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Only the Best for the Northwest

Eight new low-maintenance and high-impact perennials and shrubs for 2008 create spectacular, easy-care gardens.

By Sally Credille and Laura Drotleff

Spring is nearly here, and with its arrival comes a host of new and exciting perennials and shrubs which are ideal for the Northwest landscape. Whether you are novice or master gardeners, these plants offer low-maintenance options that are striking and unique. "Today's genetically superior perennials and shrubs can be used interchangeably in the landscape and container garden for maximum flexibility," says Linda Guy, new plant product development director for **Novalis Plants that Work**. "Gardeners can first plant them in dramatic container gardens and then transfer them to the garden the following year, or plant perennials *en masse* for an eye-catching display."

Gardeners in the Northwest have always been known for their stewardship of and great care for the environment. As attention turns toward more sustainable options in the horticultural world, more plant selections that cater to this concern are now available. "Many of today's perennials and flowering shrubs are bred for disease-resistance to reduce the use of harmful and often confusing pesticides," says Dan Heims, president and co-owner of Oregon-based **Terra Nova Nurseries**. "Heat- and humidity-tolerance also reduces wasteful watering, which is all too important today,

when concern for our resources is high and restrictions are common."

Plant experts like Novalis' Guy and Terra Nova Nurseries' Heims develop plants that are suited to the lush growing conditions of the Pacific Northwest, with proven tolerance for pests and the region's off-chance weather extremes. From their years of horticultural experience, Guy and Heims recommend these new varieties for fabulous, easy-care gardens throughout the Northwest:



Novalis® Plants that Work®

Gaillardia 'Commotion Tizzy'

Common name: Blanket Flower

USDA Zones: 5-9

Growing conditions: Grow in full sun with regular water, allow soil to dry fully between waterings.

Part of the revolutionary Commotion™ Series from the Northwest's own Skagit Gardens, and introduced exclusively by **Novalis Plants that Work** in 2008, 'Tizzy' is a vigorous grower with a manageable, mounding habit. Early in the season, 'Tizzy' offers red and burgundy tones, with hints of yellow. By summer's end, orange seeps into the red, making this variety a natural for fall planting. "This variety has a higher petal count per bloom, so it often appears as though it is semi-double," says Guy. 'Tizzy' reaches 18 to 24 inches tall with a 24-inch spread. Planted in the perennial border or in boldly colored containers,

Novalis® Plants that Work®

this plant's numerous blooms will provide color all season.

Hypericum 'Mystical Beauty'

Common name: St. John's Wort

USDA Zones: 5-9

Growing conditions: Plant in well-drained soil in full sun.

"'Mystical Beauty' allows gardeners to enjoy the same hypericum plants that were bred exclusively for the cut-flower industry," says Guy. "Beautiful, salmon-pink colored fruits on perfectly branched stems are lovely in the garden or in long-lasting bouquets." A large, red-berried form, 'Mystical Beauty' is also exclusively available from Novalis in 2008. This plant will fill the fall garden with interest and floral arrangements with lovely colored hips and bright yellow flowers in spring. Hypericum can be used as a specimen plant or in masses. 'Mystical Beauty' is rust-resistant and reaches a height of 30 to 36 inches.



Novalis® Plants that Work®

Lonicera nitida 'Edmee Gold'

Common name: Box Honeysuckle

USDA Zones: 6-9

Growing conditions: Grow this evergreen in well-drained, compost-rich soil with protection from afternoon sun.

Add a touch of gold to the shade garden with this new box honeysuckle. Equally at home in the perennial garden

or used as a specimen to infuse an area with color, 'Edmee Gold' throws layer after layer of golden branches with tiny, delicate leaves. "This shrub is so adaptable that it also can be used as a tall groundcover under large trees," says Guy. "It makes a very attractive addition to the winter garden with its bony, architectural silhouette." This native of China reaches four feet tall and wide in eight to 10 years.



Novalis® Plants that Work®

Weigela 'Shining Sensation'

Common name: Weigela

USDA Zones: 5-8

Growing conditions: Plant in moist, well-drained soil in full- to part-sun exposure.

A blooming machine, the pink, funnel-shaped flowers of 'Shining Sensation' engulf the plant in May and June, and then sporadically bloom through summer. Shiny, burgundy foliage appears polished and contrasts nicely with the pink flowers. Long, arching stems provide a handsome architectural element to the mixed border. "This shrub is often used in place of a traditional perennial," Guy says. "It is a true performer, offering months of blooms and

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New Plants for 2008, continued

beautiful foliage." A fast-growing shrub that reaches five to six feet tall with a gracefully arching habit, 'Shining Sensation' adds season-long color.

Campanula 'Pink Octopus'

Common name: Bellflower

USDA Zones: 5-9

Growing conditions: Plant in full sun to partial shade. Allow soil to dry slightly between waterings.

The buds of 'Pink Octopus' open to reveal striking pink, octopus-like flowers that weep from the upright flowering branches above strong, deeply cut foliage. These unusual plants reach 18 inches across and 10 to 15 inches tall. "With more than 50 blooms per plant at any given time, this long-blooming, oddly exotic selection adds interest to any perennial border or container garden," says Heims.



Terra Nova Nurseries

Echinacea 'Raspberry Tart'

Common name: Coneflower

USDA Zones: 4-9

Growing conditions: Plant in full sun in coarse, composted soil. Allow soil to dry slightly between waterings. Deadhead to prolong flowering.

"These electric-magenta blooms might stop traffic with their striking color, which is one of the deepest magenta flowers we have ever seen," says Heims. "They are extremely showy when planted *en masse* in the border." Up to 30 flowers adorn this compact, well-branched perennial in the first year. The flowers are small and numerous, and emerge for a long period, from midsummer to fall. The plant reaches 18 to 24 inches tall with a 15-inch spread.



Terra Nova Nurseries

Hellebores 'Regal Ruffles' Strain

Common name: Double Lenten Rose

USDA Zones: 5-8

Growing conditions: Grow in light shade or full sun and provide regular watering.

Bred by one of the world's greatest hellebore hybridizers, Marietta O'Byrne, the 'Regal Ruffles' strain marks O'Byrne's first introduction by Terra Nova Nurseries. "Marietta's single mix is a compendium of the world's greatest hellebores," says Heims. "Brushstroke splashes, spots and true, rich colors adorn the wide petals of this superior group." A delight in the winter garden, these deer-resistant plants reach 12 to 24 inches tall with a 24-inch spread.



Terra Nova Nurseries

Heucherella 'Alabama Sunrise'

Common name: Foamy Bells

USDA Zones: 4-9

Growing conditions: Plant in full to partial shade in well-drained soil. Feed and water moderately.

'Alabama Sunrise' changes color with the seasons. The deeply-cut foliage is gold with red veins from spring to midsummer. In late summer, leaves turn green with red veins, and in fall the older foliage turns orange-pink for excellent seasonal appeal. A veil of small white flowers bloom above the foliage in summer. This mounding plant reaches 12 inches tall and 20 inches across.

Growing Tips

1. Choose plants best suited to your heat or cold hardiness zones. Select varieties that are bred for pest and disease resistance.
2. Prepare garden beds in advance. Enrich soil with organic matter to encourage strong root development. Good soil is the key to healthy plants and allows them to resist drought, insects and diseases.
3. After planting, mulch with two to four inches of shredded bark, straw or other organic material to moderate soil temperature, reduce water needs and prevent weeds. For health, keep mulch away from the stem or crown of the plant.
4. Newly planted shrubs and perennials need regular watering. Once established, many plants can survive weeks without irrigation. Water deeply to promote healthy root growth.
5. If needed, fertilize according to a soil test and follow label instructions. If a plant is growing well, it does not require supplemental fertilizer applications.