

GARDENING

These plants for the new year are winners

GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

Another new year is upon us! Time to scour the plant catalogs that are filling our mailboxes, get out the photos we took last year of the garden so we wouldn't forget (hope you remembered to do that), reconfigure the garden on paper and decide on replacement plants.

It might be time to try something new, so here are some winners that may be just the thing.

An annual, trailing *Sutera cordata* "Snowstorm," commonly called "the snowflake plant," has been awarded the Guinness World Record for the largest and longest of its kind ever grown, slightly over 6-1/2 feet long.

This news comes from Proven Winners, an international marketing cooperative dedicated to developing new hybrid color varieties that will perform well.

The common name is appropriate because of the abundance of petite white blooms that are as prolific as falling snow.

AAS winners

All America Selections has chosen several bedding plants as winners.

Look for Portulaca "Margarita Roita" with semi-double rose flowers. Plant in a sunny spot or patio container and enjoy the flowers for many months.

Eustoma "Forever Blue" is great for those who wish to grow blue flowers. The plant is dense with a branching habit and blooms profusely. It's also great for containers.

Nicotiana "Avalon Bright Pink" is a dwarf with many star-shaped blooms. The pastel pink color will light up any garden as a border plant or in a container.

"Ring of Fire" is a 5-inch sunflower with golden petal edges and a ring of deep red surrounding the chocolate brown center. It's a late bloomer but worth it. Grow it in full sun and look for it to reach 4 to 5 feet in height, spreading 2 to 3 feet.

The zinnia "Profusion White" has captured the AAS gold medal flower award. It has a long-flowering season and is the only white zinnia with 1 1/2-inch, single, daisy-like flowers. It's disease resistant and resists powdery mildew. Easy-care, it needs no pinching or pruning.

AAS has chosen these four vegetables as the best for 2001:

Tomato "Jolly" produces cherry-type, deep pink tomatoes that are peach shaped and grow in grape-like clusters. I predict the

children will love 'em.

Sweet corn "Honey Select" has wonderful flavor and quality. Because this hybrid contains two endosperm types, any gardener can grow this corn without concern about other corn plants and pollen.

An onion, "Super Star" is the first hybrid onion to win the AAS award. This onion is a sweet one and is adaptable to spring growing conditions. It can also be grown in the fall, when mild, short days prevail.

The onion is great raw or grilled, as is the pepper "Giant Marconi," which is exceptionally good when grilled. To ensure the pepper blossom end doesn't touch the soil, AAS suggests using an organic mulch to prevent rot caused by contact with soil.

For more information about these and other plants, log on to all-americaelections.org

Look for these

When you're shopping for plants, here are a few to look for:

"Storm Petunias" are extremely weather tolerant; pink, lavender and salmon are the colors. Great for sunny beds or patios. Also, dianthus "Strawberry Super Parfait," with a scarlet eye, and "Raspberry Super Parfait," crimson with a darker eye.

These are produced by Goldsmith, the company that brings many other new plants to the



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Parfait treat: "Strawberry Super Parfait" is a new dianthus for 2001.

nursery, such as "Summer Sizzler" marigolds, "Accent" impatiens and "Accord/Banner" pansy — "Black Beauty" is a knockout.

Those of you who grow flowers, vegetables and herbs from seeds should request a catalog from Renee's Garden. They offer seeds for 182 varieties, and the catalog is a work of art. Call toll-free (888) 880-7228, or fax (831) 335-7227.

For rose lovers, the second USA Edition 2001 David Austin rose catalog is now available. It's a beauty, as are the roses! They are breeders of new roses, specialist growers of English roses, old roses, shrub, climbing and modern roses. The plants will be shipped from Texas.

Call toll-free (800) 328-8893.

GOOD GARDEN TIPS

■ When ordering seeds, check your list several times so you don't over-order.

■ With the snow we've had this winter, rabbits, mice and other gnawing rodents may find your trees and shrubs quite a treat. It may be worth your while to put a protective cylinder of wire mesh to protect the tree. (Extend it a foot above snow level)

I saw a little mouse come from a tunnel of snow on the garage roof, scot down the brick wall and eat a tasty bit of bird food right outside the kitchen window last month.

■ Spray your outdoor Christmas decorations with an anti-desiccant early this month to prolong the beauty.

■ Spray it on rhodios, boxwood and other broad-leaved evergreens late this month, when the temperature is above freezing.

■ Don't miss Scott Kunst and his program, *Antique Gardens: American Home Landscapes, 1800-1940*, 6:45 p.m. Monday, Jan. 15, presented by The Community House Garden Club of Birmingham. Call (248) 644-5832.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then 111, then 3445. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.

GARDENING CALENDAR

Does your garden club have an upcoming event or meeting you want publicized? Send items for consideration in *Gardening Calendar* to Ken Abramczyk, *Observer* Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or e-mail kabramczyk@oe.com or homecomm.net. To send a fax, call (734) 591-7279.

MATTHAEI

LEARN ABOUT HERBS

An herb study group will meet 7-9 p.m. Monday, Jan. 8, in Room 125 at the University of Michigan, Botanical Gardens, 1800 Dioxboro Road in Ann Arbor. (Enter in the west end of the building). This month's program will be a presentation on Hydroponic Herb Growing by Harley Smith of East Lansing.

Anyone interested in herbs is welcome. For further information

please call J. Schellhaas at (734) 763-1029 or e-mail jschell@provident.net.

FLORAL FUN

ARRANGEMENTS

Several workshops are scheduled at Keller & Stein Florist and Greenhouse, 42158 Michigan in Canton. Reservations are needed for the

workshops. Each workshop costs \$10 per person, and is non-refundable. Classes are scheduled at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. The classes include: poodle arrangement workshop, Saturday, Jan. 20; silk spring flower arrangement workshop, Saturday, Feb. 24, and herbal workshop, Saturday, March 17. Call (734) 397-0800.

Telethon raises money for animals

Join animal-loving celebrities as they pledge their support for homeless animals noon-5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 21, on WKBD-UPN 60 at the Michigan Humane Society Telethon 2001.

The station's "Ten O'Clock News" anchors, Amyr Makupson and Rich Fisher, will join colleagues Harry Hairston, Jim Madaus, Leslie Lobue, Sherry Christian and Jerry Millen in hosting the event. WJR's Michael Barr, WYCD's Jyl Forsyth, WDRQ's Jay Towers and radio personality Karen

Dallessandro will feature adoptable animals from MHS shelters. Comedienne Vicki Lawrence will co-host the five-hour telethon.

Viewers will meet several special animals, now enjoying better lives with new owners, along with dozens of adoptable pets. Every hour the telethon will feature chances for viewers to win prizes.

The MHS Telethon 2001 is sponsored by Pet Supplies Plus, General Motors and Charity Motors.

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