



August 2010

## Plants of the Month

Sweet corn

*Zea mays* convar. *saccharata* var. *rugosa*

Is sweet corn envy setting in? It's not too late to plant a fast-maturing variety. Early May to early July, space seeds 9-12" and two to three feet between rows. It is important to plant at least 3 rows side by side for good wind pollination. Corn is a "heavy feeder." When plants are 12 to 18 inches high, side dress twice with ¼ lb. of 10-10-10 fertilizer or equivalent per 10 foot row and fertilize again when tassels appear. Removing suckers or side shoots is not necessary and actually decreases yield. Harvest when husks are green, silks are dry brown, and kernels are full size, white or yellow at ear tip and have a milky sap, not clear, when punctured.



Cinnamon Fern

*Osmunda cinnamomea*

For a vertical accent in the shade garden, cinnamon fern is a softly elegant, even statuesque, choice. Fiddleheads of this woodland native emerge tawny and hairy in the spring. They unfurl into medium green 2-4 foot fronds that are bipinnate. Their fertile fronds give them their name, arising from the center of each clump, so thickly covered with spore capsules that they show no green. Their cinnamon brown color suggests cinnamon sticks. In fall, fronds turn yellow. Wonderfully long-lived, cinnamon ferns will not tolerate prolonged dry soil but tolerant some drought once established. Sow spores as soon as they mature.



## **Million Bells**

*Calibrachoa* 'Million Bells'

Lush cascades of 1" blooms from this annual flower keep gardeners happy all summer. Once believed to be a petunia and still sometimes known as trailing petunia, calibrachoa has burst onto the gardening scene big time with the introduction of the Million Bells cultivars. Excellent in a hanging basket, Million Bells also shines in containers or beds. While height is 6-12", the tendrils can add as much as 20" in size. Full sun and consistently moist (but not soggy) soil elicits the best display. Shade significantly lessens flower production. Propagate by cuttings overwintered indoors, but do not sell because of patent rights.



**Do you have a plant or insect pest question? Call the Home and Garden Information Center 1-800-342-2507**