

Proven Winners Certified 2020

Transcript



Introduction

Hi, my name is Dave Konsoer and I'd like to welcome and thank you for participating in the 2020 Proven Winners Certified Garden Center program!

If you didn't do this already, I'd like to suggest you hit the pause button on the video and print out a copy of the Certified Garden Center test so you can answer the questions as we move through the video – trust me, it will make things a little bit easier.

This will be my 19th year hosting this training program, and this year I'm more excited than ever! We've listened to your feedback from last year's program with a goal of making this as impactful as possible for you.

I'll be joined by some of my co-workers who will share their knowledge about our annuals, perennials, and shrubs. Specifically, they'll share some must-have varieties we feel will be difference-makers in your garden center, answer some frequently asked questions we have received from consumers, give you suggestions to attract pollinators to the garden and they'll offer tips for selling some of the new varieties you'll see in your store this season.

Then, I'm going to discuss a couple of exciting new programs that I know are going to be a hit with your customers, as well as some of our most impactful consumer marketing programs.

That's it in a nutshell! Grab your test, and let's get things underway!

Annuals

We know how important annuals can be for your business. That's why we want to help you focus on consumer trends, know answers to common questions, and feel more confident when selling at your garden center. With so many choices in Proven Winners Annuals, it can be hard to decide what to put in your spring line-up. Here are some of our essential varieties for this coming spring.

You may be familiar with Supertunia Vista Bubblegum, but have you ever been asked what makes a Supertunia a Vista? Supertunia Vista petunias are fantastic performers in the landscape, with mounding habits that can reach up to 2 feet in height. Like all of our Supertunias, they are great in planters, as well. These make gorgeous containers alone or in a recipe, just be sure your customers know that they are quite vigorous and play best with other robust plants. We are continuing to add colors to the Supertunia Vista line-up and are thrilled to introduce Supertunia Vista Snowdrift. This is a must-have color for this series. Simply put, it's everything you love about Supertunia Vista Bubblegum, but in white. A huge plant covered in self-cleaning flowers, even early in the season, that is sure to become a fan favorite.

Now customers may have questions about whether they need to cut back their Supertunia Vistas mid-season to encourage continued flowering. While that is often necessary with other petunia varieties, Supertunia Vistas will flower profusely without any deadheading or trimming.

With the addition of Rockin' Blue Suede Shoes, the Rockin' salvia series is now available in four striking colors, including Rockin' Fuchsia, Rockin' Deep Purple, and Rockin' Playing the Blues.

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The light blue flowers, black calyxes, and large habit of Rockin' Blue Suede Shoes will be sure to garner customer attention, but the added bonus are the pollinators they are sure to attract.

Hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees all love these plants, which make them ideal for pollinator gardens. With more and more interest in protecting pollinators, you're probably getting lots of questions from your customers about what they can do to support the movement? Home gardeners can help to support these populations by planting a diverse selection of pollinator-friendly varieties that provide pollen and nesting sources throughout the growing season.

If you want more information on Proven Winners varieties that attract pollinators, or information on how to create a Proven Pollinators display, check out Proven Winners University.

www.provenwinners.com/university.

If your customers are looking for maximum color impact with low maintenance, the Superbells® series offers an array of vibrant colors that flower all season long, with no dead heading required. Superbells are a great choice for hanging baskets, window boxes, or patio containers. Beautiful on their own, they are also a super choice when combined with other Proven Winners varieties. Joining the lineup for 2020 are Superbells Blackcurrant Punch and Superbells Dreamsicle Improved.

Superbells Blackcurrant Punch's abundant flowers have a deep black-eye and bright petal edges that are show-stopping, and their larger flower size ensures they won't get buried in recipes.

Superbells Dreamsicle Improved is an improved variety that takes everything you loved about Superbells Dreamsicle and makes it even better. A tighter, well-branched habit, and larger, more vivid flowers that bloom early make this a must have for summer and fall recipes.

Your customers might be asking if they can plant Superbells in the landscape. While it is possible for Superbells to work in the landscape when soil conditions are optimal, those conditions are variable from yard to yard, and even from bed to bed. This is the case with all types of Calibrachoa, so we suggest home gardeners let Superbells shine in containers and opt for Supertunia Vistas when planting in beds.

The popularity of self-cleaning double flowers continues to grow. This year we are introducing three new superbells double varieties: double blue, double orange, and double amber. These join our existing line of doubles that continue to grow in demand.

While we often choose the most vigorous varieties we can find, we recognize there is a need for smaller, more compact, and earlier flowering varieties. Consumers often want to decorate on tabletops and in centerpieces. That is why we have introduced our Superbells TableTop™ collection that is available in three outstanding colors: Blue, Red, and White.

Snowstorm

Our Snowstorm series has been completely upgraded for this season. Snowstorm, a longtime consumer favorite, has been enhanced with even larger flowers. Better spring and summer performance and a larger habit combine for great impact in the garden. Available in five colors: Snowstorm Glacier Blue, Snowstorm

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Pink Improved, Snowstorm Rose, Snowstorm Blue Improved and Snowstorm Snow Globe. These varieties perform great in containers, recipes and in the landscape. When you think Snowstorm, think versatility.

Some customers may shy away from all Sutera because they feel it lacks heat tolerance. Remind them that Snowstorm sutera are vigorous plants and need larger containers with ample soil to not wilt when drought stressed. While it may drop flowers and buds in high heat, it will bounce back as temperatures cool. Snowstorm will rebloom and give them weeks of performance into fall.

A number of great strides have been made in Pentas breeding. This allows growers in the North to easily produce Pentas under cool, low light conditions while continuing to demonstrate our commitment to expand our offering of heat-loving varieties. Sunstar Pentas come in four vibrant color choices: Pink, Red, Rose and Lavender.

We know your customers love sunflowers, so we are thrilled to bring you Suncredible. This everblooming sunflower boasts well-branched, bush-like habit that is perfect for the back of the bed, along a fence, or in a container. These iconic blooms do not need to be deadheaded to continue blooming, and Suncredible also makes a great plant for cut flowers. Gardeners can expect flowers all summer and well into the fall for a great seasonal pop of color.

Talk about checking all the boxes. Heat It Up Scarlet and Heat It Up Yellow Gaillardia are native plants that attract pollinators, are deer resistant, sterile, heat tolerant, and bloom all season long with no dead-heading required. With their bold colors the versatile Heat it Up Gaillardia are exciting new additions for hanging baskets, containers, and landscapes.

While we covered a number of the new introductions for 2020 in this certified training video, there is a wealth of additional knowledge available to you in our Proven Winners University track. Learn more about recommendations to attract pollinators, great plants for both northern and southern climates, merchandising tips, and much more!

Proven Harvest

When we launched Proven Harvest last season, our goal was simple: Offer incredibly flavorful, high yielding, disease resistant food crops to a new generation of gardeners who are eager to grow and share healthy food with the ones they love. We strive to bring you varieties that are unique and have a story to create an innovative vegetable program for your garden center.

These aren't your grandmother's fruits and veggies, and because of that, you have the opportunity to make more money while giving your customer a high-end product.

As a quick reminder, last year we introduced two highly flavorful, high yielding, and disease resistant tomatoes; Tempting Tomatoes Garden Gem and Garden Treasure. We also launched Berried Treasure Red Strawberry with huge double red ornamental flowers and ever-bearing tasty red berries. And last but not least, Amazel Basil, a groundbreaking Italian Basil that is highly resistant to downey mildew and yields huge leaves all season long.

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This season, we have two additions that will build upon the initial success of the Proven Harvest program. First is Fire Away Hot and Heavy pepper. This compact but heavily fruiting hot pepper has what can be best described as “smooth heat” – meaning, you feel the heat on your tongue, but it doesn’t set your mouth on fire and have you running to the fridge to get a glass of milk! Often showing an abundance of fruit at retail, Fire Away Hot and Heavy will catch your customer’s eye and have them dreaming of growing it in containers or in their traditional garden beds.

The second Proven Harvest introduction for this season is Tempting Tomatoes Goodhearted. This compact plant has a bit of a cascading habit and is best grown in a container or a hanging basket where they can conveniently pick the abundance of fruit produced all season long. The unique heart-shaped, cherry-sized tomatoes are fun, interesting, and incredibly sweet and delicious. Like Fire Away Hot and Heavy, Goodhearted flowers and fruits early, so you can even see fruit at retail!

This past season, many retailers had great success using Proven Harvest as an end cap or table display within their herb and veggie department. The six high performing varieties in the program, combined with the power of the Proven Winners brand, allows you to create a truly premium program to generate high turns and higher margins.

Heart to Heart Caladiums

A fantastic addition to the Proven Winners brand is our new Heart to Heart Caladium program. We partnered with the team at Classic Caladiums in Florida, the world’s largest breeder and producer of caladium bulbs, to introduce consumers to these stunning and versatile plants that never go out of color during the season!

We’re starting the program with 20 of Classic Caladiums’ cutting edge, eye-catching, and top-performing varieties. Gardeners are always looking for plants that perform in the shade, and all of the Heart to Heart varieties thrive and show non-stop color in shady locations! Even better, 9 of the varieties grow well in both sunny or shady gardens. Be sure to check the plant tags to note which varieties work in the sun!

One thing we love about Heart to Heart caladiums is their versatility. They can be used to create stunning landscape beds, thrillers in traditional container recipes, as a focal plant in a monoculture container, as a unique hanging basket, and even as cut-foliage in a vase.

And just look at the beautiful leaf patterns of some of these varieties.

For grower-retailers, Proven Winners Heart to Heart caladium bulbs will be automatically de-eyed to generate more leaves and will be painted on the top of the bulb to make planting faster. Both of these features will help ensure a uniform and high-quality crop that will aid in retail sales.

If you aren’t familiar with Caladiums, the biggest thing to remember is that they don’t like cold temperatures. Soil temperatures should be above 70-degrees Fahrenheit for Caladiums to look their best – you’ll notice the leaves and stems droop if it’s too cold. Which means for many northern retailers – it’s best not to sell them

until late May to help gardeners avoid late spring frosts. Other than that, caladiums are very low maintenance plants and should be pretty easy for any consumer to have success with.

So, for the customer that says, “I’m looking for something for the shade...”, or “I kill all my plants...” or “I’m busy and need something low maintenance...” you can confidently recommend Heart to Heart caladiums.

Perennials

Our perennial line continues to grow as new break-thru genetics are developed. Today, we’d like to share with you some new varieties, some pollinator friendly varieties, and also those that work well as ground covers. We also know that many gardeners are looking for perennials that are well suited for shade, so we’ll cover several of those as well.

- **Veronica MAGIC SHOW® ‘Wizard of Ahhs’** is the complete package in one, beautiful plant. This variety has gorgeous, violet-blue flower spikes tipped with lime green, and is one of the earliest veronicas to bloom, extending the sales window for the genus. Veronica are attractive to both bees and butterflies, making it a great pollinator-friendly addition to any gardener’s garden.
- **Sedum ROCK ‘N GROW® ‘Boogie Woogie’** is a new sedum introduction that has already skyrocketed to the top of our sedum list. ‘Boogie Woogie’ is a variegated *Sedum* with creamy leaf margins and clusters of bright yellow flowers that are displayed during June & July. Unlike many other variegated sedums, ‘Boogie Woogie’ is quite stable and maintains its beautiful foliage color!
- While Echinacea is not a new genus for Proven Winners®, the new **Echinacea COLOR CODED™ Collection** is unique because both varieties, Orange You Awesome and Yellow My Darling, are produced clonally from tissue culture rather than from seed. This ensures that all plants will have uniform habit and flower color, as opposed to a significant amount of variation when growing Echinacea from seed. Both colors were also selected for excellent branching and large flowers.
- The new **Achillea Firefly Collection** was selected for its tall, strong upright habit that won’t fall down at retail. The warm, summery colors sparkle in the garden just like fireflies twinkling on a summer evening.

We know that protecting pollinators and offering attractive habitats is important to many gardeners. Here’s a few varieties to help both gardeners and bees alike.

- Pollinators love ornamental onions, and bees will collect both pollen and nectar from them. **Allium ‘Serendipity’** is a brand-new sport of the award-winning ‘Millenium’, but with glaucous, blue-green foliage! Like ‘Millenium’, ‘Serendipity’ is considered to be ornamental and is not used for culinary purposes. ‘Serendipity’ is a perennial Allium, not to be confused with the bulb types such as Globemaster, which flower mainly in spring and go dormant in the summer. The foliage smells of onion, and is a great deterrent against hungry rabbits and deer.
- Last year we introduced **Nepeta ‘Cat’s Pajamas’**, the purr-fect Catmint for gardeners who want a smaller and more manageable plant. In addition to its smaller stature, ‘Cat’s Pajamas’ blooms two to

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three weeks earlier than Nepeta 'Cat's Meow', which allows retailers a longer nepeta selling season. Additionally, Catmint's aromatic foliage is a deterrent to both deer and rabbits.

We all know customers are looking for great performing shade loving plants.

- Hostas are a popular shade plant among gardeners due to their versatility in the landscape. The subtle coloration of foliage makes a great backdrop for other plants, and they grow well in city environments. The 'Shadowland' Collection includes ten gorgeous varieties that range in size from the smaller varieties such as 'Autumn Frost' and 'Waterslide', to the giant 'Empress Wu' and 'Wu-La-La'.
- **Athyrium 'Crested Surf'** is the first perennial fern in the Proven Winners® lineup. This fern has similar dramatic coloration to other Japanese Painted ferns, but with more vigor, more height, and unique double crested tips to each frond. Athyrium 'Crested Surf' is the perfect height at 20 to 22 inches for middle of the border areas in moist, shady woodland beds.
- Brunnera is a classic shade garden perennial, but the varieties on the market up to this point have often struggled in the height of summer due to heat, humidity, and foliar leaf spotting, leaving plants looking less than ideal as the summer wears on. These two new Brunnera selections have superior leaf-spot resistance and hold up well all summer long! **'Jack of Diamonds'** is similar in appearance to the old standby 'Jack Frost', but with huge 9 to 10 inch leaves. **'Queen of Hearts'** has a silvery overlay and heart shaped foliage.

Heucheras are a shade-loving perennial, prized for their unique, colorful foliage.

- **Heuchera PRIMO® 'Black Pearl'** is a large, landscape Heuchera. 'Black Pearl' was the Proven Winners® Perennial of the Year in 2018, and is prized for its scalloped, glossy, jet black foliage. This variety even grows well in full sun!
Heuchera DOLCE® 'Wildberry' is a more moderately sized. This variety works great in the landscape, but can be grown well in containers due to its smaller stature. Dolce 'Wildberry' has scalloped, glossy foliage, with an iridescent shade of intense purple that is really eye-catching!
- Goat's Beard is another perennial for shade that may not be as well-known, but has earned its place in the shade garden with its gorgeous sprays of lacy, cream colored flowers. **Aruncus 'Chantilly Lace'** flowers in late spring to early summer, and while the foliage is similar in appearance to Astilbe, it is significantly more drought tolerant. While 'Chantilly Lace' will also grow in full sun, it will be more compact when grown in the shade.

We often get questions about plants that work well as ground covers. There are several groundcover-type sedums that will spread fairly quickly, and are great in sunny & dry areas of the garden.

- **ROCK 'N GROW® 'Yellow Brick Road'** is brand new and has finely textured dark green foliage that is complemented by red stems and small yellow flowers. 'Yellow Brick Road' blooms in mid to late summer, bridging the gap between summer and fall flowering sedum.

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Sedum ROCK 'N GROW® 'Superstar' has an intermediate groundcover habit that will reach 10-12" in height. Sedum 'Superstar' is the perfect companion to other fall bloomers such as hardy garden mums, asters and Black-Eyed Susans.

Finally, **Sedum ROCK 'N GROW® 'Popstar'** rounds out the groundcover type sedums, sharing both the habit type and flowering time of 'Superstar'. Like 'Superstar', this variety also has a longer season of interest due to the dark pink seed pods that follow the blooms.

- Another great groundcover is the **Sprite Series** of hybrid spring phlox. Three colors make up this series, Magenta, Rose and Purple. While similar in appearance to Creeping Phlox, they don't spread as aggressively; forming a low, mounding habit covered with star-shaped flowers in early spring. All are about a week later to bloom than typical *Phlox subulata*, which makes them hit the benches at a better time, when more gardeners are apt to be shopping. These varieties prefer full sun but will also tolerate light shade and are a perfect companion to spring bulbs.
- Last but not least, the **'Paint the Town' Series** of Dianthus is a great low-growing plant for front of the border color. Two varieties, Fuchsia and Magenta, are outstanding for their bright colors, glaucous blue foliage and increased heat tolerance over other dianthus. One of the earliest dianthus to bloom, 'Paint the Town' dianthus are covered in flowers in early summer. They can be sheared after flowering to encourage a second bloom in early fall.

Shrub

Here are a few shrubs that we recommend you carry in your garden center this season:

- It's always a wise choice to carry the varieties that are included in the Proven Winners National Plant of the Year program. Our growers select the plants of the year based on ease of growth, wide geographic and cultural adaptability, and consumer appeal. Plus, we call special attention to the plants that are featured in the program each year with increased advertising exposure, assuring retail success.

Speaking of success, in upcoming consumer advertising, you'll see a beautiful image of the 2020 Rose of the Year, **Oso Easy Double Red®**, under the headline "thoroughbred". Reminiscent of the garland of roses presented at the Derby Winner's Circle, this floriferous, bright-red rose is definitely a winner.

Disease resistant and easy-growing, with an abundance of doubled blooms, it maintains a nice rounded habit, making it a favorite among growers and gardeners.

The 2020 Flowering Shrub of the Year is **Blue Chiffon® rose of Sharon**. The Chiffon® series of rose of Sharon is distinguished by its elegant habit, high flower count, and anemone-like double blooms.

Gardeners love blue flowers and Blue Chiffon® rose of Sharon has a true blue flower with a low seed set, so gardeners can feel confident this plant will stay put.

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- **Double Play Doozie® Spiraea** is our newest addition to the Double Play line and it's really a special plant. It's seedless, which makes it a perpetual bloomer, putting all of its energy into creating wave after wave of dark pink flowers from early summer through frost with no deadheading. It has beautiful deep green foliage with red tips in the spring, is disease and deer resistant and drought tolerant.
- Finally, the Invincibelle® series of *Hydrangea arborescens* are must-haves for any garden, such as the 2020 Proven Winners hydrangea of the year, **Invincibelle® Ruby**. Its deep, fully flowered buds open to a two-toned combination of bright ruby red and silvery pink.

Invincibelle Ruby, as well as six plants in the Invincibelle series, offer everything you love about smooth hydrangeas – they're super-tough, reliable rebloomers, and they always look good on your sales floor and in your customer's gardens.

Another very special member of the series is the **Invincibelle® Spirit II** *Hydrangea arborescens*. It's an improved version of the Invincibelle Spirit hydrangea with stronger stems and larger flowers that are a richer pink color, but it also has a very special purpose.

For every Invincibelle® Spirit II Hydrangea sold, one dollar is invested toward breast cancer research. This built-in cause marketing opportunity is the perfect way to bring more people into your business, and do good at the same time. How much good? So far we've raised one million dollars toward breast cancer research. But there is still work to do. Visit InvincibelleSpirit.net for a free kit that will help you host a Pink Day event at your nursery or garden center.

You may often get questions at your nursery or garden center about what plants make good pollinators. Here are some suggestions.

- Single-petaled flowers are great for pollinators – and one of our newest introductions, Ringo™ Rosa, is a perfect example. Its single-petaled blooms start out bright yellow with a red eye, then transition to soft yellow, then finally to white, with a pink eye. The effect when in full bloom is three colors of flowers all on the same plant! And pollinators will go straight for that bullseye of easily-accessible pollen in the center.
- The Pugster series of *Buddleia* is also a pollinator magnet. The series has been bred to offer full sized flowers on a compact habit and **Pugster® Amethyst Buddleia** epitomizes that, with extra-large, cool-purple, velvety flowers that are covered in butterflies all summer long. The entire Pugster® series also has thick, sturdy stems, so they are less brittle with improved winter survival.

You may be often asked, what are good shrub choices for season long color? I'll give you four suggestions.

- The flowers and foliage of the Gatsby series of native oakleaf hydrangea brings a beautiful array of season-long color. Take **Gatsby Pink® hydrangea**, it starts in spring with big, showy blooms which transform from pure white to a deep, true pink. Color develops early and persists through the season. In autumn, the dark green foliage turns mahogany-red.

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- Another member of our **Double Play**® series of *Spiraea Candy Corn*® is incredibly colorful. In spring candy apple red foliage transforms to pineapple yellow, contrasting with dark purple blooms. In the fall, that foliage turns brilliant orange – this has got to be the most eye-poppingly colorful spirea on the market.
- **Sugar Tip**® rose of **Sharon** has gorgeous, creamy-white and bluish-green variegated foliage with pure pink double blooms, delivering season long color wherever it's planted. It is also non-invasive and has a versatile, narrow habit.
- Finally, the 2020 Landscape Plant of the Year, **Gem Box**® *Ilex* maintains its color year-round, with small, dark, evergreen leaves that develop attractive red tips in spring. Gem Box is also an excellent boxwood substitute for those who live in areas that are experiencing boxwood blight.

When choosing plants, gardeners might look for anything from size of the shrub, to color of the flower, whether it is a pollinator attractor, or also they might choose plants based on their scent. Here are some great choices of shrubs that have fabulous scent.

- **Vanilla Spice**® *Clethra*, also known as summersweet, is a delightful, deer resistant plant with glossy, dark green leaves and pure white summer flowers, which emit a sweet fragrance that is reminiscent of root beer. This variety was selected especially for its extra-large flowers that are roughly double the size of others. Butterflies and hummingbirds love this North American native plant. If you're looking for something smaller, **Sugartina**® '**Crystalina**' is a dwarf *Clethra*, measuring just half the size with all the fragrance.
- Everyone loves shrub roses for their durability, but most shrub roses lack that classic rose fragrance. **At Last**® rose changes all that by offering lush, full flowers with a true rose scent. Its soft, apricot-peach blooms are self-cleaning and appear continuously on the plant without deadheading. Like all our roses, it has glossy, deep green foliage that stays free of black spot and powdery mildew.
- Finally, **Scentara**® **Double Blue Lilac** is a sure bet for unforgettable fragrance - in fact, it was selected for its powerful lilac scent. Scentara® Double Blue lilac also has very large flower clusters are made up of lavender-blue double florets that cover the plant in spring.

At Proven Winners Color Choice, we are always on the lookout and breeding for brand new and improved varieties. Everyone loves hydrangeas so I'd be remiss not to tell you about this brand new variety.

- Our newest hydrangea variety is called **Tuff Stuff Ah-Ha**® *Hydrangea serrata*. The lacecap blooms of mountain hydrangeas give you the same beautiful color story of bigleaf hydrangeas but with better bud hardiness, so they can withstand colder temperatures - but we've gone one better by adding reblooming to the mix. And Tuff Stuff Ah-Ha is one of our strongest rebloomers – a mature plant will have dinner-plate sized blooms that are almost always in flower during the season, which makes for great container presentation.

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- **Perfecto Mundo™ Double Pink *Rhododendron*** is another brand new variety that is changing the way we look at this vibrant, showy plant. Tom Ranney has bred our first entry in the Perfecto Mundo series to bloom from spring, all the way to fall, with a heavy set of richly-hued flowers. Even better, it is azalea lacebug resistant, and grows better in cooler regions with shorter summers. Plus its compact size makes it a great container plant or an easy add to established gardens.
- Finally, we're introducing 7 ornamental trees to be sold in the Proven Winners ColorChoice line. They've been selected for superior beauty, disease resistance, landscape-friendly size and habit, multi-season interest, and retail appeal.

Varieties include **Golden Shadows® Pagoda Dogwood, Avalanche® Asian Birch, Crusader® Hawthorne**, as well as two varieties of *Malus* and *Prunus*, both with very showy spring flowers which give way to colorful ornamental fruit.

We'll continue adding new trees to the line each year, and although supply will be limited initially, we're working toward making these new trees widely available. If you're having trouble locating stock in your area, please call your favorite tree supplier and express your interest.

Plants of the Year

I'm guessing many of you watching have heard of our Plant of the Year program. For those of you new to the program, for the past few years, we've selected an amazing variety from each of our plant categories to back with a tremendous amount of consumer promotion. This creates a ton of excitement and buzz from gardeners, and creates a low hanging fruit sales and merchandising opportunity for you in your store!

The plants of the year are never chosen at random – we survey growers, retailers and thousands of consumers – each sharing their favorite candidates. To reach this highest designation, Proven Winners annuals, perennials, and shrubs must meet a strict set of criteria for consideration, including:

- Being easy to grow.
- Being iconic and easily recognizable at a glance.
- Being readily available and easy for consumers to find.
- When applicable, perfect for containers of all sizes.
- And having outstanding landscape performance.

These amazing plants will be a main focus of our North American consumer marketing campaign and are backed by an informative website: www.nationalplantoftheyear.com. We also have eye-catching POP developed for all of the varieties, as well as pre-made social media and web graphics you can incorporate into your own local marketing activities.

Since Natalie share with you the shrubs and rose selections, let me tell you about our other National Plants of the Year for 2020.

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The Annual of the Year is the Diamond Collection of Euphorbia. This includes the ever popular and classic Diamond Frost with its airy habit and non-stop dainty white flowers, the super-sized Diamond Mountain that combines well with vigorous plants and makes a stunning and low maintenance statement in landscape beds, and the new Diamond Snow that has the same size and habit as Diamond Frost but with twice as many flowers.

Shadowland Coast to Coast is the Hosta of the Year and one of my favorite hostas, with striking gold coloration that really pops in the shade garden. The foliage emerges bright gold in spring and lightens over the summer, especially with more sun exposure. As the plant matures the foliage develops wavy edges and a nice thick substance that gives good resistance against slugs. Light lavender flowers embellish the vase shaped habit in mid-summer.

The Perennial of the Year is the stunning Denim 'n Lace Perovskia. This Russian Sage is the perfect addition to a garden in hot, dry areas. Flowering from mid-summer until mid-fall with strong stems and an upright habit, your customers will enjoy the beautiful blue flowers for a long time! Deer shy away from the aromatic foliage, and the flowers are attractive to bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

Don't miss out – use our resources and the power of our marketing campaign to build end-caps for these varieties in each respective department, or group all of them together in one large Proven Winners National Plants of the Year table display!

National Recipes

Another successful program we offer is our National Recipe program. These recipes have been extensively trialed and tested to not only look fantastic in the garden center, but to have all season performance for home gardeners. You'll see there are five recipes, allowing you to choose the genetics or color pallets that are best for your local market. Similar to our Plant of the Year program, these five recipes will be heavily promoted in the Proven Winners consumer marketing campaign, making this another easy sales and merchandising opportunity!

The five 2020 National Recipes are:

- Fruit Salad
- Sunglasses
- Neptune
- Storm Shadow
- And Gloria Rose, a colorful recipe for shady locations.

As a reminder, all of our national recipes and plants of the year are featured in the Gardener's Idea book which is mailed to over 500,000 gardeners annually.

Products for Retailers

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Soil and Plant Food

We invest many resources finding and developing award winning plants for gardens. And while having an outstanding plant is vital, we all know there's more that is needed to create a successful garden.

Many years ago, we developed a line of high-quality potting soil and plant foods for gardeners. Our professional grade potting soil is available in two sizes and includes a 6-month continuous release plant food mixed right into the soil. This well-draining mix provides the base for successful plant growth.

The next step for amazing looking plants is feeding them regularly. We have two options that make for an easy add-on sales opportunity that all gardeners should bring home from your garden center.

Our two-and-a-half-pound Premium Continuous Plant Food is a 6-month formulation and provides a base-level of plant food for the entire growing season. A tip I give gardeners is that this product acts as their insurance policy for when they forget to feed with water soluble plant food or if they go on vacation for a week or two in the heat of the summer.

And the must have item for every gardener buying plants in your store is our two-and-a-half-pound Premium Water-Soluble Plant Food. With a unique 24-12-18 formulation, including the EDDHA form of iron, this plant food will generate a generous growth of dark green foliage and an abundance of flowers.

Now, while we've had these items for a number of years, one thing we've struggled with has been distribution and the ease of ordering for garden centers. The exciting news is that these are all stocked items at 13 different distributors who regularly call on independent garden centers throughout the North America.

WaterWise

After building their containers with Premium Soil, premium plants and helping them grow with premium plant food, watering is next. We all know consumers are busier than ever and keeping up with watering their plants can sometimes take a back seat to work, kids, and everything else life throws at them.

Another add-on sales opportunity for you, built around consumer success, is our easy to use WaterWise drip irrigation system. I've used WaterWise for many years to water all of my hanging baskets and containers at home – it takes minutes to install, and by adding a simple timer, all of my plants get watered automatically.

AquaPots

And while we're talking about watering plants, I'm extremely excited to introduce you to our newest component to ensure consumer success, AquaPots by Proven Winners. AquaPots is a first of its kind line of luxury grade, glazed, ceramic, self-watering containers. After many years of testing, AquaPots combines an innovative and easy to use self-watering system with the stunning container designs from Michael Carr.

And speaking of Michael Carr, in addition to AquaPots, we have partnered with Michael Carr Designs Pottery to offer his entire line of stunning, high-end, glazed ceramic containers as part of the Proven Winners brand.

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By bringing AquaPots and Michael Carr Designs Pottery into your stores, you'll be offering your customers beautifully designed containers that not only make gardening easier but will enhance the look of your customer's home.

For a list of stocking distributors and to order any of these products, visit the Professional page at Proven Winners dot com. Then, navigate to the Retailers section.

National Marketing

Well, that about does it, but before we close, I want to remind you of all the marketing and support Proven Winners provides for each of the products we described. We will have over 100 billboards spanning North America – many of them being digital, which allows us to promote our National Plants of the Year. We will be running an extensive Pandora, print and radio campaign focusing on brand awareness and many of our popular flowering shrubs. And of course, we will be mailing copies of our popular Gardeners Idea Book to over 500,000 gardeners who've desired inspiration and tips from Proven Winners.

Lastly, our social media efforts are second to none in the world of gardening – from our popular social media channels on Pinterest, Facebook and Instagram, to the super popular efforts of Laura from Garden Answer.

For those of you who are managers, if you're not already plugged into our new CONNECT+ program, we'd love to discuss with you how we can help you further your local advertising efforts and partner with Proven Winners. We have loads of social media graphics, advertising campaigns, open house materials and more. For more information visit www.provenwinners.com/connect.

Closing

We hope you've enjoyed learning about our new plants and programs and found this year's training program helpful. We want to share with you some of the additional benefits you can receive by becoming a Proven Winners Certified Garden Center.

First, and most importantly, in order to become an official certified garden center employee, you need to complete and submit the test by May 1st. And remember, we're giving away a pizza party to every garden center across North America that completes this certification program on time! Submit your receipt within 6 weeks of completing certification to enjoy.

Secondly, every Certified Garden Center is able to choose from these additional benefits:

A free Proven Winners T-shirt or hat, or a \$6 credit towards Point of Purchase materials for every certified employee.

Thirdly, as a certified employee, you have exclusive access to bonus Proven Winners University content. We launched Proven Winners University a few years ago, and people that have watched the series of short educational videos have loved what they've seen and learned. Because we only have a short amount of time in this video, a large focus of Proven Winners University is sharing information about many of the other new

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annual, perennial, and shrub varieties. We also have many customer service and store set-up videos which I know you'll find useful.

Lastly, we want to reward those of you that are supporting Proven Winners via your commitment to learning even more than ever. Certified Garden Centers will receive a premium listing in our popular retailer locator at provenwinners.com. As a reminder, only Certified retailers will be shown in our expanded retail listing and on all our product pages. Those independent garden centers that have not become Certified will be grayed out and not have operable links to learn more about their business.

That about does it! A sincere thank you for taking the time to watch this program, and for your commitment to learning more about Proven Winners. Our partnership with you, and all of the other Independent Garden Centers throughout North America, is the basis for nearly everything we do at Proven Winners. On behalf of the entire Proven Winners network, thank you for your business, and have a great season!