingbird Pink

Lumina

Only the Lonely

Ornamental Pepper Medusa

Osteospermum Passion Mix

Pansy Crown Mix

Fama Clear Face Mix

Fama Mixed Colors

Impressions Mix

Masterpiece Mix

Oliver Twist

Purple Rain

Rococco

Ultima Silhouette Mix

Zorro

Petunia Double Madness Rose

Dramatica Cherry

Dramatica Hot Pink

Fantasy Ivory

Madness Lilac

Rose Carpet Improved

Summer Kiss

Phlox Starry Eyes Mix

Polygonum Pink Punching Balls

Rudbeckia Indian Summer

Rustic Colors

Sputnik

Toto

Salvia splendens Orange Zest

Salsa Salmon

Red Hot Sally

Red Vista

Salvia hormium Bicolor Mix

Claryssa Pink

Salvia coccinea Coral Nymph

Salvia farinacea Rhea

Sanvitalia Mandarin Orange

Shoo Fly Plant (*Nicandra*)

Signet Marigold

Lulu

Silene Hot Pink

Snapdragon Black Prince

Pink Bells

Sonnet Mix

Trumpet Serenade

Statice Sirima Pastel

Sunflower Crimson Thriller

Giant Sungold

Sunflower Kong

Lemon Queen

Santa Fe

Soraya

Sunbeam

Sun Goddess

Sunbright

Titanic

Valentine

Vanilla Ice

Sweet Alyssum Carpet of Snow

New Apricot

Venidium Jaffa Ice

Zulu Prince

Verbena Moon River

Quartz PolkaDot Mix

Quartz Formula Mix

Verbena Sterling Star

Viola Sorbet Blackberry Cream

Four Seasons Golden Yellow

Sorbet Blue Mix

Sorbet Formula Mix

Sorbet French Vanilla

Sorbet Lemon Chiffon

Sorbet Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Zinnia angustifolia Star Orange

Profusion Orange

Zinnia elegans Blue Point Eldorado

Oklahoma Mix

Persian Carpet

Zinnia Bonita Red

The Best and the Worst Annual Flowers of 1999

There were some real standouts in the annual flower trials this year as well as some very visible duds. Fortunately, the list of winners far exceeds the losers. Below is our list of plants worth trying followed by those to avoid. The list includes all the losers you will not see in the Garden next summer, but only a selection of the large number of annual flower winners. Expect a more extensive review in our upcoming Annual Flower Trials Report. We would also be interested in hearing from our readers about their own winners and losers. Please send your list to the address on the back of the Review, and we will share them with others in a future edition.

Winners

Ageratum ‘Red Top’ (Johnny’s)— 10–21–inch plant, excellent for cutting, beautiful two–toned flowers of reddish purple and burgundy

California Poppy ‘Buttermilk’ (Thompson & Morgan)— beautiful creamy yellow flowers all summer

Calendula ‘Pink Surprise’ (Thompson & Morgan)— outstanding pink/light orange color, needs less deadheading than most

Centaurea ‘Alaska’ (Burpee)— giant, pure white bachelor’s button–type flowers with very ornamental, netted flower buds, blooms late, but worth the wait

Chilean Glory Vine ‘Fireworks’ (Unwins)— excellent annual vine that grows as well as scarlet runner bean, beautiful glossy green, finely segmented foliage and very ornamental rose and orange flowers, great addition to our small list of vines

Mexican Sunflower (*Tithonia*) (Seeds of Change)— very showy orange flowers, large plant up to 60 inches tall, great with sunflowers

Pansy ‘Rococco’ (Seeds of Distinction) and ‘Masterpiece Mix’ (Harris Seeds)— very ornamental ruffled edges, dark faces

Pansy ‘Oliver Twist’ (Seeds of Distinction)— unusual purple and yellow bicolor flowers with dark red face

Petunia ‘Dramatica Hot Pink’ and **‘Dramatica Cherry’** (Ball Seed)— certainly were ‘damatica’, huge mounds of flowers more than two feet tall, looked great all summer, even in the rain

Phlox ‘Starry Eyes Mix’ (Burpee)—outstanding mix of flower colors in pink, red, rose, white, lavender and cream with white markings, looks like stars

Polygonum ‘Pink Punching Balls’ (Johnny’s)— very unusual ground cover annual with dark reddish green leaves topped with pink balls of flowers

Salvia ‘Splendissima’ (Thompson & Morgan)— truly splendid, very tall 18–to 22–inch scarlet flower spikes, holds up well all summer, little maintenance needed

Statice ‘Sirima Pastel’ (Shepherd’s)— outstanding statice for dried arrangements in pastel pinks, purples and lavender

Stock ‘Legacy Mix’ (Thompson & Morgan)— the very best, long-blooming stock in the GBG, 12– to 24–inch stalks of pink, lavender and white flowers

Sweet William ‘Red Monarch’ (Stokes Seeds)— very showy in mid to late summer, outstanding red color, mounds of flowers up to 27 inches tall

Viola ‘Four Seasons Golden Yellow’ (Park Seed)— eye–popping bright yellow 20–inch mounds, excellent full–season color

Zinnia ‘Bonita Yellow’ (Thompson & Morgan)— profusion of dusky yellow flowers on 15– to 27–inch stems, outstanding mass display all summer (in contrast, the ‘Bonita Red’ cultivar was not nearly as floriferous and colorful)

Zinnia ‘Profusion Cherry’ and **‘Profusion Orange’** (All America Selections)— 12–to 18–inch compact mounds covered with brilliant shiny flowers all season, a no maintenance plant

Losers

Agrostemma ‘Purple Queen’ and **‘Ocean Pearls’** (Johnny’s)— bloomed early, weak and floppy stems, disappeared by midsummer, might be good in flower mixes where other flowers take over later in the season, but should not be planted alone

Centaurea ‘Dairy Maid’ (Thompson & Morgan)— interesting yellow bachelor’s button flowers but very weak stems and poor cover, died out in July

Carnation ‘Lillipot Mix’ (Twilley)— interesting blue–green foliage, but poor flowering all season

Chrysanthemum ‘Charmer’ (Johnny’s)— looked like wild chamomile, only taller, very ragged appearance, nothing charming about it

Coreopsis ‘American Dream’ (Thompson & Morgan)— shorter than advertised, tiny, pink flowers, barely taller than foliage, not showy

Eucynide ‘Golden Tassel’ (Seeds of Distinction)— never flowered

Gypsophila ‘Lady Lace’ (Johnny’s) and **‘Covent Garden’** (Harris Seeds)—tiny flowers in early summer, short lived, dead by mid summer, may work well in seed mixes with other flowers that take over later in the season, but should not be planted alone

Mesembryanthemum ‘Lemon Soda’ (Seeds of Distinction)— hot pink flowers, not yellow as advertised

Poached Eggs [*Limnanthes douglasii*] (Thompson & Morgan)— tiny, yellow and white flowers on very weak, sprawling stems, poor cover, died out in July

Poppy ‘Burnt Orange’ (Thompson & Morgan)— blink and you missed the blooms on this one, dead in June

Salvia ‘Salsa White’ (Harris Seeds)— poor flower development, older flowers were a dirty brown, not attractive, little reblooming

Silene ‘Pink Pirouette’ (Thompson & Morgan)— bloom time was very short, all but one plant died by July 1, the remaining plant bloomed through July, but looked very lonely in a bed of brown, dead plants

Scabiosa ‘White Perfection’ (Seeds of Distinction)— finally had one bloom in mid September

Snapdragon ‘Powy’s Pride’ (Thompson & Morgan)— variegated yellow and green foliage looked ‘sick’, not a robust plant

Zinnia ‘Desert Sun’ (Thompson & Morgan)— poor flower development, not showy

All America Selections 2000

Nine varieties won top honors as All America Selections winners for 2000. They included four flowers, one bedding plant and four vegetables. We tested some of the varieties in the Garden this summer. Benary Seed's cosmos '**Cosmic Orange**' won for its compact growth habit, pest and disease resistance, and great flowers. In the GBG, it certainly performed better than the other varieties of *Cosmos sulphureus*, but its appearance was still very ragged. Serious deadheading was required to keep it looking nice. By the end of the season, it had few flowers and plenty of not-so-pretty seed pods.

The dwarf **Mexican sunflower, 'Fiesta del Sol'**, also from Benary Seeds, didn't hold a candle to its normal sized cousins. The plants were tiny, about 12 inches in height rather than the advertised three feet! The plants were dwarfed by neighboring sunflowers, had few flowers and little ornamental appeal. We will plant them in another location next year to give them a better test.

Benary's **sunflower, 'Soraya'** won rave reviews from Garden visitors. This is the first sunflower to win an AAS award. The six- to eight-inch heads had golden orange petals and large, chocolate brown centers. The long stems made them perfect cut flowers. It had abundant flowers on 64-inch stalks beginning the end of July.

Sakata Seeds won AAS honors for '**Melody Pink**' **dianthus**, an outstanding cultivar that was covered with medium pink flowers from mid June through September. The long stems on 29-inch plants were great for cutting, and the flowers had a nice spicy fragrance. Minor deadheading was needed in late summer. This cultivar is the best of the 2000 AAS winners for Alaska gardens. All the pictures advertising this variety show coral pink flowers, but instead, the flowers are true light rose pink.

We tested two AAS vegetable winners, both from Seminis Vegetable Seeds. The **cabbage, 'Savoy Express'** matured early and produced nice, compact heads. It was not a good keeper and has its best market for fresh salads. **The garden pea, 'Mr Big'** was chosen an AAS winner for its large, 4-inch pods and high yield. At the GBG, it was 'nothing special', according to Grant Matheke. It produced nice pods, but other standard varieties yielded better.

The AAS bedding plant winner for 2000 was **rose periwinkle 'Stardust Orchid'**. This plant won for its unusual orchid-colored flowers and compact mounding growth habit. Periwinkles as a group, never grow well in our cold soils, and this cultivar was no exception. The tiny five-inch plants had just a few tiny blooms, certainly not worth the effort.

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