

It's All America Time Again

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. If it's January it's time for the All Americans!

Oh, I'm not talking about any sports figures here, I'm talking about the All American vegetable and flower winners That were announced a few weeks ago. All America Selections is a non-profit nationwide organization that exists to evaluate new vegetable and flower cultivars all across the country. That actual number varies from year to year but there are generally about 80 trial sites all across the US and Canada. Some trial sites are run and evaluated by commercial seed firms or large nurseries. Many of the sites are run by university researchers or Extension Master Gardeners. Trial cultivars are planted side by side and include cultivars of the same species that are accepted standards currently in the trade. Evaluations are done throughout the growing season. This program has been in existence, and testing new varieties, since 1933 - that's over 80 years of results. To be named an All-American Selection, a cultivar has to do well across a majority of the testing locations. The AAS organization doesn't advertise the winners, they don't sell seeds or plants, they are simply there, supported by corporate donations and a vast network of volunteers. AAS leaves it up to companies and folks like me to get the word out about the new cultivars. Most of the AAS winners can be purchased on line or from larger nurseries, but if you want the new cultivars, get your order in early! Over the next two days I will detail the 6 AAS vegetable and winners and 6 floral winners. For more information Google AAS winners. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

AAS Winners - Vegetables

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. There were six vegetable cultivars selected as All-America Selections for 2018. More details can be found on line or by contacting me, but here's the quick and dirty lowdown on them. American Dream Sweet Corn. It has excellent germination, super sweet bi-colored kernels and is slightly earlier than comparison varieties being mature at 77 days after planting. Many people don't grow Pak Choi but cabbage lovers should try this Chinese Cabbage. Asian Delight is less likely to bolt than other cultivars and produces small to mid-size heads. This may be a cultivar that you can grow throughout the summer with multiple plantings. There were two pepper winners this year. Cayenne Red Ember is early maturing and has a large number of thick walled rounded end fruits that produce far more flavor in addition to the heat than traditional cayenne cultivars. The next pepper is a habanero pepper called Roulette. Before you turn off and say you can't handle a habanero's heat, get this - this is a habanero without heat! Mature fruits are thick walled and give you that great citrusy flavor of habaneros without the scorching heat! We wrap up with two tomato varieties. Red Racer is a cocktail tomato with good taste, great sweet/acid balance and slightly fruit larger than cherry or grape tomatoes. Valentine is a grape tomato with a deep red color and a very sweet taste. It will also hold longer on the vine with out cracking and losing quality. It should mature at 55 days from transplanting. For more information on these, give me a call at the Extension Office. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

AAS winners - Flowers

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Yesterday we talked about the AAS vegetable winners so today we'll talk about the flower winners. Let's start with a canna known as South Pacific Orange. It has a bright orange color, dark green leaves is vigorous with a lot of basal branching. Cuphea, also known as Mexican Heather may not be well known to local gardeners but needs to be considered. The AAS winner FloriGlory Diana is a cuphea with larger intensely magenta colored flowers and lots of them. It is a compact plant generally growing 10 to 12 inches and has a long flowering time with good heat and weather tolerance. Gypsophila Gypsy White Improved is a different species than the sometimes invasive perennial Gypsophila paniculata. It has nice sized semi-double flowers and creates a nice white fluffy mound in your garden. It will also work well in containers. We have to have a marigold and this year's winner is Super Hero Spry. This is a compact French marigold with dark maroon lower petals and golden yellow upper petals. It's 10 to 12 inches tall, it has a uniform stable color, blooms earlier than other marigolds and does not require dead heading. Ornamental peppers are becoming more and more popular and Onyx Red is a well branched ornamental with dark black foliage and lots of shiny red fruits. It'll work well in beds, borders, containers and mass plantings. Quickly we also have a Zinnia called Queeny Lime Orange. It has large dahlia like blooms on a sturdy compact plant. Flower color evolves from dark coral/peach/orange to a light peach color with a dark center! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Caddo Sugar Maples

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. People like to plant trees for fall foliage color.

They are very fond of the reds and oranges, probably because those are the hardest colors to get in woody plants around here. Homeowners often gravitate towards the red maples and the sugar maples to achieve these hues. Unfortunately, red maples while faster growing than sugar maples, are very poorly adapted to our Kansas climate, at least this far west in the state. Sugar maples are somewhat slower growing but are actually better adapted to Kansas climates especially if you select cultivars that are known as Caddo sugar maples. This particular variety of sugar maple came from a naturally occurring population in Caddo County Oklahoma. While it is a true sugar maple it is much better adapted to periodic drought, heat, hot dry winds and high pH soils. Most sugar maples respond to this kind of weather with a condition called leaf scorch and leaf tatter which look exactly like they sound! If you go to a local nursery and ask for a Caddo maple you may get a blank stare. So you need to go equipped with a couple of cultivar names. Autumn Splendor is the first one. It has a very traditional sugar maple growth form and will ultimately be a big tree so give it plenty of room. John Pair is a second cultivar and is a smaller more compact selection that will work in many smaller residential yards. John Pair also has a denser crown so may create enough shade that grass growth may be limited under it. Both of these cultivars have a nice red fall color and are known to color early. Be careful not to plant in heavy soil that stays wet! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Shumard Oaks

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Oaks are a mystery to many people. There is an unfortunate misconception that all oaks grow very slow. If you could plant an oak tree today and in 20 years it'd be 30 feet tall, would that be fast enough for you? If not, then we need to talk!

The Shumard Oak is a native to eastern Kansas and is in the Red Oak family. While it is found naturally growing along river bottoms or rocky hillsides next to creeks and streams, it is an amazingly tolerant tree with moderate growth rate. Unlike northern red oak which isn't that fond of heavier clay soils, the Shumard Oak is quite tolerant of clay soils, just don't drown it though. It is similar in appearance to the red oak being loosely pyramidal in form. The tree can grow to 80 feet in height with a 50 foot spread. It can serve as a windbreak tree or a yard shade tree. It is considered to have a moderate to rapid growth rate so once it is established (3 or 4 years) you can expect 2 to 3 feet of growth per year. It can have big leaves, 4 to 8 inches long and 3 to 6 inches wide with a fairly typical red oak shape. It reaches maturity at 20 to 25 years of age at which time it will start producing acorns. Acorns are typically 1 inch long and ½ to 1 inch wide. Much smaller than those massive acorns of bur oaks. Some of the red oak family, like pin oak, has problems with iron chlorosis in higher pH soils. Shumard oak does not seem to have this problem and will do well in western Kansas. It has very high value for wildlife, and medium drought tolerance. For maximum growth potential water regularly in dry weather. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.