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New Bedding Plants for 2014

Few activities are more motivating for the avid gardener on a dreary February day than poring over seed catalogs (and websites) wishfully thinking about the upcoming growing season. Each and every year seed companies unveil their very latest cultivars for our contemplation. This often makes the decision of what to plant somewhat of a quandary. Below is a description of a number of the new annual bedding plants for 2014 that should, in most cases, fare well in Missouri.

Angelonia 'Serenita™ Pink' (Angelonia angustifolia). 2014 AAS Winner. Elegant yet tough plants bring long-lasting color with very little maintenance. These look beautiful in mixed combos on the patio or create a soothing sea of soft color in the landscape. Heat-tolerant by nature, angelonia also is deer and rabbit resistant. Grows 12-14" tall by 12-14" wide.

Begonia 'Santa Cruz Sunset' (Begonia boliviensis). 'Santa Cruz Sunset' packs both flower power and bold color. It boasts a compact, upright habit during its early stages of growth, but as it matures, plants begin to cascade over edges of pots and baskets. Fiery bright red-orange, bell shaped flowers cover the entire plant, creating a lush tropical look. At maturity it averages 12-16" in height and spreads 16-20".

Calibrachoa 'MiniFamous™ Double Red' (Calibrachoa hybrida). MiniFamous Double Red has a semi-trailing habit with double blooms. This new "callie" looks great in hanging baskets or patio containers. It is both heat tolerant and low maintenance.

Celosia 'Arrabona Red' (Celosia plumosa). 'Arrabona Red' is a well branched plume-type celosia with a stunning new red-orange

bloom color. It tolerates drought and loves the heat. Exceptionally long-flowering in borders and containers, it is a great choice for hot, sunny areas.

Celosia 'Twisted' (Celosia cristata). 'Twisted' displays a unique bold color that is sure to catch your eye! Heat tolerant, it shows good all-season garden performance with low maintenance.

Coleus 'Kong Jr.' (Solenostemon scutellarioides). 'Kong Jr.' has huge foliage with unique color combinations. This "eye-catcher" is sure to add interest to shade garden beds and containers. Scaffold leaves create unique plant form.

Coleus 'Mighty Mosaic' (Solenostemon scutellarioides). This striking seed coleus has multicolored foliage for striking garden appeal. 'Mighty Mosaic' is a very late-flowering variety that is great in the shade but tolerates sun under high humidity. This new coleus meets gardeners' demand for longevity and versatility.

Corn, Ornamental 'Japonica Striped Maize' (Zea spp.). A beautiful ornamental pop corn from Japan, 'Japonica Striped Maize' grows 5-6 feet tall and boasts

variegated leaves striped with green, white, yellow and pink. It produces dark purple tassels and burgundy kernels or corn. Color development is better when plants are widely spaced. As an added bonus, the mature ears are sought-after by birds.

Cuphea 'Sriracha™ Violet' (Cuphea llavea). 'Sriracha' cuphea is a heat-loving plant that is compact, easy to grow and requires little-to-no maintenance when planted in the landscape. It is available in three vibrant colors: pink, rose and violet. 'Sriracha' should prove to be a totally new, eye-catching addition to any garden.

Gomphrena 'Pinball™' (Gomphrena hybrid). As the first vegetative Gomphrena on the market, Pinball™ stands apart for its strong mounding habit and vibrant color. Pinball has excellent heat and drought tolerance and delivers worry-free color

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all summer long. Unique flower form and intense colors make Pinball an excellent choice for mixed combination planters.

Hollyhock 'Spring Celebrities™ Apricot' (Alcea rosea annua). Hollyhock 'Spring Celebrities Apricot' has stunning double-to semi-double flowers. Not your ordinary hollyhock, 'Spring Celebrities Apricot' is dwarf and branching. It reaches a mature height of 32" and produces side shoots that also flower.

Hollyhock 'Spring Celebrities™ Rose' (Alcea rosea annua). Another hollyhock in the 'Spring Celebrity' series, this one has stunning double- to semi-double flowers that are rose in color. It, too, is dwarf and produces side shoots that also flower.

Impatiens 'Florific™ Red' (Impatiens hawker). Florific New Guinea impatiens is disease resistant and shade-tolerant. This new variety is a great alternative to regular impatiens. It features large, abundant blooms that provide superior coverage and color in pots or the landscape. The Florific™ series is available in several colors including lavender, red, violet and white.

Impatiens 'Florific™ Sweet Orange' (Impatiens hawker). 2014 AAS Winner. Florific Sweet Orange New Guinea Impatiens is perfect for brightening gardens or patio containers in partial to full shade. Plants produce masses of large, uniquely bicolored flowers in shades of light salmon to deep orange. Naturally branching plants quickly fill beds and are perfect for mass planting. Resistant to downy mildew, Florific Sweet Orange is an excellent alternative for shade gardens where the disease is a concern.

Impatiens 'SunPatiens Compact Red' (Impatiens hybrida). These remarkable plants represent a breeding breakthrough. SunPatiens is a robust, sun-loving, heat-loving New Guinea-type impatiens that thrives in full sun or part shade. It delivers continuous color from spring through hard frost. Unaffected by downy mildew, SunPatiens are an excellent alternative to seed impatiens, offering non-stop color and impressive coverage in the garden. With shorter internodes and exceptional branching for dense, bushy plants, the

Compact SunPatiens grow 16-32" tall and 14-24" wide in the landscape.

Mandevilla 'Sun Parasol Red Emperor' (Mandevilla hybrid). 'Red Emperor' is the latest addition to the Sun Parasol Giant Group, which features gorgeous, vigorous mandevillas with large flowers. Even more gorgeous than 'Giant Crimson,' 'Red Emperor' is a new premium mandevilla with highest number of large, striking red flowers. 'Red Emperor' plants have outstanding heat tolerance and disease resistance.

Marigold 'Narai Orange' (Tagetes erecta). Bred to withstand hot, humid conditions, 'Narai Orange' has extremely strong and stiff stems that form large and bushy plants that will not fall over with heavy rain. Also suitable as a cut flower it is excellent for bedding and landscape use. Plants produce many firm and large flowers. Blooms have unique deep orange color.

Marigold 'Pagoda Yellow' (Tagetes erecta). 'Pagoda' has large flowers that maintain their size even in hot summer conditions. Its light yellow flowers contrast nicely with its deep green foliage. The blooms are firm, ball shaped with strong stems. 'Pagoda' is an excellent choice for bedding and landscape application.

Ornamental Pepper 'NuMex Easter' (Capsicum annuum). 2014 AAS Winner. 'NuMex Easter' is a compact, well branched, uniform sized plant that displays small clusters of 4-6 fruits on top of the plant. Fruits range in color from lavender to light yellow and, when fully mature, light orange. The colors of the fruit resemble the pastel colors of Easter eggs—hence the name. This new variety is excellent in pots, on patios, or for outdoor use.

Pentas 'Starcluster™ Rose' (Pentas lanceolata). 'Starcluster Rose' pentas performs well in full sun and puts up well with heat and humidity. Its rich, vibrant large flower clusters are very appealing to humans as well as to bees and butterflies. In containers, 'Starcluster Rose' combines well with other sun loving annuals. With a mature garden height of 24" tall, Starcluster provides a solid show of color in landscape settings.

Petunia 'African Sunset' (Petunia x hybrida). 2014 AAS Winner. 'African Sunset' is a petunia with definite "wow factor". It bears "designer color" blooms in shades of orange that are unlike other petunias currently available. 'African Sunset' grows evenly and uniformly in the garden while producing a prolific number of blooms all season long.

Petunia 'Cha-Ching Cherry' (Petunia hybrida). This novel petunia bears delightful bi-colored blooms with striping of rich wine, pink and cream. It is perfect for today's decorative-minded gardener. 'Cha-Ching Cherry' makes stunning hanging baskets with tremendous appeal and shows equally well in mixed containers.

Petunia 'Flash Mob Bluerific' (Petunia hybrida). 'Flash Mob Bluerific' is superstar morn-pattern petunia that's great in containers. Early, mid-vigor plants mound and then trail resulting in huge shows of color in planters and baskets.

Petunia 'Sophistica Blackberry' (Petunia hybrida). 'Sophistica Blackberry' petunia offers shimmering black blooms with reddish-purple undertones. A part of the Sophistica 'designer collection' of petunias, Blackberry is nothing short of striking. The large, velvety-black blooms cover lush, upright plants for a show-stopping look. Plant 'Sophistica Blackberry' by itself, or contrast it with a bright, lighter colored petunia. It offers deep conversation-starting color whether in mixed containers, hanging baskets, or garden beds.

Petunia 'Supertunia Picasso in Pink' (Petunia hybrid). 'Supertunia Picasso in Pink' offers a unique pink bloom surrounded by a bright green edge. This variety is compact with a mounding habit and will make a striking focal point in any garden or patio container.

Petunia 'Surfinia Heavenly Blue' (Petunia hybrida). 'Surfinia Heavenly Blue' petunia is a gorgeous light blue. It represents an upgrade to the popular 'Surfinia Sky Blue' in terms of plant habit and garden performance. Plants are covered with a mound of gorgeous blooms that trail and spread.

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Petunia ‘Trellis Pink’ (Petunia x hybrida). ‘Trellis Pink’ represents another great petunia improvement. On plants that are upright growing and aggressive, it produces tons. It vigorous growth habit that lends itself to trellis production--the only petunia on the market that grows this way.

Petunia ‘Trilogy™ Blue’ (Petunia x hybrida). ‘Trilogy’ petunia gives gardens, containers and hanging baskets a blast of color. Plants cover themselves in flowers and continue flowering all season with minimal care. ‘Trilogy’ maintains its tidy, mounded appearance and has proven itself a stellar performer across the country. You’ll be amazed at the number of flowers ‘Trilogy’ produces!

Sunflower ‘Elegance’ (Helianthus annuus). Sunflower ‘Elegance’ produces smaller plants with big-time flower power. The compact, low-growing sunflower fills vase after vase with luminous, long-stemmed, brown-eyed, golden flowers. Heavy-branching, floriferous 20-30” tall plants will keep your home aglow with joyous blooms. Like all sunflowers, it is heat and drought tolerant.

Sunflower ‘Miss Mars’ (Helianthus annuus). ‘Miss Mars’ is one uncommonly gorgeous sunflower! This garden standout’s flowers, leaves and stems are suffused with dark-red-to-purple hues. Low-growing, vigorously branching, its flame-type blooms appear on top of 20-30” tall plants. Blooms boast merlot-colored ray petals that transition to a pretty pink.

Sunflower ‘Shock O Lat’ Hybrid (Helianthus annuus). Bold golden-tipped mahogany blooms up to 6 inches wide arise plentifully on this vigorous 6-foot plant. Pollen-free and very long-lasting, the flowers are excellent for fresh

and dried arrangements. This sun-loving annual is a bee and bird magnet, making it ideal for the annual flower bed as well as vegetable gardens.

Sunflower ‘Suntastic’ (Helianthus annuus). 2014 AAS Regional Winner. ‘Suntastic’ is a new dwarf sunflower perfect as a cheery long-blooming potted plant or window box accent. It also will add a burst of color to a sunny garden bed. Gardeners will love the number of flowers each plant produces: up to twenty 5-6” flowers per plant in three successive blooming periods. ‘Suntastic’ blooms in less than 65 days after sowing. By starting plants indoors, sunflower lovers can get this new variety in bloom early in the summer.

Verbena ‘Enduro Purple’ (Verbena hybrida). ‘Enduro’ verbena tolerates heat and powdery mildew better than most verbenas. It is quite hardy in the landscape and endures temperatures to the low teens for extended enjoyment summer through late fall.

Verbena ‘Lanai® Twister™ Red’ (Verbena hybrida). ‘Lanai Twister Red’ verbena is a unique flower pattern in a well-known class of summer flowering annuals. It was selected to be tough in the garden and to power-through for season long enjoyment. The red & white bicolor flower pattern colorfully fills containers and also generously fills landscape spaces.

Zinnia ‘Profusion Double Hot Cherry’ (Zinnia hybrida). 2013 AAS Winner. This new zinnia was recognized by AAS judges for holding its vibrant cherry red color throughout the season. It displays a compact growth habit and good disease resistance. A highly prolific bloomer, ‘Profusion Double Hot Cherry’ produces masses of 2” double flowers on mid-height

plants. It performs exceptionally well in gardens, planters and landscapes, due to its combined tolerance for both cool and hot, humid conditions. Plants mature 12-18” in height with a 16-24” spread.

Zinnia ‘Solar Flare Blend’ (Zinnia elegans). Yellow, orange and white flowers light up the garden with the heat of the summer sun. This mix of zinnias has large, long-lasting blooms that are great for cut flowers. It is equally suitable for containers or near the middle or back of the border for bright color. Easy-to-grow plants start blooming in early summer and continue to bloom until frost.

Zinnia ‘Zahara™ Sunburst’ (Zinnia marylandica). With big blooms and superior disease resistance, Zahara Sunburst assures a carefree, season-long show of color. Heat and drought tolerant, its unique orange-scarlet star pattern gets more pronounced as flowers mature.

Acknowledgement: National Garden Bureau

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March Gardening Calendar

Houseplants

- **Weeks 1-4:** Two handsome houseplants that provide fragrant blossoms indoors this month are the Confederate Jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*) and Japanese Pittosporum (*Pittosporum tobira*). Both thrive in average home conditions and are easy plants to grow.
- **Weeks 1-4:** As day lengths increase, plants begin new growth. Repot root bound plants, moving them to containers 2 inches larger in diameter than their current pot. Check for insect activity and apply controls as needed. Leggy plants may be pruned now.

Ornamentals

- **Weeks 1-4:** Trees, shrubs and perennials may be planted as soon as they become available at local nurseries.
- **Weeks 1-4:** To control Iris borer, clean up and destroy the old foliage before new growth begins.
- **Weeks 1-4:** Fertilize bulbs with a “bulb booster” formulation broadcast over the planting beds. Hose off any granules that stick to the foliage.
- **Weeks 1-4:** Dormant mail order plants should be unwrapped immediately. Keep the roots from drying out, store in a cool protected spot, and plant as soon as conditions allow.
- **Weeks 1-4:** Loosen winter mulches from perennials cautiously. Re-cover plants at night if frost returns. Clean up beds by removing all weeds and dead foliage at this time.
- **Weeks 1-2:** Heavy pruning of trees should be complete before growth occurs. Trees should not be pruned while the new leaves are growing.
- **Weeks 1-2:** Seeds of hardy annuals such as larkspur, bachelor’s buttons, Shirley and California poppies should be direct sown in the garden now.
- **Weeks 2-4:** Summer and fall blooming perennials should be divided in spring.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Ornamental grasses should be cut to the ground just as the new growth begins.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Spring bedding plants, such as pansies and toadflax (*Linaria* sp.), may be planted outdoors now.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Apply a balanced fertilizer such as 6-12-12 to perennial beds when new growth appears.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Apply sulfur to the soils around acid-loving plants such as azaleas, rhododendrons, hollies and dogwoods. Use a granular formulation at the rate of 1/2 pound per 100 square feet.
- **Week 4:** Gradually start to pull back mulch from rose bushes.

Lawns

- **Weeks 1-4:** Mow lawns low to remove old growth before new growth begins.
- **Weeks 2-4:** Apply broadleaf herbicides now for control of cool-season perennial and annual weeds. These must not be applied to areas that will be seeded soon.
- **Week 2:** Apply controls for wild garlic. It will take several years of annual applications for complete control.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Thin spots and bare patches in the lawn can be over seeded now.

Vegetables

- **Weeks 1-4:** Any root crops such as horseradish, parsnips, Jerusalem artichokes, or carrots still in the ground from last year should be harvested before new green top growth appears.
- **Weeks 1-4:** Cultivate weeds and remove the old, dead stalks of last year’s growth from the asparagus bed before the new spears emerge.

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- **Weeks 1-4:** Fertilize the garden as the soil is being prepared for planting. Unless directed otherwise by a soil test, 1 to 2 pounds of 12-12-12 or an equivalent fertilizer per 100 square feet is usually sufficient.
- **Weeks 1-2:** Delay planting if the garden soil is too wet. When a ball of soil crumbles easily after being squeezed together in your hand, it is dry enough to be safely worked.
- **Weeks 1-2:** Asparagus and rhubarb roots should be planted as soon as the ground can be worked.
- **Weeks 2-4:** Plant peas, lettuce, radishes, kohlrabi, mustard greens, collards, turnips, Irish potatoes, spinach and onions (seeds and sets) outdoors.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Plant beets, carrots, parsley and parsnip seeds outdoors.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Set out broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, Chinese cabbage and cauliflower transplants into the garden.
- **Week 4:** Start seeds of tomatoes, peppers and eggplants indoors.

Fruits

- **Weeks 1-4:** Gradually remove mulch from strawberries as the weather begins to warm.
- **Weeks 1-3:** Continue pruning apple trees. Burn or destroy all prunings to minimize insect or disease occurrence.
- **Weeks 1-2:** Continue pruning grapes. Bleeding causes no injury to the vines. Tie vines to the trellis before the buds swell to prevent bud injury and crop loss.
- **Week 2:** Cleft and splice grafting can be done now. This must be completed before rootstocks break dormancy.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Aphids begin to hatch on fruit trees as the buds begin to open.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Apply dormant oil sprays now. Choose a dry day when freezing temperatures are not expected.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Spray peach trees with a fungicide for the control of peach leaf curl disease.
- **Week 4:** Mulch all bramble fruits for weed control.
- **Week 4:** Peaches and nectarines should be pruned just before they bloom.

Miscellaneous

- **Week 1:** Red maples begin to bloom.
- **Week 1:** Set up nesting boxes for bluebirds.
- **Week 1:** Watch for the harbinger of spring (*Eriogonum bulbosum*) blooming in rich wooded areas.
- **Weeks 2-4:** Spicebush is blooming in moist woodlands.
- **Week 2:** Raise purple martin houses this week.
- **Week 3:** Purple martins return to the St. Louis area.
- **Week 4:** The white flowers of serviceberry (*Amelanchier* sp.) and wild plum (*Prunus americana*) are showy in wooded areas.
- **Week 4:** Watch for the fuzzy blooms of the pussy willow (*Salix* sp.).

Gardening Calendar supplied by the staff of the William T. Kemper Center for Home Gardening located at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri. (www.GardeningHelp.org)