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December 2019 NO. 190

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northwest

1. 'STREIB'S FINDLING' BEARBERRY COTONEASTER • *Cotoneaster dammeri* 'Streib's Findling'

ZONES: 6–8

SIZE: Up to 1 foot tall and 4 to 8 feet wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; adaptable to a range of soils and moisture levels

NATIVE RANGE: Central China

Bearberry cotoneaster rises to the occasion in the toughest environments, yet it is too beastly for many gardens, overreaching growth estimates by miles. 'Streib's Findling', however, is an exceedingly prostrate and polite cultivar. It is endlessly useful as a large-scale, deer-resistant ground cover, spilling over retaining walls or accenting boulders. It even lends itself toward bonsai culture, with a quirky, twisting habit and seasonal interest. 'Streib's Findling' has fishbone-patterned branches tipped with red new growth and clothed in small, leathery evergreen leaves. In midspring, ivory green pearl-like buds explode into multitudes of tiny white flowers, attracting a buzz of bee activity. Red berries ripen in early fall, supporting wildlife into the cold season.

2. NODDING CHOCOLATE FLOWER • *Glumicalyx goseloides*

ZONES: 6–10

SIZE: 12 to 18 inches tall and 24 to 36 inches wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; dry to average, well-drained soil

NATIVE RANGE: South Africa

Everything about this semi-evergreen subshrub is surprising and unique. Its lightly serrated, waxy leaves wind around sinuous stems in a rosette pattern. Atop the arching stems are fat, drooping clusters of white tubular flowers that open to reveal deep burnt orange faces and slender white stamens. With a bit of deadheading, you will be rewarded with these blooms from late spring through summer. When it comes to fragrance, noddling chocolate flower boldly lives up to its name. Both foliage and flower emit an unmistakably earthy chocolate aroma, which is magnified when brushed. This alpine oddity is right at home in shallow rocky soils and also performs well in containers.

3. 'PURPLE HAZE' CATMINT • *Nepeta × faassenii* 'Purple Haze'

ZONES: 6–10

SIZE: 12 inches tall and 30 to 36 inches wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; adaptable to a range of soils and moisture levels

NATIVE RANGE: Caucasus, northern Iran, Iraq, Turkey

'Purple Haze' is a seriously beefed-up hybrid catmint with an amazing ability to perform despite deer, heat, and drought. Stout gray-green foliage smothers the ground in an aromatic mass, while densely packed, plump lavender flower spikes draw bees and butterflies all season long. This versatile edger and spiller looks equally fabulous among soft pastels or sizzling magentas and reds, bursting to life and providing color when many plants are just waking up. If it seems a bit splayed out, or if the leaves start to yellow, you're probably overwatering. Just cut it back 4 to 6 inches from the crown, toss in a pinch of mild fertilizer, and watch the spectacle resume with gusto.

4. 'SUMMER SUNSHINE' GERMANDER • *Teucrium chamaedrys* 'Summer Sunshine'

ZONES: 5–9

SIZE: 6 to 12 inches tall and 12 to 18 inches wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; lean to average, well-drained soil

NATIVE RANGE: Mediterranean, northern Africa to western Asia

Germander has long been a trusted staple in hot and dry gardens frequented by deer, and for foliar contrast in these harsh locations, 'Summer Sunshine' truly shines. With a smaller footprint and shorter stature than the straight species, this golden Canadian selection slowly forms an easily managed patch with underground rhizomes. It also adapts to shadier conditions, where its tough countenance is of great value. Its minute, scalloped leaves soften to chartreuse by midseason, leaning even more toward light green in partial sun. Come midsummer, petite spikes of saturated mauve flowers adored by pollinators provide further contrast. A light shear after bloom is all the maintenance required to keep this semi-evergreen plant tidy.



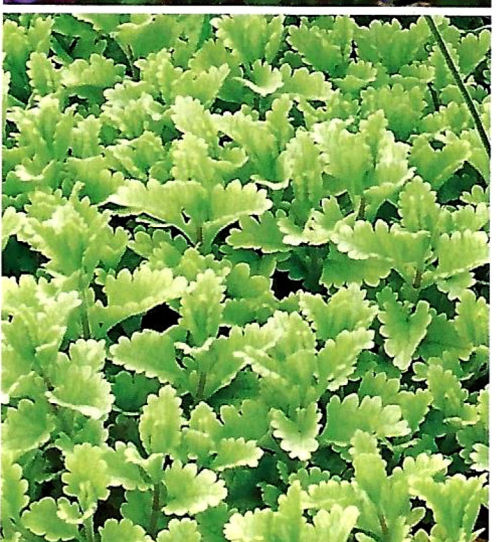
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Bonni Criswell is a landscape designer in southern Oregon.





northeast

1. 'DIANNE'S GOLD' BRUNNERA • *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Dianne's Gold'

ZONES: 4–9

SIZE: 12 to 15 inches tall and 18 to 24 inches wide

CONDITIONS: Partial shade; moist, well-drained soil

NATIVE RANGE: Turkey

'Dianne's Gold' brunnera begins to show off in midspring and carries its foliage color through the summer months. For weeks beginning in late April, sky blue forget-me-not flowers are held in loose sprays above the clumps of chartreuse, heart-shaped 3-to-4-inch leaves. You may be pleasantly surprised to discover dozens of yellow-leaved seedlings around mother plants (which I scoop up and transplant elsewhere), but should you not want babies, prevent this from happening by removing the spent flowers quickly before seeds form. Pair 'Diane's Gold' with Japanese forest grass (*Hakonechloa macra*, Zones 5–9) and epimedium (*Epimedium* spp. and cvs., Zones 4–9) for an easy, long-lasting vignette that is deer resistant.



1

2. UPLAND WHITE GOLDENROD • *Solidago ptarmicoides*

ZONES: 3–8

SIZE: 12 to 15 inches tall and 12 to 24 inches wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; dry soil

NATIVE RANGE: Eastern North America

Many years ago on a hot August visit to Wave Hill in New York City, I spied this prairie native with its many white flowers looking fresh and unfazed by 90°F temperatures. It was some years before I was able to source seed for upland white goldenrod, but it was worth the wait. Narrow dark green leaves form low tufts in spring, with flower stems emerging in midsummer topped with clusters of small white asters, which are beacons for pollinators of all kinds. I have been delighted with how tough this plant is in scorching sun and poor soils. Upland white goldenrod will self-sow where happy.



2

3. 'PINK CHAMPAGNE' EPIMEDIUM • *Epimedium* 'Pink Champagne'

ZONES: 5–8

SIZE: 12 inches tall and 18 inches wide

CONDITIONS: Partial to full shade; well-drained soil

NATIVE RANGE: Japan, Korea

The floral display of this shade lover is simply enchanting: sprays of soft pink spurs surrounding deeper coral pink centers, rising above clumps of attractive mottled olive green foliage. Vigorous and showy, the wiry flower stems show up in force in midspring (and occasionally during summer). What more could you ask for? How about deer resistance and a tolerance for dry soil conditions? You got it!



3

4. 'WHITE CLOUD' CALAMINT • *Calamintha nepeta* 'White Cloud'

ZONES: 5–9

SIZE: 15 inches tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; well-drained soil

NATIVE RANGE: Europe, northern Africa, western Asia

Calamint should be grown in more sunny gardens. A strong summer bloomer, it seems to perform whether we have a hot, dry summer or one that is cool and moist. The cultivar 'White Cloud' forms a tidy low mound of gray-green, slightly hairy foliage. It begins to enhance the border in early July with multitudes of flower stems bearing myriads of small white blossoms, creating a hazy low cloud. 'White Cloud' has a tendency to self-sow, which could be good if you consider a steady supply of plantlets a bonus. If you are looking for a form that won't proliferate, consider dwarf calamint (*C. nepeta* ssp. *nepeta*, Zones 5–9), which has never self-sown in my garden in all the years I've grown it.



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Katherine Tracey owns Avant Gardens, a specialty nursery in Dartmouth, Massachusetts.

