



Hot New Perennials

Photos courtesy of Valleybrook Perennials

Every winter most of us in the nursery business (I hope) pour over trade magazines checking out new plant introductions trying to figure out which varieties to try out which ones will be the most successful. While going over more than 85 varieties presented by Landscape Trades I wondered however are we going to choose. Availability, zone hardiness and the wow factor were taken into consideration when we choose the following. We hope you agree and are as excited about these varieties as we are.

Every spring we see numerous new cultivars of *Cone flower (Echinacea)* and this year is no exception. The following are all fragrant, attract butterflies and are long blooming. 'Merlot' has sturdy nearly black stems with large rose-pink flowers. 'Pink Double Delight' has frilly double centres of rose-pink surrounded by soft pink daisy like petals. 'Raspberry Tart' is a compact sturdy plant with deep magenta blooms. Great in containers. 'Evan Saul' with it's intense orange flowers and prominent brown centre makes a terrific cut flower or container plant. All require full sun and are hardy to Zone 4.

Another perennial with many new cultivar introductions each year are *Daylillies (Hemerocallis)* I'm only mentioning 3 of what we think are the more interesting varieties. 'Jungle Beaty' is a selection from Valleybrook Gardens Trophytaker line, sporting huge nearly black blooms with a yellow throat. It is long blooming, reaches a height of 28-30" (70-75 cms) and spread of 26-28" (65-70 cms). Zone 4 'Rooten Tooten Red' another Trophytaker has fire engine red blooms on a compact plant reaching 24" (60 cms) tall and 32" (80 cms) wide. Zone 4 'Stella Stars' blooms are larger, longer lasting and a more intense yellow than 'Stella D'oro'. It reaches 10" (25 cms) and blooms all summer. Zone 3

'Berry Exciting' *Corydalis (Corydalis 'Berry Exciting')* This hybrid selection forms a low mound of brilliant yellow leaves streaked with chartreuse and fragrant tubular purple flowers. Best grown in partial shade with rich moist but well drained soil. Long blooming. Zone 5

'Pink Penny' Geranium (Geranium 'Pink Penny') This cransbill blooms continuously from June to October with large cup-shaped pink flowers and white centre. The foliage has good fall colour and reaches 16" (40 cms). Zone 4

'Midnight Rose' Coral Bells (Heuchera 'Midnight Rose') This vigorous growing variety has hot pink splotches on bold black foliage, spectacular for sunny locations. Zone 4

Prairie Fire 'Switchgrass' (Panicum virgatum 'Prairie Fire') This new improved variety is the earliest to turn red, usually by early summer. It does best in sunny locations and reaches 4'-5' tall. (120-150 cms) Zone 4

'Walkers Low' Catmint (Nepeta x faassenii 'Walkers Low') has been chosen by The Perennial Plant Association as the 2007 perennial of the year! And why not? This catmint blooms from April to October with blue-violet tubular flowers and reach 24" (60 cms) tall. Best grown in full sun catmint also attracts hummingbirds and butterflies. Zone 3

'Branford Beauty' Fern (Athyrium 'Branford Beauty') While not brand new this hybrid of Japanese painted fern and Lady Fern combines the colouring of the Painted Fern and the larger size of Lady Fern growing between 18 & 24" (60 cms) high. Zone 4

Two of the most interesting hostas in a wide selection of new varieties are "Lakeside Spellbinder" a medium sized mound of green foliage with a striking white centre and white flowers. Grows 14" (35 cms) high and 32" (80 cms) wide. Zone 2

'Woolly Mammoth' has thick corrugated blue-green leaves with gold edges and white flowers. Huge, it grows 30" (75 cms) high and up to 5' (150 cms) across. Good slug resistance. Zone 2

Hopefully some of these exciting new varieties will inspire you. For more information on these or other new selections please come in and see us or e-mail us at gardencentre@glenecho.com