

# Marketing

MARKETING



# 2018 National Plant of the Year Program

We continue to create awareness and build demand for the most reliable and outstanding plants we offer through our awards program. Growers need plants that are easy to produce. Retailers need plants with strong sell-through. Consumers need plants with excellent garden performance. The answer to all three audiences is the National Plant of the Year program.

The Annual of the Year™ selection is based on these five considerations:

- Easy to grow – for both gardeners and growers alike
- Iconic – easily recognizable as a Proven Winners plant
- Readily available – no production or inventory issues
- Applicable for basket and container use
- Outstanding landscape performance

Candidates for Annual of the Year go through two rounds of internal voting before they are presented in an email survey to Proven Winners' audience of growers, retailers, broker representatives, gardening press and consumers for voting. The winner is announced at CAST (California Spring Trials) each spring.

## 2018 Annual of the Year™ – Supertunia® Bordeaux™ Petunia

Over 5,600 people voted for this dazzling beauty, solidifying its reputation as being one of the easiest, most striking petunias for container recipes. Try it once and you'll see why it's a longstanding favorite among growers and gardeners alike.



SUPERTUNIA® BORDEAUX™  
Petunia

## 2018 Perennial of the Year™ – Primo® 'Black Pearl' Heuchera

The jet black foliage and excellent vigor of this *H. villosa* hybrid coral bells is something everyone from the grower to the consumer will appreciate. It delivers a phenomenal performance in landscapes and combination containers all season long.



PRIMO™ 'Black Pearl'  
Heuchera

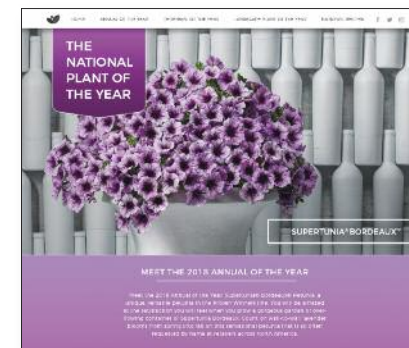
## 2018 Landscape Plant of the Year™ – Spilled Wine® Weigela

The broad, spreading habit of this purple-foliage selection is a new look for Weigela. Hot magenta pink flowers dot the wavy, dark purple foliage in late spring, making it an easy sell at garden centers when consumer traffic is high.



SPILLED WINE®  
Weigela

## Consumer Promotions



**www.nationalplantoftheyear.com –**  
We've devoted an entire website to the promotion of the National Plant of the Year to consumers. You'll find Supertunia® Bordeaux™ featured prominently there, along with fun ideas and useful information to help gardeners be successful with this special plant.



**National Print Advertising –**  
We'll create millions of impressions of Supertunia® Bordeaux™ in our 2018 national advertising campaign which has been diversified to reach a broader array of consumers across the U.S. and Canada.



**Gardener's Idea Book –**  
Supertunia® Bordeaux™ will be featured prominently in our popular *Gardener's Idea Book* which is distributed by request to 350,000 consumers annually.



**Social Media Coverage –**  
Supertunia® Bordeaux™ is an ideal plant to promote across social media channels with gorgeous photos of lush plantings and how-to videos to help consumers grow their own.



**Winner's Circle Newsletter –**  
Over 176,000 loyal consumers view our Winner's Circle newsletter each month, in which the 2018 Annual of the Year will be heavily promoted.



**2018 Calendar –**  
Supertunia® Bordeaux™ will be featured in this year's calendar to act as a daily reminder and inspiration for consumers.

## Retailer Resources



**Annual of the Year™ POP –**  
Merchandising your 2018 Annual of the Year display is simple when you use our signage. Use your points or credit card to purchase the 24" x 34" Annual of the Year poster and 11" x 7" benchcard to promote Supertunia® Bordeaux™.



**Annual of the Year™ Social Media and Web Graphics –**  
Proven Winners will be sharing information about the 2018 Annual of the Year through all our online channels this year. To make it easy for you, we've put together a collection of free graphics and photos to share on your own social media accounts and website. Go to [https://www.provenwinners.com/social\\_media](https://www.provenwinners.com/social_media)

# How We Support Our Independent Retailers

## 1 99% of IGCs Recommend Certification\*

Word is spreading among retailers about how the Proven Winners Certification Program can translate into increased sales. An all-time record of 891 garden centers, including 6,773 employees, completed our free staff training program in 2017. When you take advantage of this valuable opportunity by May 1, 2018, you'll earn a free pizza party too, just like this year's certified retailers.



**"I stand behind Proven Winners.**

Your website, brochures, classes and salespeople are at the top of my list for keeping up to date on the latest trends, knowledge of the plant material and growing requirements. Proven Winners offers an excellent training video and it is a requirement for all our salespeople."

**Valery Cordey**  
East Coast Garden Center,  
Millsboro, DE

### Could your business benefit from:

- FREE Knowledge** – Trained employees have greater sales potential.
- FREE Advertising** – Gain greater visibility with a priority listing on our Retailer Locator.
- FREE Resources** – Access our free photo library, social media graphics, and more.
- FREE Pizza** – Who doesn't like free pizza?
- FREE Rewards** – Every certified employee earns their choice of valuable free rewards.

Learn more about how your garden center can get certified at [provenwinners.com](http://provenwinners.com) or contact Sandy at [sandy@provenwinners.com](mailto:sandy@provenwinners.com) or 1-815-895-1872. Certification Program starts Feb 1, 2018.



### Bonus Content Exclusive to Certified Retailers

At the request of our certified retailers and retail advisory board, we've developed the Proven Winners University through which we offer additional exclusive content to further train garden center employees. A series of 21 short 2-5 minute videos is grouped into seven courses ranging from best watering practices to plants for pollinators.

These free training videos are available year-round and can be consumed at your own pace. Some garden centers have reported showing one training video at each weekly staff meeting, while others have asked employees to complete one course per month. Nearly 1,000 employees took advantage of this free bonus content when it debuted in Spring 2017, and we expect those numbers to grow this year.

## 3 Proven Signage Solutions

### Ready-to-Go

Popular pre-printed signage including posters, banners, benchcards and more is the fastest way to sign your store before opening day. All orders are shipped within 48 hours of placement. Don't miss our newly redesigned benchcards, square posters and recipe signage this year.



### Semi-Customized

Add your business' logo to our standard signage for an easy branded solution for all your POP needs. We'll ship it within a week of final proof approval. Use your new customized signage to create a Proven Winners destination within your store or order select pieces for special displays.



### Fully Customized

Let's work together to create signage that matches your store's style. You'll choose imagery that reflects popular plants in your region, add your logo and custom message. We'll take care of everything else so you'll be ready to sign your store in your own signature style.



Order ready-to-go signage at [provenwinners.com/signage](http://provenwinners.com/signage). Or get started on your customized POP for spring by contacting Tabatha at [tabatha@provenwinners.com](mailto:tabatha@provenwinners.com) or 1-601-527-5213.



Wedel's of Kalamazoo, MI needed to boost their sales of landscape shrubs, so we worked together to create customized signage for their new Proven Winners ColorChoice landscape hub. As a result, they experienced a **28%** boost in sales the very first year.

**"The Proven Winners SWAS program helped us to create a fun, focused destination in our store that recreated excitement in the shrub category."**

**Andy Wedel**  
Wedel's Nursery, Florist and Garden Center

# Share the #1 Resource of the Year: Gardener's Idea Book

## Let Us Work for You

Our passion is inspiring people with new ideas about how to use plants to make their world more beautiful. We continue to spread the word through our annual *Gardener's Idea Book* which reaches 350,000 people across North America. Chock-full of inspiring imagery backed by expanded content on [beauty.provenwinners.com](http://beauty.provenwinners.com), this little book is one of your best resources. 57% of retailers have reported that customers come in to their stores with the *Gardener's Idea Book* in hand and request plants by name.



## Customize Your Message

Add your marketing message to the back cover of the *Gardener's Idea Book* by March 15, 2018 for FREE and we'll mail them out for you – no charge for the books, you just pay the postage. Or make the *Gardener's Idea Book* your own by submitting your design ideas to us by January 25, 2018 and we'll print a fully customized back cover for your mailing list. Learn how customization can work for your business at [provenwinners.com/share-booklet](http://provenwinners.com/share-booklet) or contact Sandy at 1-815-895-1872 or [Sandy@provenwinners.com](mailto:Sandy@provenwinners.com).



## Order Extras for Giveaways

Gardeners love giveaways! Order extra cases of the *Gardener's Idea Book* to give away at your registers and events. At just \$65 + shipping for a case of 100 books, it's one of the most cost-effective ways to put actionable gardening ideas into the hands of your customers. Call 1-815-895-1872 or place your order online.



## Stay Informed

We're working far ahead on the next edition of the *Gardener's Idea Book* so we can keep you informed of key plants that will be featured this year. Look for the list of featured plants for 2018 on our website in early November so you can get your plant orders placed to meet the coming demand.

Some of this year's themes will include:

- Shade gardening with annuals and perennials
- How to choose plants on a limited budget
- Potager gardening using vegetables, herbs and flowers
- Rock gardening on a sunny slope
- Urban rooftop gardening



## Expanded Content on [beauty.provenwinners.com](http://beauty.provenwinners.com)

Did you know that nearly every subject presented in the *Gardener's Idea Book* is backed by expanded content online? You'll find fun project ideas, interactive content, plus links to related inspiration on Pinterest and YouTube. Be a resource for your customers by linking to and sharing this engaging content on your own website and social channels. Let your employees know about the fun project ideas being shown there, then stock the products your customers will need to complete them.



## Social Media Support



## Inspiring Content You Can Share

Professional quality, eye-catching social media graphics are available for your business to download and share. Select from images pre-sized for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Pinterest, or get creative and make your own using our free image library. A wealth of imagery is available at your fingertips to reach your online audiences. Here are a few examples of retailers who have shared our free content. Go to [www.provenwinners.com/social\\_media](http://www.provenwinners.com/social_media) to learn more.

## Garden Answer Videos

The popularity of Laura and Aaron of Garden Answer has exploded since we first introduced them last year. Currently, 1.8 million fans follow them on Facebook alone, viewing their YouTube gardening videos more than 16 million times. Some of those people are surely your retail customers.

Garden Answer creates exclusive video content for Proven Winners which our customers are welcome to share on their own social channels and websites. Keep up to date with their video content by visiting [provenwinners.com/Professionals\\_Garden\\_Answer](http://provenwinners.com/Professionals_Garden_Answer) where we post a list of their current projects and possible plants featured. Interested parties can sign up to receive an email notification whenever this page is updated. Instructions on how to embed their videos onto your page from YouTube is also included on this page.



# 50+ Million Timely Impressions

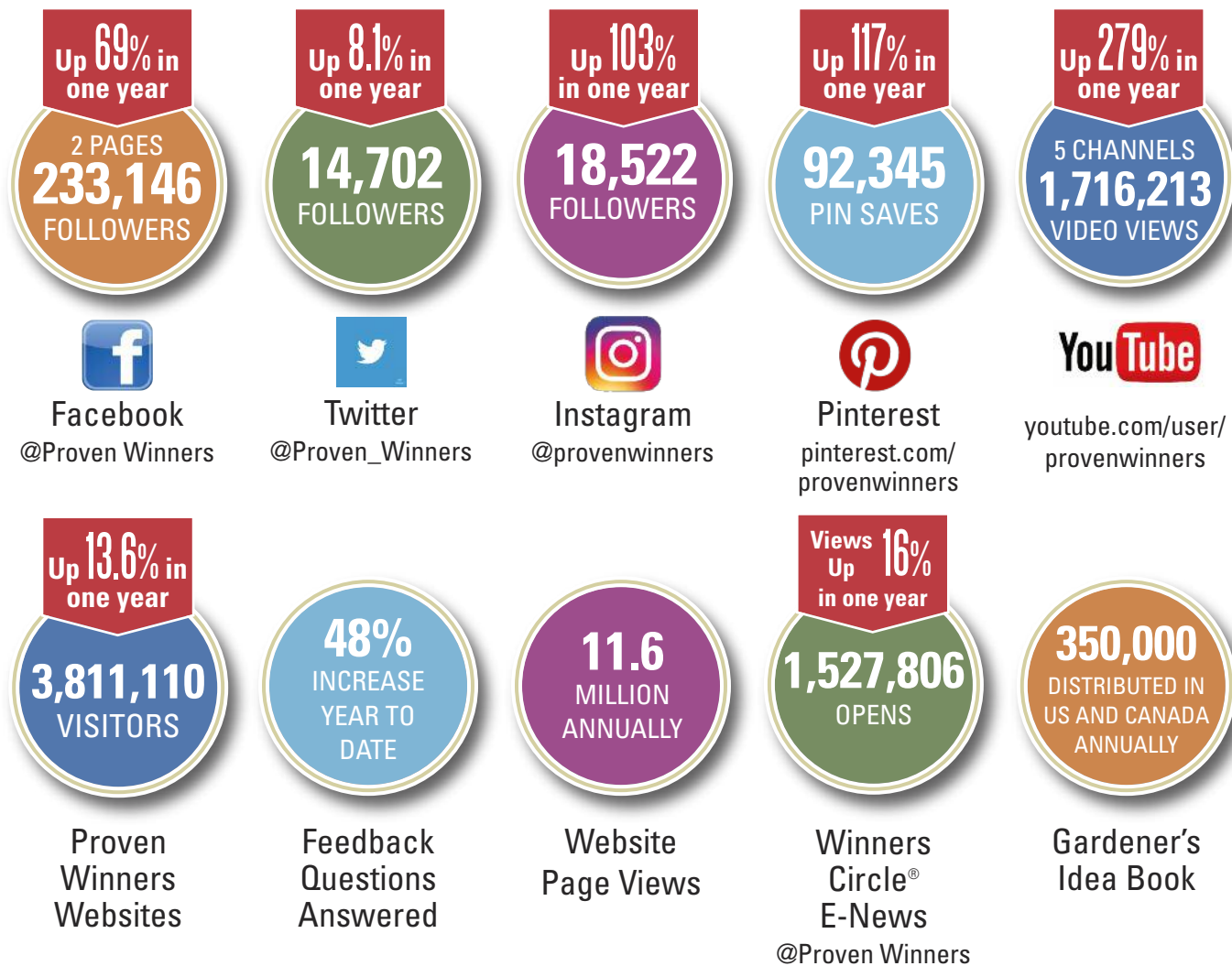


Billboard messages displayed each spring along the nation's busiest roadways remind consumers that it is time to head to their local retailer to find and plant Proven Winners. Check out all locations for 2018 next spring: [provenwinners.com/professionals/advertising](http://provenwinners.com/professionals/advertising)

## Reaching Consumers 24/7/365

Our dedicated social media team is working hard to reach more consumers than ever by studying trends, providing relevant content and creating attractive posts that appeal to all kinds of gardeners. Our video content has increased significantly over the past year as more consumers are preferring to learn by watching than by reading.

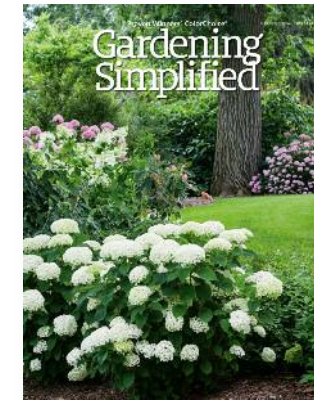
We keep our finger on the pulse of consumer trends by personally answering our fans' questions every day of the week. By listening to their concerns, we can respond by creating content that specifically targets the issues they care most about. Here is a snapshot of our broad-reaching efforts:



# Proven Winners® ColorChoice® Marketing

## Driving Consumer Demand

When you offer Proven Winners ColorChoice Flowering Shrubs, you're tapping into an extensive consumer promotion campaign that works every day to build trust and recognition of the brand. Count on us to take care of marketing so you can focus on getting high quality finished plants into the marketplace.



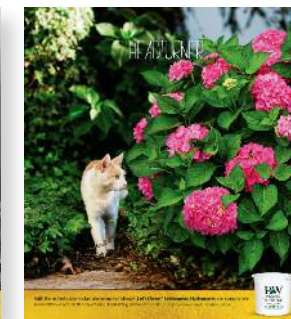
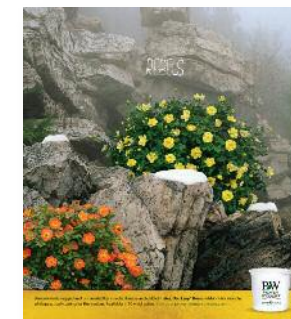
### Gardening Simplified –

This newly revised, 100 page shrub guide is filled with tips and how-to's, showcasing the entire Proven Winners® ColorChoice® collection. Free copies are available from Spring Meadow Nursery for your events.



### Sharable Social Media Content –

Inspiring visual content, which we encourage you to share, is posted every day on our social media channels. Our popular Let's Make a Garden video scored over 112,000 views on YouTube and 9 million on Facebook.



### 2017-2018 Consumer Print Ads –

New ads for Oso Easy® roses and Let's Dance® hydrangeas are making their debut. Proven Winners ColorChoice Shrub ads run year round in 10 National, 25 Regional, and 3 Canadian consumer magazines like *Better Homes & Gardens*, *Fine Gardening*, *HGTV*, and *Southern Living*.



### Shrub Madness® Competition –

Every March, we ring in spring with our Shrub Madness competition at [www.ShrubMadness.com](http://www.ShrubMadness.com). More than 89,000 votes were cast through six rounds of voting on 64 shrub varieties this year, crowning Tuff Stuff™ mountain hydrangea the National Champion.



### Pink Day Promotions –

Hosting a Pink Day is an opportunity to mobilize your community, build staff morale and fill your garden center with customers while raising money for the Breast Cancer Research Foundation. Contact Spring Meadow Nursery to work with them on planning your next Pink Day.



### Pandora® Internet Radio –

Pandora Internet Radio targets 26 million home and gardening enthusiasts while broadcast radio covers ten major markets in the U.S. and Canada.

# Stay Informed – Sign Up Today

## Don't miss our newsletters for growers and retailers.

Do you receive our monthly newsletters? Sign up today at [www.provenwinners.com/professionals/newsletters](http://www.provenwinners.com/professionals/newsletters).

Our **Grower Newsletter** includes videos on plant varieties and culture information, combination ideas, growing tips for a variety of greenhouse settings, trial garden updates, and event information.

Our **Retailer Newsletter** includes ideas from retailer settings across the U.S. and Canada, the latest in social media with links to ready to use graphics, new plant information, our popular Smart Shrub blog, and updates on our promotional efforts.

The screenshot shows the 'Professionals' newsletter page. At the top is the PW Proven Winners logo and the title 'Professionals'. Below the title are navigation links: Grower Website, Culture Search, Recipe Search, Professional Fertilizers, Branded Containers, National Combos, Gardeners Idea Book, and Landscape Plants. The main content features a video player for 'Graceful Grasses Prince Tut' with a play button icon. Below the video is a text block describing the plant: 'All the texture, half the size - Graceful Grasses Prince Tut'. Further down is a section titled 'Matching component vigor ratings in combination recipes' with a detailed paragraph and a numbered list of three tips. At the bottom is a section titled 'Top Ten Shrubs for Containers and Small Gardens' with a paragraph and two small images of flowering shrubs.

Grower Newsletter

The screenshot shows the 'Retailing' newsletter page. At the top is the PW Proven Winners logo and the title 'Retailing with Proven Winners'. Below the title are navigation links: CERTIFICATION PROGRAM, TOOLS FOR RETAILERS, WHAT'S NEW?, and SOURCES FOR FINISHED PLANTS. The main content features a social media section with the text 'Connect with us' and icons for Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Below this is a section titled 'The SMART Shrub series' with a sub-section 'Flowering Shrub Boot Camp' and a paragraph of text. Further down is a section for 'Magnolia Journal' with a paragraph of text and an image of the journal cover. Below that are four small images of garden displays. The next section is 'Never Underestimate the Power of Great Signage' with a paragraph of text and an image of a garden sign. At the bottom is a section with the text 'Need to spiff up your displays? Then check out our latest P.O.P. materials right here.' and an image of a garden display with a sign that says 'LET'S MAKE A GARDEN'.

Retailer Newsletter