

Flashy newcomers

Showoffs for your 1993 garden

by Debbie Wallis Landau
special writer

The standouts in your 1993 garden are just as likely to be new varieties of trusted old favorites as they are to be new exotic blooms.

Local greenhouse owners, always sensitive to the desires and growing trends of their public, haven't stopped at flowers this year, either. Some of their favorite picks are in the vegetable family.

Dave Smith, Jr., manager of Clyde Smith's in Westland, specializes in locally grown produce.

"The tomato plants you can cultivate today are superior in flavor, texture and performance to those of yesteryear," he says. "Many second- and third-generation people come in still remembering their parents and grandparents touting the merits of the old Beefsteak Tomato."

He buys seeds from Stoke Seeds in Canada for three varieties — Ultra Sweet Ultra Sonic and Ultra Magnum — he claims "put the flavor and performance back." The consumer who buys grown produce is often at the mercy of grocery stores, Smith says.

"You can't control when the produce is picked. Often they are picked before they are ripe and color is injected into them," he says. "Growing your own, on

the other hand, permits you to harvest to your taste."

Fiona Brinks, greenhouse sales and florist manager for Bordines in Rochester, sells a six-pack of tomato seeds and a new assortment of hot peppers.

"People into gourmet cooking and food trends love these," she claims, saying the packet contains seeds for jalapeno, serrano and red chili peppers and other spicy choices.

"Many of our customers mix flower and vegetable gardens," she says. One of her favorite flowers is *Pendulous Blue Lantana*, a lavender blue offering which blooms all summer and does beautifully with geraniums.

Brinks says she is also getting more prairie flowers, as consumers opt for a wild, less cultivated look.

One perennial Mike Bovio, greenhouse manager for English Gardens in West Bloomfield, likes to recommend *Veronica Sunny Border Blue*, with deep blue flowers and large leaves.

"It's hardy for our ever changing climate, can adapt to different soils and full sun. It's very nice planted in combination with *echinacea purpurea*," Bovio says.

"I like it for its ornamental effect." Bovio is purchasing new varieties of hosta for shady areas. It's a perennial

which works nicely with ferns, has an attractive combination of foliage and texture and is low- upkeep.

For one single, best selling plant, Smith is continually pleased with *impatiens*. Although this greenhouse manager supervises the growing of plants in his nursery, he insists, "You just don't get the beautiful large mass of flowers in other plants. Not only are they low maintenance, but come in every imaginable color you could desire."

Two new varieties of *impatiens* he is excited about are the *Super Elfin Swirl*, which comes in 18 new shades, and the *Bi-Color*.

"Last year, we presented the *Dazzler* and will be repeating it again because it sold well," says Smith.

A new variety of *zinnia*, called "*Tropicana*," comes in rose, blush and pink.

"It's very heat and draught tolerant. It can even be used in an area where hot sun bakes the brick. This variety is much stur-

dier than its predecessors were, and also lasts a longer season."

Although people associate *petunias* with high maintenance, Smith is confident that some of the newer varieties like *Dreams* and *Grandeflora* are better performers than their ancestors.

"Yes, they do like sunny, moderately moist conditions these newer blooms have more disease-resistant properties. They are also known to grow more bushy instead of that tall, lanky and more fragile appearance of older varieties."



Beautiful blooms - Flowers like this jaunty 10-inch-tall "Little Witch" narcissus are a cheerful addition.

Your Home and Garden



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