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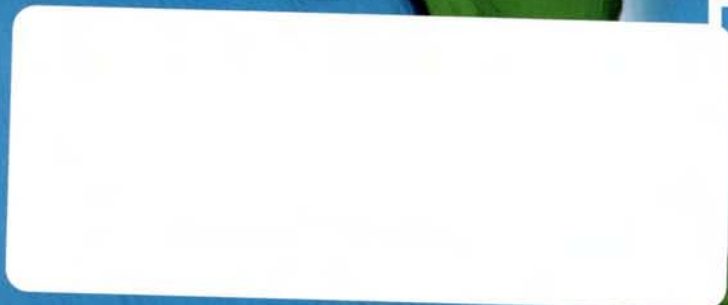
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SMART IDEAS FOR INDEPENDENT RETAILERS | MAGAZINE



Pre-season Forecast

Ready or not, here spring comes! What will it bring for your business? p. 12



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SMART IDEAS FOR INDEPENDENT RETAILERS | MAGAZINE



FEATURES

- 12 **COVER STORY: National Preseason Forecast**
Ready or not, here spring comes! What will it bring for your business? Illustration: Matt Collins
- 16 **A blast of color**
Vibrant annuals and perennials help your customers stand out from the crowd
- 18 **Worth its weight**
Communicate the benefits of premium soils and amendments to your customers
- 20 **Sweet sights and sounds**
Want to better market wind art? Put it in the wind!
- 22 **What customers want**
Here's what to expect from landscape customers—and what they expect from you
- 24 **Healthy alternatives**
Here are five 'best bets,' both economically—and ecologically

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 Editor's Note—Target practice
- 6 Marketplace News
- 50 One-on-One with Peter Mezitt
- 52 The Success Series—Chad Harris
- 54 Views You Can Use—Josh Schneider
- 55 Products
- 56 Introductions
- 57 Ad Index/Classifieds
- 58 This 'n' Data

FEATURES (CONTINUED)

- 26 **Weird plants**
Check out this collection of unique plants that will catch a customer's attention
- 28 **Follow the Road Warriors**
GIE Media's Horticulture Group will bring you full coverage of California Spring Trials
- 34 **Why trees matter**
Spread the message: Trees are an investment in the landscape
- 36 **Under control!**
Use these items to help customers thwart 'bad guys'
- 38 **Get the hang of it**
'Plant-your-own' seminar draws an early crowd at Southwood Nursery
- 39 **Profit prescription**
ANLA's New Clinic gets retailers geared up for spring
- 40 **A closer look**
Prescreening can help minimize employee theft
- 42 **Game-changers**
Innovative notions were the norm at New England Grows' retail seminar
- 46 **Deal or no deal?**
Why negotiation strategy matters when selling a gardening business

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A BLAST OF color

Vibrant annuals and perennials help your customers stand out from the crowd

COMPILED BY SARAH MARTINEZ, MANAGING EDITOR

It's a common situation: Customers want something new for color, but don't want to gamble with a plant they're unfamiliar with. Gardeners are in luck this year. Several annuals and perennials are on the market, which are both new and reliable.

FAMILIAR—BUT NEW, TOO

ANNUALS

1. Calibrachoa. Superbells Blackberry Punch from Proven Winners has two-tone flowers with a rich, velvet-black throat on deep-grape petals. It reaches 4-6 inches tall and 12-18 inches wide, with a slightly looser habit than other Superbells. www.provenwinners.com

2. Impatiens. SunPatiens from Sakata love the heat and provide three seasons of solid performance and color. Additions to this line are Vigorous Pink and Spreading Corona (pic-

tured), a new reddish-orange variety with green leaves. www.sakataornamentals.com

3. Petunia. Purple Wave Improved from PanAmerican Seed has a larger bloom size and an overall fuller look. It offers a faster garden fill, even in cooler and wetter conditions. www.panamseed.com

4. Viola. Penny Primrose Picotee from Syngenta Flowers is extremely free flowering, which makes it great for both fall and spring seasons. It has a robust root system and produces large, flat flowers that form a carpet of color. www.syngentaflowersinc.com

PERENNIALS

5. Coreopsis. *Coreopsis verticillata* (threadleaf coreopsis) 'Sienna Sunset', is a unique new sport of 'Crème Brûlée' that was discovered by Sunny Border Nurseries. Its beautiful burnt

sienna flowers fade to coral as they age. It does best in full sun to partial shade, growing to 12-18 inches tall. It is hardy in USDA Hardiness Zones 5-9. www.sunnyborder.com

6. Echinacea. *Echinacea purpurea* 'Hot Summer' is exclusively available from Northwest Horticulture. Flowers open orange and fade to red. It boasts a good flower petal count and produces an abundance of blooms from late June to August. 'Hot Summer' grows 18 inches tall and 12-18 inches wide. www.northwesthort.com

7. Helleborus. *Helleborus* Winter Jewels Painted Doubles from Terra Nova Nurseries has a clumping habit reaching 12 inches tall and 24 inches wide. This white double flower hellebore is adorned with red brush marks. It is hardy in USDA Hardiness Zones 5-8. This striking variety is also deer resistant. www.terranovanurseries.com



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8. Hosta. 'Tropical Storm' from Walters Gardens is an exceptionally showy new sport of 'Rainforest Sunrise'. Heart-shaped, puckered leaves of good substance emerge green with a light green margin, but then quickly develop wide, brilliant yellow gold margins which remain all season. It is hardy to USDA Hardiness Zones 3-9. www.waltersgardens.com

OUT-OF-THE-ORDINARY SELECTIONS

ANNUALS

9. Centradenia. 'Blushing Cascade' from GroLink has shell-pink flowers that contrast with the bronze-green foliage. Its trailing habit makes it ideal for baskets or as a replacement for ipomoea and vinca in combination pots. www.grolink.com

10. Lobelia. Nautica from Hort Couture is a humidity- and heat-tolerant

series. Young plants have a mounded habit. The colors are vibrant, and the flowers are very large and profuse. www.hortcoutureplants.com

11. Scoparia. The Illumina series from Suntory Flowers has an unusual red-licorice fragrance. Lemon Mist Improved (pictured) produces an abundance of star-shaped yellow flowers continuously throughout the season. Illumina is good for hanging baskets and window boxes. www.suntorycollection.net

PERENNIALS

12. Gaura. Fleurizon offers the Compact Africa Gaura series (Pink, Red and White) and 'Silver Lining.' All of the plants are compact and free branching. 'Silver Lining' has variegated leaves. All four varieties are 12 to 16 inches tall, produce many flowers and flower for a long time. www.fleurizon.com

13. Physostegia. *Physostegia virginiana* 'Crystal Peak White' from Benary is excellent for mass plantings or as a filler in mixed combination planters. The 16-inch tall, well-branched plant produces a multitude of bright white flower spikes that do not fade or brown as they age. It is hardy in USDA Hardiness Zones 2-9. www.benary.com

14. Chasmanthium. *Chasmanthium latifolium* 'River Mist' from ItSaul Plants provides striking green and white variegated foliage. Variegated northern sea oats provides a vivid look to any garden and makes a great specimen plant.

It can reach 30-36 inches tall and 24-36 inches wide. Late summer and early fall is when the oats appear that provide interest well into the winter as they dry out. It is hardy in USDA Hardiness Zones 5-9. www.itsaulplants.com 