University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center

The 2015 Top Ten Performing Annual Flowers
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Esther Jordan, Communications Specialist

One of the largest and most impressive displays of annual flower varieties and cultivars in the Upper Midwest can be found at the University of Minnesota (U of MN) West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC) Horticulture Display Garden in Morris, MN. Voted as the Best Public Display Garden in MN by WCCO/CBS Minnesota in August 2015, the Garden features annual flower cultivars from plant breeding companies around the world.

Annual flowers are evaluated on unique characteristics, exceptional performance, color and vigor under regional conditions. A visual evaluation and score was given three times during the 2015 growing season. Only the highest rated cultivars earn the distinction of a Top Ten Performing Annual. The goal of evaluating this vast array of cultivars is to develop recommendations for Minnesota.

Even though the annual flowers are under evaluation, the plants are placed into an aesthetically pleasing design. All flowers are labeled, allowing visitors to take note of top performing cultivars under regional conditions.

The WCROC Garden is also an All-America Selections (AAS) Display Garden and Trial Grounds. This Garden provides the public an opportunity to view the newest superior performers recognized by AAS judges. The Horticulture Display Garden is open daily from dawn until dusk; admission is free. For a complete list of all trial results, please refer to www.wcroc.cfans.umn.edu/flower-research-results.

* On the front cover: Begonia tuberhybrida Nonstop™ JOY Yellow (top left), Vinca Cora® Cascade Strawberry (top center), Scaevola Paper Doll™ Top Model (top right), Bacopa Big Falls™ Dark Blue (middle right), and Impatiens Interspecific Big Bounce™ series (bottom).
Begonia x benariensis BIG® Red Green Leaf If looking for a quick-blooming vigorous begonia, it’s hard to beat BIG Red Green Leaf. Although the fire-engine bright crimson red flowers are exceptional, the combination of the glossy green foliage is outstanding. BIG Red Green Leaf grows well in partial shade and is perfect for a mass planting or very large containers.

**Height** = up to 24 inches  
**Spread** = 20 inches  
**Bloom Time** = Early Summer to Fall  
**Exposure** = Full Sun to Part Shade  
**Soil Moisture** = Moist, Well Drained
Begonia *Solenia® Apricot* produces large blossoms of three-inch peach frilly flowers with amazing long season color from mid-spring to early fall. This Begonia is a hybrid cross between a tuberous begonia and a wax begonia. *Solenia® Apricot* requires dead-heading to keep it looking nice. Deer don’t particularly care for this plant, and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier plants.

**Height** = 12 inches  
**Spread** = 16 inches  
**Bloom Time** = Mid Spring - Fall  
**Exposure** = Full Sun to Partial Shade  
**Soil Moisture** = Moist
Calibrachoa Superbells® Garden Rose has abundant, small petunia-like flowers all season long. Superbells® Garden Rose features distinctive, shiny, striking flowers that don’t fade in the summer heat. This variety has long, trailing branches cascading over the sides of hanging baskets. Superbells® Garden Rose is a low-maintenance compact plant with no necessary deadheading and perks back up after a rain.

- **Height**: 8 inches
- **Spread**: 36 inches
- **Bloom Time**: Planting to Hard Frost
- **Exposure**: Part Sun to Sun
- **Soil Moisture**: Good Drainage
Coleus Broad Street features burgundy leaves with a lime green edge and was an outstanding performer in our 2015 display garden. Grown in partial shade in a garden bed, Broad Street is extremely compact and uniform.

In general, coleus is a durable plant with significant gardening potential for a wide range of gardeners. Coleus has a long history of use as a foliage plant; its ease of establishment after planting combined with a wide range of selections has made coleus a popular favorite for gardens and containers. Coleus was the annual selected as the National Garden Bureau’s Annual of the Year for 2015.

Height = 30 inches  
Spread = 20 inches  
Exposure = Partial Shade  
Soil Moisture = Well Drained
Dahlia Hypnotica® Lavender  This outstanding dahlia blooms profusely from planting into early fall. The beauty of Hypnotica® Lavender is its vigorous plant habit, clean foliage and large flowers that were real eye catchers in our garden beds. The lavender blooms compliment many other planting companions. Requires occasional deadheading for a neat appearance.

Height = 26 inches  
Spread = 24 inches  
Bloom Time = Summer until Frost  
Exposure = Full Sun to Partial Shade  
Soil Moisture = Moist, Well Drained
Dianthus Jolt™ Pink is a 2015 All-America Selections bedding plant award winner. This dianthus has large, showy flower heads on strong stems that perform extremely well all summer long. Jolt™ Pink has bright pink-fringed flowers, and is an easy to grow and trouble-free annual for the gardener looking for neat and tidy low-maintenance flower varieties.

- **Height** = 22 inches
- **Spread** = 18 inches
- **Bloom Time** = Late Spring - Fall
- **Exposure** = Full Sun
- **Soil Moisture** = Well Drained
Geranium *Pinto™ Premium Lavender Rose* A seed type geranium from the Pinto series, *Premium Lavender Rose* is a great garden performer with uniform plant habit and early flowering. Its most appealing feature is the disease-free clean foliage all season long. *Premium Lavender Rose* is an outstanding seed geranium; perhaps the best we’ve trialed at the U of MN.

**Height** = 20 inches  
**Spread** = 20 inches  
**Bloom Time** = Early Spring to Fall  
**Exposure** = Partial to Full Sun  
**Soil Moisture** = Moderate
Impatiens walleriana *Lollipop™ Fruit Punch Rose* is an outstanding impatiens from greenhouse to garden with exceptional uniform plant habit, growth and vigor. The rose flowers provide an intense pop of color throughout the entire growing season. The *Lollipop™* series also comes in other colors including Orange, Raspberry Violet, Cherry Red, Pomegranate Carmine, Coconut White and Peach Salmon.

Height = 20 inches  
Spread = 22 inches  
Bloom Time = June to Fall  
Exposure = Partial Shade  
Soil Moisture = Moist
Petunia Surfinia® Sumo™ Pink offers a vigorous, full mounding habit of hot pink flowers in a landscape bed. Buds open continuously from the center and all along the stems, so there are no "flat-topped" or empty-centered plants as the season progresses. Surfinia® Sumo™ Pink is perfect for large containers and hanging baskets because its unique habit changes from mounding to trailing.

**Height** = 16 inches  
**Spread** = 35-55 inches  
**Bloom Time** = Late Spring until Frost  
**Exposure** = Full Sun  
**Soil Moisture** = Well Drained
Portulaca Mojave® Tangerine  This durable and colorful flowering succulent blooms profusely all summer long without deadheading. The flowers of Portulaca close at night and reopen with sunlight. Mojave® Tangerine performed well for us in a block wall planter next to an asphalt parking lot with limited moisture. Mojave® Tangerine is a great plant choice for warm climates and poor, drier soils.

- **Height** = 7 inches
- **Spread** = 12-16 inches
- **Bloom Time** = Spring to Late Summer
- **Exposure** = Sun
- **Soil Moisture** = Average
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety Name</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Spread</th>
<th>Bloom Time</th>
<th>Exposure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begonia boliviensis Santa Cruz™</td>
<td>15”</td>
<td>Trails up to 24”</td>
<td>Late Spring to Fall</td>
<td>Full to Partial Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bidens Campfire™ Fireburst</strong></td>
<td>10”</td>
<td>Trails up to 18”</td>
<td>Spring to Fall</td>
<td>Full Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calibrachoa Aloha Grape Cartwheel</td>
<td>8”</td>
<td>30”</td>
<td>Planting to Hard Frost</td>
<td>Part Sun to Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calibrachoa Can-Can® Pink Splash</td>
<td>10”</td>
<td>32”</td>
<td>Planting to Hard Frost</td>
<td>Part Sun to Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calibrachoa Can-Can® Red Splash</td>
<td>9”</td>
<td>28”</td>
<td>Planting to Hard Frost</td>
<td>Part Sun to Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calibrachoa Hula Godiva</td>
<td>9”</td>
<td>30”</td>
<td>Planting to Hard Frost</td>
<td>Part Sun to Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calibrachoa Kabloom® Deep Pink</td>
<td>7”</td>
<td>30”</td>
<td>Planting to Hard Frost</td>
<td>Part Sun to Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calibrachoa Kabloom® White</td>
<td>8”</td>
<td>32”</td>
<td>Planting to Hard Frost</td>
<td>Part Sun to Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calibrachoa Superbells® Evening Star</strong></td>
<td>8”</td>
<td>24”</td>
<td>Planting to Hard Frost</td>
<td>Part Sun to Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cleome Senorita Blanca™ (Imp)</strong></td>
<td>44”</td>
<td>22”</td>
<td>Spring to Fall</td>
<td>Full Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuphea Sriracha™ Violet</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>16”</td>
<td>Late Spring to Summer</td>
<td>Full Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euphorbia Glamour</td>
<td>20”</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>Spring to Fall</td>
<td>Full Sun to Partial Shade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impatiens Rockapulco® Wisteria</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>20”</td>
<td>Spring to Early Fall</td>
<td>Part Shade to Shade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lantana Luscious® Pinkberry Blend</strong></td>
<td>20”</td>
<td>36”</td>
<td>Late Spring to Fall</td>
<td>Full Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobularia Yolo Lavender</td>
<td>6”</td>
<td>24”</td>
<td>Spring to Fall</td>
<td>Sun to Partial Shade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety Name</td>
<td>Height</td>
<td>Spread</td>
<td>Bloom Time</td>
<td>Exposure</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marigold patula Colossus</td>
<td>19”</td>
<td>20”</td>
<td>Spring to Early Fall</td>
<td>Full Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Guinea Impatiens Sunpatiens® Spreading Shell Pink</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>20”</td>
<td>Early Spring to Fall</td>
<td>Sun or Shade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petunia Surfinia® Summer Double™ Salmon</td>
<td>10”</td>
<td>26”</td>
<td>Spring to Mid-fall</td>
<td>Full Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petunia Potunia Plus Red</td>
<td>7”</td>
<td>26”</td>
<td>Mid-spring to Late Summer</td>
<td>Full Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petunia Sun Spun® Salmon</td>
<td>8”</td>
<td>20”</td>
<td>Spring to Fall</td>
<td>Full Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petunia Supertunia® Morning Glory Charm</td>
<td>10”</td>
<td>27”</td>
<td>Spring to Fall</td>
<td>Part Sun to Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petunia Supertunia® Vista Bubblegum</td>
<td>16”</td>
<td>46”</td>
<td>Spring to Fall</td>
<td>Full Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petunia Surfinia® Trailing Deep Red</td>
<td>7”</td>
<td>28”</td>
<td>Spring to Mid-fall</td>
<td>Full Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petunia TriTunia™ Salmon</td>
<td>7”</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>Spring to Fall</td>
<td>Full Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbena bonariensis Meteor Shower™</td>
<td>26”</td>
<td>22”</td>
<td>Spring to Fall</td>
<td>Part Sun to Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinca Cora® Cascade Strawberry</td>
<td>6”</td>
<td>Trails up to 23”</td>
<td>Spring to Fall</td>
<td>Full Sun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Horticulture Display Garden is a participating garden in the National Plant Trials Database, which is a central repository for trial plant data. Participating gardens adopt standardized trialing protocol along with evaluation criteria. At the conclusion of each growing season, trial managers upload trial data into the database making cultivar evaluations available to industry professionals. For more information on annual flower research at the WCROC, please visit our website at wcroc.cfans.umn.edu.

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