

All-America Selections for 2014: National and Regional Winners for Outstanding Garden Performance[®]

Diane Blazek

All-America Selections, 1311 Butterfield Road, Suite 310, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515-5625, USA

Email: dblazek@aat-nsb.org

Eugene K. Blythe

Mississippi State University, Coastal Research and Extension Center, South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station, Poplarville, Mississippi 39470, USA

Email: blythe@pss.msstate.edu

Ten cultivars became All-America Selections (AAS) National Award Winners for 2014. All-America Selections includes a network of over 75 trial grounds all over North America where new, never-before-sold plants are “Tested Nationally and Proven Locally[®]” by skilled, impartial AAS judges. Only the best performers are declared AAS Winners. Once these new varieties are announced as AAS Winners, they are available for immediate sale and distribution.

An additional nine plants were selected as All-America Selections (AAS) Regional Award Winners for 2014. With heightened public interest in locally produced products and recognition that some plants can truly perform well in specific regional climates, AAS has established awards for plants with superior regional performance. Regional winners undergo the same trialing process as national winners.

THE AAS NATIONAL WINNERS FOR 2014 ARE AS FOLLOWS

***Angelonia angustifolia* Serenita[™] Pink F₁ Angelonia**

Elegant yet tough plants bring long-lasting color with very little maintenance. Plants look beautiful in mixed combos on the patio or create a soothing sea of soft color in the landscape. Plants are heat-tolerant and deer and rabbit resistant. Plants grow 12-14 in. tall by 12-14 in. wide and perform best in full to part sun locations in well-drained soil. This angelonia is tolerant of dry conditions, so less water is needed. Bred by PanAmerican Seed.

***Capsicum annuum* ‘Mama Mia Giallo’ (F₁ Pepper)**

Plants produce very early-maturing, yellow, sweet Italian peppers. Long tapered fruits have an easy-to-remove skin. Peppers have a nice sweet flavor that is excellent either fresh, grilled, or roasted. Bright yellow/gold fruit are pendant on sturdy, dark green, bushy plants with excellent coverage from sunburn. The somewhat compact, 24-in. plants take up less space and feature disease tolerance to tobacco mosaic virus. Bred by Seeds By Design.

***Capsicum annuum* ‘NuMex Easter’ (Ornamental Pepper)**

Plants are compact, well branched, and uniform in size, displaying small clusters of 4 to 6 fruits on top of the plant in a range from lavender to light yellow and (when fully mature) a light orange. The colors of the fruit resemble the pastel colors of Easter eggs. Plants perform well in pots, on patios, or for outdoor use. Bred by Chile Pepper Institute at New Mexico State University.

***Gaura lindheimeri* ‘Sparkle White’ (Gaura)**

Plants bring a touch of airy elegance to the garden with long slender stems sporting a large number of dainty white flowers tinged with a pink blush. Plants are perfect for mass planting in sunny landscape beds, in groupings with other perennials, or in larger containers. This season-long bloomer has excellent heat tolerance and a more uniform

flowering habit than other seed gauras. Commercial growers can utilize ‘Sparkle White’ as a first-year flowering perennial or as an annual. Bred by Kieft Seed.

***Impatiens hawkeri* Florific® Sweet Orange (F₁ New Guinea Impatiens)**

Plants produce masses of large, uniquely bicolored flowers in shades of light salmon to deep orange. Naturally branching plants quickly fill beds and are perfect for planting ‘en masse’. With resistance to impatiens downy mildew, ‘Florific Sweet Orange’ is an excellent alternative for shade gardens where the disease is a concern. Bred by Syngenta Flowers.

***Osteospermum ecklonis* Akila® Daisy White’ (F₁ African Daisy)**

Clear white flowers have a novel yellow center. Plants are easily grown from seed. Tidy, uniform plants produce non-stop blooms all summer long. Plants can continue blooming in the heat and have shown more drought tolerance than other African daisies. Bred by PanAmerican Seed.

***Petunia* × *hybrida* ‘African Sunset’ (F₁ Petunia)**

Plants produce an abundance of attractive, “designer color” flowers in shades of orange, an improvement over other orange petunias on the market. Plants grow evenly and uniformly in the garden and flower all season long. Mounded plants are 12 inches tall and spread up to 32 inches. Bred by Takii & Co., Ltd.

***Phaseolus vulgaris* ‘Mascotte’ (Bush Bean)**

The first AAS winning bean since 1991, this compact variety is perfect for today’s small-space gardens. ‘Mascotte’ is a bush type bean that produces long, slender pods that stay above the foliage for easy harvest. Plants produce white showy flowers for ornamental value during bloom time. Root system size is ideal for patio containers and window boxes. The French “mascotte” (like its English translation “mascot”) is a symbol of good luck and was chosen for the variety’s gardener-friendly habit. Bred by Clause Vegetable Seed.

***Solanum lycopersicum* ‘Chef’s Choice Orange’ (F₁ Beefsteak Tomato)**

Derived from the popular heirloom ‘Amana Orange’ (which matures late), ‘Chef’s Choice Orange’ produces tomatoes in only 75 days from transplant. Fruits have a bright, internal color and superior flesh taste and texture. Orange fruit color does not fade when cooked. Average-sized fruits are 12 ounces, but can weigh up to 1 pound. Large, 5-foot-tall, indeterminate plants have leaves that protect fruit from sunburn. Bred by Seeds By Design.

***Solanum lycopersicum* ‘Fantastico’ (F₁ Grape Tomato)**

This variety is an early-maturing, high-yielding grape tomato with late blight tolerance. Bred specifically for smaller home gardens, this determinate tomato variety will perform quite well in hanging baskets, container gardens, and in small gardens. Long clusters of sweet tasty fruits are held toward the outside of the plant, making them easy to harvest, plus the fruits resist cracking. This bush tomato produces nicely flavored, half-ounce, grape-shaped fruit with up to 12 pounds of ripe fruit per plant. Plants are best grown in a cage for support, or in a large patio container or basket. Bred by Pro-Veg Seeds.

THE AAS REGIONAL WINNERS FOR 2014 ARE AS FOLLOWS

***Capsicum annuum* ‘Giant Ristra’ (F₁ Chili Pepper) (Region: Mountain/Southwest)**

Plants produce a heavy yield of bright red, very hot, 7-inch chili peppers with the appearance of a Marconi pepper, but the spiciness of a cayenne pepper. Fruits can be enjoyed fresh, roasted, or dried. Bred by Seeds By Design.

***Cucumis sativus* ‘Pick a Bushel’ (F₁ Cucumber) (Regions: Heartland, Great Lakes)**

This pickling cucumber has excellent heat tolerant and can be picked at the gherkin or spear stage for processing. The large yields from semi-bushy plants can be enjoyed fresh in salads and slaws. Gardeners can grow plants either in the vegetable garden or in containers on the patio. Bred by Seeds by Design and W. Atlee Burpee & Co.

***Cucumis sativus* ‘Saladmore Bush’ (F₁ Cucumber) (Region: Southeast)**

The first cucumbers mature in 55 days after sowing seed. This semi-bush vines set additional sweet crisp cucumbers as long they are kept harvested. Plants exhibit good garden performance due to their multiple disease resistances. Cucumbers can serve a dual use, with fruits harvested when small for processing as pickles or harvested later for fresh slices or spears. Bred by Seeds By Design.

***Cucurbita maxima* ‘Cinderella’s Carriage’ (F₁ Pumpkin) (Regions: Southeast, Great Lakes, Mountain/Southwest)**

This bright reddish-orange pumpkin is the first hybrid Cinderella-type pumpkin on the market featuring a higher yield as well as powdery mildew resistance. Fruits are well suited for fall decorations and baking. Flesh is yellow, sweet, and has a nutty flavor. A surprising pale blue pumpkin may sometimes appear. Bred by Seeds By Design.

***Helianthus annuus* ‘Suntastic Yellow with Black Center’ (F₁ Sunflower) (Region: Great Lakes)**

These naturally dwarf, compact plants produce up to twenty 5- to 6-inch flowers per plant in three successive blooming periods. Plants will bloom in less than 65 days after sowing and can be enjoyed by gardeners as potted plants or in window boxes. Bred by Clause S.A.

***Raphanus sativus* ‘Rivoli’ (Radish) (Regions: Southeast, Heartland, West/Northwest)**

Plants have upright, healthy leaves with roots that are evenly colored and bright red. Interior texture is smooth and dense with bright white color, even when roots get large. Uniform roots are very round and about 1½" inches in diameter with exceptional quality and taste when picked young, but still tasty if allowed to grow a longer time in the ground. Bred by Bejo Seeds, Inc.

***Solanum lycopersicum* ‘Mountain Merit’ (F₁ Tomato) (Region: Heartland)**

A superior, all-around tomato for the Heartland, perfect for slicing and sandwiches. With a 4- to 5-week harvest window, dark red fruits grow on compact, uniform plants that offer good resistance to multiple diseases that are common to home-grown tomatoes. Bred by Bejo Seeds, Inc.

***Penstemon hartwegii* ‘Arabesque Red’ (F₁ Penstemon) (Regions: Heartland, Mountain/Southwest, West/Northwest)**

This exciting new hybrid provides superior garden vigor and flowering for USDA zones 6-9. Large, bell-shaped, red and white bicolor flowers adorn well-branched plants. Bred by Syngenta Flowers.

***Solanum melongena* ‘Patio Baby’ (F₁ Eggplant) (Region: Northeast)**

This very early and highly productive eggplant has a compact habit, making it a great choice for containers or in the garden. Harvest fruit at 2 to 3 inches. Fruits are delicious roasted or in dips and salads. Thornless leaves and calyxes allow for painless (and child-friendly) harvesting. Bred by PanAmerican Seed.

IN SUMMER 2014, TWO AAS NATIONAL VEGETABLE AWARD WINNERS WERE ANNOUNCED FOR 2015

***Lactuca sativa* ‘Sandy’ (Oakleaf Lettuce)**

‘Sandy’ produces a multitude of sweet tasting, frilly, dark green leaves, is disease resistant, and is slow to bolt. Bred by Seeds By Design.

***Raphanus sativus* ‘Roxanne’ (F₁ Radish)**

Roots have a uniform, bright red color and a creamy white interior, with a great flavor and no pithiness. Bred by Bejo Seeds, Inc.

IN SUMMER 2014, FOUR AAS REGIONAL VEGETABLE AWARD WINNERS WERE ALSO ANNOUNCED FOR 2015

***Brassica oleracea* ‘Hestia’ (F₁ Brussels Sprouts) (Regions: Southeast, Mountain/Southwest)**

This Brussels sprouts features a bright green exterior and smooth, dense yellow interior, with potential for a second season crop in many areas as this variety tolerates both warm and cool temperatures. Bred by Bejo Seeds, Inc.

***Brassica rapa chinensis* ‘Bopak’ (F₁ Bok Choy) (Regions: Northeast, Great Lakes, Mountain/Southwest)**

The first pak choi to receive an AAS award, plants mature early and the tender leaves and crisp sweet stalks have an excellent taste. Bred by Bejo Seeds, Inc.

***Capsicum annuum* ‘Sweet Sunset’ (F₁ Sweet Banana Pepper) (Regions: Southeast, Heartland, West/Northwest)**

These compact upright plants do not require staking and can be grown in a container, producing attractive, colorful, tasty peppers that can be enjoyed either fresh or canned. Bred by Seminis Vegetable Seeds.

***Cucumis sativus* ‘Parisian Gherkin’ (F₁ Cucumber) (Regions: Northeast, Mountain/Southwest)**

The numerous, black-spined, sweet-flavored cucumbers can be enjoyed fresh in salads and slaws, or picked at the midget size or small pickle stage for processing. Bred by Seeds by Design, Inc.

More information on AAS and AAS winners is available at: <www.all-americaelections.org or www.aaswinners.com>.