



January 2010

## Plants of the Month

### **Zebrina, Wandering Jew 'Quadricolor'**

*Zebrina pendula* 'Quadricolor'

Iridescent leaves heighten the dazzle of this hanging houseplant. Add an array of pinks, ivory, silver and green, not to mention purple leaf underside, and you get quite a show. Give zebrina a bright sunny window. It will enjoy the heat. The farther it's moved from sunlight, the more color it loses and the more straggly it gets. Water moderately when it's actively growing, letting the top inch of soil dry out between watering, and it will give you better color. Pinch tips to encourage bushiness. You can easily start multiple 3" tip cuttings in spring when an old plant's base gets sparse.



### **'Winter King' Green Hawthorn**

*Crataegus viridis* 'Winter King'

Colorful berries that persist all winter are prized by gardeners. Most berries fade or quickly disappear down bird gullets. The berries of this Maryland native hit the trifecta: large for a hawthorn, brilliant red all winter, and not palatable to wildlife until the end of winter. As a bonus, it has good resistance to rust disease, which can disfigure hawthorn leaves and fruit. A small tree, 'Winter King' averages 20-35 feet with a spreading canopy covered in spring with corymbs (small bouquets) of white flowers. Thorns are fairly sparse. Plant this outstanding tree in spring in full sun and just about any soil as long as it's well-drained.



**Alocasia, Kris plant, African mask**

*Alocasia sandieriana*

The crisp contrast of exceptionally dark green and white makes Alocasia a clean, refreshing presence in the home. Its large shining leaves with bright white swooping in scallops along the edge suggest bat wings about to take flight. The flower simple but intriguing, white with a green spathe (like a Jack in the pulpit), followed by red-orange berries. All parts are poisonous. Long leaf stems arise from a rhizome which must not be buried in the soil or it will rot. Alocasia likes is warm and humid with rich, moist but well-drained soil. This plant can tolerate a position in moderate light to shade.



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