

Bringing your garden to life

January/February 2011

gardening

HOW-TO

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REPORT**

**best new
plants
of 2011**

**EASY
WEEKEND
PROJECT**

**mount a
window box
in a few
simple steps**

**8 big
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Photograph courtesy of Skagit Gardens

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EDITORIAL QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

Editors, *Gardening How-To*, 12301 Whitewater Drive, Hopkins, Minnesota 55343-9447
e-mail: editors@gardeningclub.com

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800-324-8454 (Mon.-Fri., 7:30 a.m.-8 p.m.; Sat., 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Central time) e-mail: memberservices@gardeningclub.com

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See Resource Guide on page 48 for additional sources.



***Astilbe chinensis* 'Mighty Pip'**

Sometimes modest, small, and subdued just doesn't cut it. For those times, there's 'Mighty Pip'. This larger-than-life astilbe carries feathery pink plumes that tower over just about everything except trees and sunflowers. Introduce 'Mighty Pip' to a shady corner and watch it become the centerpiece of your garden from mid- to late summer, when the dancehall blooms strut their stuff. Lush, dark green foliage holds the place until then.

Sun: Part to full shade
Soil: Moist, well-drained
Height: 3 to 4 feet
Width: 3 to 4 feet
Zones: 3 to 8
Source: Jung



***Bouteloua gracilis* 'Blonde Ambition'**

Blue grama grass (also called mosquito grass), a prairie native, now has a glamorous city counterpart. In 'Blonde Ambition', the most distinctive feature of the native grass—its sideways flower—has had a makeover. The subdued reddish-brown bloom is now bigger and brighter, with a chartreuse hue that fades to blonde as the flowers turn into seed heads. Stiff stems stand tall through winter snows. A 2011 Plant Select winner.

Sun: Full sun
Soil: Well-drained
Height: 36 inches
Width: 36 inches
Zones: 4 to 9
Source: High Country Gardens



***Echinacea* 'Mama Mia'**

For the restless gardener in you, here's a coneflower with blooms that change color almost daily. The 4½- to 5-inch flowers start out red and then fade to orange, coral, and pink, which means your border is awash in sunset hues from June to October. 'Mama Mia'—a tough, hardy plant with the classic daisy shape of traditional coneflowers—is first in Terra Nova's Broadway series of coneflowers.

Sun: Full sun
Soil: Coarse, lean, fairly dry
Height: 36 inches
Width: 30 inches
Zones: 4 to 9
Sources: Local garden centers and mailorder nurseries; see Terra Nova Web site for store locator.

See Crazy White echinacea, 'Clementine' verbascum, and 'LaCrosse' daisy at www.gardeningclub.com.

See Resource Guide on page 48 for additional sources.



***Gaillardia x grandiflora*
'Moxie'**

'Moxie' joins siblings 'Frenzy' and 'Tizzy' in Skagit Gardens' excellent Commotion series of gaillardias. This trio should take first place in the Most Accurately Named Perennial contest, for they create nothing less than a frenzy of vivid orange, red, and yellow blooms from May to October—which, of course, sends gardeners into a tizzy. And when drought hits, these champions have the moxie to go on with the show.

Sun: Full sun

Soil: Average, well-drained

Height: 18 to 24 inches

Width: 24 inches

Zones: 5 to 9

Sources: Local garden centers, Great Garden Plants, White Flower Farm



***Helleborus x ballardiae*
'HGC Cinnamon Snow'**

A cold winter has a way of plucking color from your yard until all that remains is white, gray, and brown. So how incredible would it be to see a cluster of dusky pink buds interrupting the monotony? Enter Cinnamon Snow, one of two new winter-blooming hellebores (with Pink Frost) from the Helleborus Gold Collection. Rosy buds open in late winter to creamy white flowers brushed with light green and pink. Plants are long-lived, disease resistant, and unattractive to deer.

Sun: Part to full shade

Soil: Moist but well-drained

Height: 15 to 18 inches

Width: 24 inches

Zones: 5 to 9

Source: Local garden centers



***Heucherella* 'Yellowstone Falls'**

Heucherellas, a cross between heucheras and tiarellas, have been around for a while, but there's never been anything quite like this. 'Yellowstone Falls' commands attention for both its bright chartreuse leaves etched with scarlet and its graceful 3-foot trailing habit. The lush stretch of leaves brings sophistication to a container, and the plant can also creep horizontally to form a striking ground cover.

Sun: Full sun to full shade, depending on climate

Soil: Average, well-drained

Height: 6 to 10 inches

Width: 24 inches

Zones: 4 to 9

Sources: Local garden centers and mailorder nurseries; see Terra Nova Web site for store locator.

See Absolutely Amethyst candytuft, 'Cinque Terre' iris, and Fragrant Star wallflower at www.gardeningclub.com.