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THE MAGAZINE OF THE MINNESOTA STATE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

## Spectacular Side Yards

### Making Peace with Rabbits (and Deer)

### 10 BEST ANNUALS

### BLUE Vegetables? You BET!

Minnesota Horticultural Society  
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# contents

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## in every issue

- 1 **Seedlings:** News and notes from the editor.
- 4 **Cuttings:** MSHS news and events.
- 14 **Perennial Favorites:** New perennials for 2014.  
BY MELEAH MAYNARD
- 16 **By Design:** Spring saviors.  
BY DON ENGBRETSON
- 18 **Northern Natives:** The case for native plants.  
BY LYNN M. STEINER
- 20 **How-to:** Circuit composting.  
BY ERIC JOHNSON
- 22 **Plant Health:** Peony diseases.  
BY KATHARINE D. WIDIN
- 24 **Plant to Plate:** Strawberry choices.  
BY RHONDA FLEMING HAYES
- 26 **Plant to Pick:** Best of the best.  
BY DEBBIE LONNIE
- 49 **Gardener's Market**
- 52 **Northern View:** Are we having fun yet?  
BY SUSAN WARDE

## features



- 28 **Side Effects** Design ideas for spectacular side yards.  
BY SUSAN DAVIS PRICE
- 34 **Blooming Blogger** She produces plenty of plants and posts.  
BY MARY LAHR SCHIER
- 38 **Luscious Lingonberries** These cold-loving berries are the new hot fruit to grow.  
BY LAURA SCHWARZ
- 40 **Making Peace with Rabbits (and Deer)** If bunnies are driving you batty, try these techniques.  
BY ELIZABETH STETENFELD
- 43 **Summertime Blues** Potatoes, peas and more in shades of blue.  
BY SAMANTHA JOHNSON
- 46 **Garden Trials** U of M Extension Master Gardeners test turnips, basil and more.  
BY U OF M EXTENSION MASTER GARDENERS



### about the cover

A pot of SuperCal® 'Neon Rose' petunia-calibrachoa hybrids surrounded by zinnias, ornamental kale and chard anchors the entry to a remarkable side yard. Photo by Tracy Walsh

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Meleah Maynard

## New Perennials for 2014

**I**t's late December as I write this and yet, this winter has been so bitterly cold and harsh, it seems like spring should be just around the corner. Fingers crossed, we'll be out planting earlier than ever this season. Happily, it looks like there will be a lot of great new plants coming out in 2014. Here are some of the new perennials for northern gardeners that caught my eye.

### *Andropogon gerardii*

#### 'Rain Dance' PPAF

Cold-climate gardeners so often have to pass on some of the most striking ornamental grasses (think Japanese blood grass) because they just can't survive here. So I can't wait to try 'Rain Dance' big bluestem from Santa Rosa Gardens. Dark green, red-tipped foliage takes on a purple hue in late summer before turning bright red in the fall. Small, red flowers on red stems make this plant even more interesting. Grows to 6 feet tall and 3 to 4 feet wide. Full sun. USDA Zone 3.

### *Heuchera 'Inheuredfu' Dolce®*

#### Cinnamon Curls™

Every time I swear off coral bells for heaving out of the soil or being a favorite snack for rabbits, along comes a new cultivar that makes me try it just one more time. The new Cinnamon Curls from Proven Winners® is this season's temptress. I love the foliage with its pretty, ruffled edges and warm orange-red color. Plants grow about 8 to 12 inches tall. Full sun to part shade. Zone 4.

### *Delphinium 'Dwarf Stars'*

I struggle to keep delphiniums going in my gardens, but I'm not ready to stop trying. 'Dwarf Stars', a new hybrid from Walters Gardens Inc., looks interesting because plants grow to just 2½ feet tall on sturdy stems, making them much more workable in all parts of the garden rather than just in the back where tall plants usually go. Part of the New Millennium™ series, these dwarf perennials

have a bushy habit with multicolored blooms in blue, lilac, purple, pink, mauve and cream. Full sun to part shade. Zone 3.

### *Hibiscus 'Cherry Cheesecake' PPAF*

I really like the tropical look that hardy hibiscus add to my summer gardens, so I'm a sucker for them whether they're new or tried-and-true. Cherry Cheesecake, the newest variety in Proven Winners' Summerific™ series, offers dazzling 7- to 8-inch blooms in light pink with red centers. And because flower buds form all along the stem, there's no worry about plants looking gangly. Grows 4 to 5 feet tall and wide. Full sun. Zone 4.

### *Rosa 'Meickinava' BougainFeelYa*

Silly plant names bug me sometimes. But this silly plant name feels right because Conard-Pyle's Look-A-Like® series is all about roses that fool the eye. In this case, dark red, five-petal blooms look a lot like bougainvillea. Though this rose is not a climber, flowers form continuously throughout the season and are followed by bright red hips in the fall. Its rust and mildew resistance is said to be good, too. It grows 4 feet tall and wide. Full sun. Be aware that it is rated for Zone 5, so plant with caution.



Conard-Pyle BougainFeelYa


### *Sedum 'Touchdown Teak' PPAF*

This striking sedum was introduced in a limited way last year but will be widely available this season, so I'm calling it a new perennial for 2014. Part of Terra Nova Nurseries Touchdown™ series, this sedum is a vigorous grower with unusual red stems and red-brown foliage that looks almost purple. Grows to 8 inches tall and 11 inches wide. Drought tolerant. Full sun. Zone 4.



Baptisia Blue Towers

### *Baptisia 'Blue Towers' PPAF*

False indigo always feels like a garden miracle to me. Rising from nothing but a bare spot on the ground every spring, these shrublike beauties look great with or without blooms all season long. 'Blue Towers', a new introduction from Plant Delights Nursery, is noteworthy for being shorter and sturdier than other varieties, so it won't get floppy even when fall approaches. Drought tolerant. Full sun. Zone 3. 

Meleah Maynard is a Minneapolis-based writer and Master Gardener. Follow her gardening blog at [www.everydaygardener.com](http://www.everydaygardener.com).