

2010 Garden Forecast

LIKE EVERY business sector, the American gardening industry has been affected by the world's current economic troubles. Many nurseries reported lagging sales in 2009, with gardeners being more frugal about their purchases and reduced demand for plants from landscape contractors. But there is hope for the future. "Up to several years ago, there was a lot of gloom-and-doom talk about how no one wants to garden anymore," says Marty Wingate, garden columnist for the *Seattle-Post Intelligencer* and author of several gardening books. "Now there is a real surge of interest in gardening again—especially vegetable gardening."

Will gardening make a healthy comeback in America in 2010? We talked to several horticultural professionals across the country to get their perspectives.

WHAT GARDENERS ARE LOOKING FOR

All the horticultural professionals agree that the biggest trend is growing edibles—driven by people wanting to save money by growing some of their own produce or those dedicated to the "locavore" movement who grow their own food so they know where it comes from.

Sandi Hillermann McDonald, president of Hillermann Nursery & Florist in Washington, Missouri, says, "We've seen great interest in edible gardening, not only in the old-fashioned vegetable gardens of our grandparents, but in square-foot [intensive] gardening and especially combination container gardens." McDonald predicts that gardeners will be seeking compact varieties of edibles, such as bush tomatoes and cucumbers and dwarf eggplants and peppers, that can be grown in containers. She is planning to capitalize on this trend by offering pre-planted combinations of edibles in containers. "We're going to stress the ease of growing your own food by offering these to our customers, along with recipes."

This burgeoning interest in gardening has brought many beginners to garden centers. Gardening has often been viewed

as a pastime for middle-aged people, but this may be changing. "The nurseries here in the Northwest had a great spring last year," says Wingate, "and they noticed a lot of young people coming in who didn't know the difference between a petunia and a zinnia, so there was a need to educate along with making the sales."



What's in store for the new year? More choices and a return to the fundamentals.

BY MARY YEE

In addition to vegetable gardening, many gardeners want to learn more about ways to garden in harmony with the environment. Janet Carson, an Extension horticulture specialist who heads the Arkansas Master Gardener program, says, "People have been asking for more programs on sustainability or 'green' gardens. Rain gardens, rain barrels, and low-input gardening are also popular newer programs for us."

In Arizona, landscape designer Scott Calhoun uses rainwater-harvesting techniques in the gardens of clients who want to maintain vegetable gardens and citrus trees. In other parts of the gardens, he relies on plants suited to the arid conditions of the Southwest that don't require sup-

plemental watering to thrive, including cacti and other succulents.

"One of the biggest trends is the increasing availability of new hybrid American plants," says Calhoun. "A lot of our agaves, for example, were once rare collectors' plants that can now be mass-produced because of tissue culture."


Calhoun also cites a design trend of using succulents for their bold forms in gardens outside the Southwest. "This is part of another trend of integrating succulents into gardens among other plants," he says, "instead of segregating them in their own part of the garden or in containers."

Plants that provide a long period of bloom are always in demand. At Williams Nursery in Westfield, New Jersey, partner Dave Williams has noticed that woody ornamentals that have been bred to flower multiple times during the year are very popular with his customers. "This trend began with the introduction of the Endless Summer® hydrangeas and Encore® azaleas a few years ago," says Williams. "We're starting to sell more Encore azaleas, although I'm not yet totally convinced as to their winter hardiness in New Jersey."

IT'S ABOUT THE PLANTS

With so many new gardeners in the game and economic recovery likely to be slow, 2010 looks to shape up as a year of getting back to basics.

"Over the last three years, I have noticed a change in what my clients want—for the better," says Calhoun. "People used to spend a lot of money on frills like spas and bars in the garden. They have dialed back on those things and gone back to plants and solving problems with plants."

"There's going to be loads more interest in beginning gardening," Wingate predicts. "People are going to start with what interests them most—usually growing plants for their flowers. But from there they'll broaden their horizons." 

Mary Yee is managing editor and art director of *The American Gardener*.

NEW PLANTS FOR 2010

Each year the plant industry introduces a lengthy list of new plants aimed at grabbing the gardener's attention. On the following pages, we've selected a variety of promising new plants to pique the interest of both beginning and seasoned gardeners.

Edibles



Dove hybrid melon. A super-sweet melon with five- to six-inch-diameter fruits weighing three to four pounds. (Park Seeds)



Purple Pak (F1) carrot. Eight-inch-long purple carrots with yellow cores. (Johnny's Selected Seeds)

More new vegetables

- **'Jumbo' green bean.** Stringless even at 10 inches. (Johnny's Selected Seeds)
- **'RSVPEA' pea.** Early variety that can grow in marginally cold regions. (W. Atlee Burpee & Co.)
- **'Skyphos' lettuce.** Heat-tolerant butterhead lettuce with attractive red leaves, grows up to eight inches in diameter. (Johnny's Selected Seeds)
- **'Sweetheart of the Patio' cherry tomato.** A determinate tomato ideal for growing in containers. (W. Atlee Burpee & Co.)



'Scarlet Empire' runner bean. A selection of a British heirloom with improved vigor and faster germination. Flavorful pods are long and stringless. (Thompson & Morgan)



'Catalogna' garnet stem endive. Red stems with bright green leaves and savory flavor. (The Cook's Garden)

'Golden' beet. Sweet mild flesh is golden and doesn't bleed like red-fleshed beets when cut or cooked. (Renee's Garden)



Echinacea 'Heavenly Dream'. This cone-flower has fragrant, white, four-inch blooms. Compact plants grow to two feet high. Zones 4–9, 9–1. (Terra Nova Nurseries)



Above: *Agave neomexicana* 'Sunspot'. A very hardy selection of variegated agave that grows to 12 inches tall and 20 inches wide. Zones 6–10, 10–5. (High Country Gardens)

Perennials



Penstemon 'Prairie Twilight' (beardtongue). Pink-and-white flowers bloom from early to midsummer on vigorous 22-inch-tall plants. Zones 4–9, 9–5. (Blooms of Bressingham)



Left: *Andropogon gerardii* 'Mega Blue' (big bluestem grass). This selection of a North American prairie native grows to over five feet tall, with gray-blue foliage that turns coppery in autumn. Zones 3–8, 8–1. (High Country Gardens)



Hemerocallis Jersey Earlybird™ 'Cardinal'. Bred by renowned daylily hybridizer Darrel Apps, this is the first in a series of early-blooming daylilies. Red flowers start blooming in May and continue for up to nearly 100 days. Pest and disease resistant and drought tolerant. Zones 4–10, 9–1. (Centerton Nursery)



Deschampsia caespitosa 'Pixie Fountain' (tufted hairgrass). This compact selection grows only two feet tall and forms feathery blooms in June. Zones 4–8, 8–1. (Jelitto)



Monarda didyma 'Purple Rooster' (bee balm). Deep purple flowers and mildew resistant. Grows to three feet tall on strong stems. Zones 4–10, 10–1. (Walters Gardens)



Disporum cantoniense 'Green Giant' (Chinese fairy bells). Evergreen collected by plantsman Dan Hinkley in China. Plants grow to six feet tall. Pink, white, and green bamboolike shoots mature to green. Fragrant white flowers bloom in spring on new growth. Zones 6–9, 9–5. (Monrovia)

More new perennials

- *Chasmanthium latifolium* 'River Mist' (Northern river oats). Plants grow 30 inches tall; both leaves and seedheads are variegated white and green. Zones 5–9, 9–1. (Great Garden Plants)
- *Coreopsis* 'Ruby Frost'. Bright red flower petals are widely edged with white. Plants grow about two feet high and three feet wide. Zones 7–9, 9–1. (Terra Nova Nurseries)
- *Gaillardia* 'Georgia Yellow' (blanket flower). Solid yellow flowers, compact habit. Heat and humidity tolerant. Zones 4–9, 9–1. (Athens Select)
- *Leucanthemum* × *superbum* 'Banana Cream' (Shasta daisy). Four-inch-wide, lemon-yellow flowers mature to creamy yellow and white. Compact plants grow to 18 inches tall. Zones 5–9, 9–1. (Great Garden Plants/Walters Gardens)
- *Pulsatilla vulgaris* 'Perlen Glocke' (Pasque flower). Low-growing early-spring bloomer with soft-pink, cupped flowers. Zones 5–7, 7–5. (Jelitto)

Retail Sources

- David Austin Roses**, Tyler, TX. (800) 328-8893. www.davidaustinroses.com.
- Great Garden Plants**, Holland, MI. (877) 447-4769. www.greatgardenplants.com.
- High Country Gardens**, Santa Fe, NM. (800) 925-9387. www.highcountrygardens.com.
- Jelitto**, Louisville, KY. (502) 895-0807. www.jelitto.com.
- Johnny's Selected Seeds**, Winslow, ME. (877) 564-6697. www.johnnyseeds.com.
- Park Seed**, Greenwood, SC. (800) 213-0076. www.parkseed.com.
- Renee's Garden**, Felton, CA. (888) 880-7228. www.reneesgarden.com.
- The Cook's Garden**, Warminster, PA. (800) 457-9703. www.cooksgarden.com.
- Thompson & Morgan**, Jackson, NJ. (800) 274-7333. www.tmseeds.com.
- W. Atlee Burpee & Co.**, Warminster, PA. (800) 333-5808. www.burpee.com.

Wholesale Nurseries

- Visit these companies' websites to find retail sources for their plants.
- Athens Select**, www.athensselect.com.
- Anthony Tesselaar Plants**, www.tesselaar.com.
- Bailey Nurseries**, www.baileynurseries.com.
- Ball Horticultural Co.**, www.ballhort.com.
- Blooms of Bressingham**, www.bobna.com.
- Centerton Nursery**, www.centertonnursery.com.
- Conard Pyle**, www.conard-pyle.com.
- Gardener's Confidence**, www.gardenersconfidence.com.
- Monrovia**, www.monrovia.com.
- Plant Development Services**, www.plantdevelopment.com.
- Proven Winners**, www.provenwinners.com.
- Spring Meadow Nursery**, www.springmeadownursery.com.
- Terra Nova Nurseries**, www.terranovanurseries.com.
- Walters Gardens, Inc.**, www.waltersgardens.com.

Annuals & Tender Perennials



Pennisetum setaceum 'Fireworks' (purple fountaingrass). Foliage is variegated pink, red, white, and green. Plants grow to 28 inches tall and bear burgundy-colored inflorescences. (Great Garden Plants)



Ipomoea batatas 'Midnight Lace' (sweet potato vine). Dark purplish, deeply lobed leaves have red venation. More compact and less aggressive than most sweet potato vines, growing eight to 10 inches in length. (Proven Winners)

More new annuals

- *Ipomoea* **Carnival™** (morning glory). Five- to six-foot vines bear a mix of large white trumpet flowers with pink or blue streaks. (Park Seed)
- *Cyperus involucratus* **Graceful Grasses™** **Baby Tut™** (umbrella plant). Grasslike plant ideal for small water gardens; grows two feet tall. Zones 8–11, 12–1. (Proven Winners)
- *Osteospermum* **Voltage Yellow™** (African daisy). A cool-season plant with improved heat tolerance. Yellow flowers bloom all summer. (Ball Horticultural Co.)
- *Phormium cookianum* 'Black Adder' (New Zealand flax). Burgundy-black spikes of foliage; grows to three feet tall. Zones 9–11, 12–1. (Anthony Tesselar)



Pretty Much Picasso™ hybrid petunia. Hot-pink flowers have contrasting lime-green margins. (Proven Winners)



Zinnia 'Profusion Yellow'. The first yellow in the Profusion series. Compact plants grow to 15 inches high and are heat and drought tolerant. (Park Seed)



Cosmos 'Rubenza'. Deep ruby-red flowers on three-foot-tall plants. Fleuroselect's 2010 Flower of the Year. (Thompson & Morgan)



Clethra alnifolia Sugartina® ('Crystalina' sweet pepperbush). Dwarf selection with dark glossy leaves grows about 30 inches tall and wide. Fragrant white flowers bloom in late summer to fall. Zones 4–9, 9–1. (Spring Meadow Nursery)



Rosa Princess Alexandra of Kent ('Ausmerchant' rose). Large, fully double pink blooms have a strong tea fragrance. Plants are compact, growing under four feet tall. Zones 4–9, 9–1. (David Austin® Roses)



Lagerstroemia indica Berry Dazzle® ('GAMAD VI' dwarf crape myrtle). Early-blooming fuchsia-colored flowers cover plants that grow to three feet tall with similar spread. Zones 7–9, 9–6. (Gardener's Confidence)

Trees & Shrubs



Quercus nuttallii Charisma® ('Mon Powe' Nuttall oak). Deciduous native selection has attractive chocolate-colored spring foliage that matures to green. Grows to 60 feet tall. Zones 5–9, 9–4. (Monrovia)



Syringa Bloomerang® ('Penda' lilac). Grows to a compact five feet tall and four feet wide. Fragrant purple flowers bloom in spring and again in midsummer to fall. Zones 6–9, 9–4. (Spring Meadow Nursery)

More new trees and shrubs

■ *Magnolia grandiflora* Baby Grand® ('STRgra' southern magnolia). Dwarf evergreen grows to 10 feet tall and wide. Zones 6–9, 7–1. (Anthony Tesselaar/Monrovia)

■ *Prunus sargentii* First Editions® Spring Wonder™ ('Hokkado Normandale' Sargent cherry). This hardy tree provides year-round interest: red-brown bark, pink spring flowers, and purplish spring foliage that turns dark green in summer and yellow, orange, or red in fall. Zones 5–9, 9–5. (Bailey Nurseries)

■ *Rhododendron Autumn Lilac*™ (Encore® azalea 'Robles'). Lavender-colored flowers bloom from spring to fall. Zones 5–9, 9–5. (Plant Development Services)

■ *Rosa* Sunny Knock Out® ('Radsunny' rose). Vigorous, disease-resistant plants grow three to four feet tall and wide; yellow flowers bloom from spring to fall. Zones 5–9, 9–1. (Conard Pyle)