

2021 ALL AMERICAN SELECTIONS

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More people gardened this past year as they had more time to spend at home and in their yards. Hopefully this will continue and now is the time to start garden planning.

Putting a plan on paper helps reduce over or under-planting and assists gardeners in selecting plants that perform best and have fewer pest issues; as will record keeping at the end of each growing season.

At this time of year we are thinking about what to grow. With all of the different types of plants and plant cultivars to select from, it can be overwhelming deciding which ones to try.

If you're new to gardening, ask a local gardener what works well for them. But know that one person's treasure might be another's junk, even when it comes to plants.

Another option is to watch for plants that have been designated All American Selection winners. Garden catalogs, seed packages and plant tags are labeled with the AAS logo to help identify these.

They are cultivars tested at trial gardens across the United States. One of the trial gardens is our own Backyard Farmer Garden on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln East Campus which is open to the public to visit.

To be designated an AAS winner, a plant must have a unique characteristic compared to similar varieties, be widely adapted, and proven to be a top notch plant.

While it's easiest to watch for the AAS logo when shopping, you can find a list of all of the winners on the All American Selection website. The list dates back to 1933; and yes, many of these cultivars are still available.

While current year winners can sometimes be a challenge to find initially, here are the 2021 winners. For vegetables, they are Crème Brule shallot, Pot-a-peno jalapeno and Goldilocks acorn squash. The names of AAS winners makes them even more fun to grow.

Crème Brule is the first shallot designated an all American selection. It's easy to grow from seed and sweet tasting with coppery pink skin and rosy-purple flesh. Goldilocks acorn squash has bright orange fruit, is high yielding and has good disease tolerance.

Pot-a-peno jalapeno has a compact growth habit and matures earlier than other jalapenos producing many small, green jalapeno fruits. If left on the plant, the fruit ripens to red and develops a sweet, spicy flavor.

Flower winners for 2021 are Kelos®Candela Pink Celosia, Sweet Daisy™Birdy Shasta Daisy and Profusion Bicolor Zinnia. See what I mean by AAS names?

This Celosia is referred to as an energizer bunny that keeps on blooming with bright pink upright and tapered blooms. The Shasta Daisy is a hardy perennial with large white flowers that have feathery petals and blooms earlier than other Shasta Daisies.

Zinnia Profusion Bicolor is the first plant since 2004 to be named a gold medal winner. It is a bicolored form for the popular Profusion Zinnia series. Profuse blooms start out vibrant red and golden, then age into soft shades of salmon and dusty rose for long season color.

Source: All American Selections