

New for 2016! Of late, those seem to be the opening words in every advertisement that I view. Whether on television or visiting gardening websites or when I'm paging through the many mail order seed catalogs arriving daily, the word **NEW** is emphasized. I must admit whenever I hear or see that word I do pay closer attention. Why? I'm not sure. Perhaps you're like me.

Have you ever wondered why we consumers are so fascinated when something is advertised as new? My attraction to new things affects me in many ways. Not only am I interested in what's new in horticulture, but every year I anticipate seeing what's new in the automobile world. I'm intrigued when new gizmos in technology become available, and it's kind of fun to see what's new in the fashion world although I'm certainly no clothes horse.

When something is new, we generally think of it as not existing before now. It is here for the first time. Conversely, new may already have existed, but it is still new when we personally experience or acquire it for the first time.

Every year a prestigious organization proclaims to the gardening world new vegetables and new flowers. For 2016 this foundation declared eight new winners. Although these eight are not actually new genus/species, they are new varieties. This institute has been hyping new winners since 1932. Their goal is to foster the development, production and distribution of new and better horticultural and agricultural varieties in and for North America. The name of this organization is AAS, better known as All America Selections.



For years, I have been promoting AAS. The fact is winners selected by this organization are superior new annual flower and vegetable plants recognized for significant achievements – a promise of gardening success. Only the very best varieties receive this prestigious award. All AAS winners have been tested for home garden performance in more than sixty independent test sites, each under the responsibility of an AAS judge, all over the United States and Canada. Gardeners can rely on AAS winners to perform in their gardens because of these unbiased, independent tests. Most of the time only one to three flower varieties and the same number of vegetables receive this award each year. This year there are eight national winners, including six vegetables and two flowers. The 2016 winners are the following:

1. **AAS Flower Award Winner: Geranium 'Brocade Cherry Night'**
2. **AAS Flower Award Winner: Geranium 'Brocade Fire'**
3. **AAS Vegetable Award Winner: Japanese Mustard 'Red Kingdom'**
4. **AAS Vegetable Award Winner: Pepper 'Cornito Giallo'**

5. AAS Vegetable Award Winner: Strawberry Strawberry Delizz® F1

6. AAS Vegetable Award Winner: Tomato 'Candyland Red'

7. AAS Bedding Plant Award Winner: Tomato 'Chef's Choice Green' F1

8. AAS Vegetable Award Winner: Pepper 'Escamillo'

Look for the red, white and blue winner logo of All-America Selections on seed packets in retail stores, plant tags on bedding plants in garden centers and nurseries, or in mail-order catalogs. For awesome high resolution photos and complete descriptions of these eight outstanding winners, I encourage you to log onto the AAS website at <http://allamericaselections.org/>

With all this hype regarding new, does that equate to out with the old and in with the new? I certainly hope not. If that were the case, Rita would have traded me in for a newer model years ago. There is still something to be said about the old. Let's face it, we're all getting older at the same rate of speed. Some of us just got started a little earlier.