

July 2008

Plant Picks of the Month

Germander

Teucrium chamaedrys

In knot and herb gardens, Germander prunes into a miniature hedge. This versatile evergreen shrub also makes an excellent edging plant, its numerous spreading stems forming a neat mound about 12-15 inches tall. Its shiny, dark leaves with scalloped edges resemble miniature oak leaves. In June and July, rosy purple flowers attract pollinators. Crush the foliage and enjoy the aroma. Dried leaves and flowers are useful for wreaths and crafts. Germander likes well drained soil in full sun to partial shade. Pinch or shear stems after flowering to promote bushy, compact growth. As a bonus, Germander is deer resistant.



Blazing Star

Liatris spicata

Looking for a cut flower that stands up to heat, drought, and humidity? This 2-3 foot native perennial deserves a spot in sunny borders and meadows where it mixes well with coneflowers, coreopsis, and rudbeckia. Its deep purple flowering spikes rise above grassy-looking leaves to make a good vertical statement. Cut flowers last well--up to two weeks if stems are recut and fresh water added daily. Liatris is deer resistant and likes well drained soil. Flowers are magnets for bees and butterflies. Leave the tan, fluffy seed-heads for the birds to feast upon in autumn and winter.



Educating People To Help Themselves

Local Governments - U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating

Montmorency cherry
Prunus cerasus 'Montmorency'

One of the best fruit trees for Maryland homes, Montmorency deserves its wide popularity all over the U.S.. It is a rarity: a fruit tree that can be grown and yield edible fruit without spraying. Montmorency produces brilliant red cherries with firm yellow flesh. Considered a sour cherry tree and scrumptious in pies, Montmorency cherries sweeten up enough to be good eating right off the tree. Montmorency is semi-dwarf, about 15 feet at maturity, so cherries are easy to reach. It requires little pruning. Fast-growing, self fertile, with lovely spring flowers, Montmorency is a terrific addition to any yard.



Cleome. Spider Flower
Cleome hasslerana

Text and photo by Shelley McNeal

Cleome is a cheery old fashioned addition to the garden with its tall, 3-4' stems topped with spidery flowers in colors from white to pink to lilac. The airy flower heads of 5-6 inches or more sit atop graceful stems with thin leaves. A good background plant, Cleome is a no-fuss plant, easy to start from seed. It reseeds itself prolifically. This annual will grow in full sun to partial shade but requires ample moisture and fertility for vigorous growth. Vegetable gardeners sometimes grow cleome as a "trap crop" for Harlequin bugs to attract the bugs from their vegetables.



Have a pest or gardening question?

**Call The Home and Garden Information Center
1-800-342-2507**

www.hgic.umd.edu