

IN EVERY ISSUE: OUR READERS' BEST TIPS

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1 'Crested Surf' crested Japanese painted fern

Athyrium niponicum

While this Japanese painted fern has the same rich color you've come to love, 'Crested Surf' has a fork at the tip of each pinna, or leaflet, adding even more great texture to this shade garden staple.

Perennial **Best feature:** Shades of gray and green foliage with forked, or crested, leaf tips **Soil:** Average, well-drained **Size:** 14 to 18 in. tall, 18 to 20 in. wide **Cold hardy:** USDA zones 3 to 9 **Introducer:** Proven Winners **Source:** Garden Crossings, www.gardencrossings.com, 616-875-6355

2 'Kaleidoscope' Jacob's Ladder

Polemonium yezoense

Pink, green and cream show up on the leaves of 'Kaleidoscope' Jacob's ladder in spring. By summer the cream takes over with a flush of pink.

Perennial **Best feature:** Beautiful variegation and blue-purple flowers in late spring to early summer **Light:** Part shade **Soil:** Moist, well-drained **Size:** 24 to 26 in. tall, 18 to 20 in. wide **Cold hardy:** USDA zones 5 to 9 **Introducer:** Darwin Perennials® **Source:** Local garden centers

3 'Lemon Snap' hosta

Hosta hybrid

This little hosta will turn heads at the front of the border. Bright yellow cup-shaped leaves show off red petioles, or stems, and the color works its way up into the leaf.

Perennial **Best feature:** Cup-shaped yellow leaves on red stems, purple summer flowers **Light:** Part shade **Soil:** Moist, well-drained **Size:** 10 in. tall, 20 in. wide **Cold hardy:** USDA zones 3 to 9 **Introducer:** Bob Solberg **Source:** Green Hill Farm, www.hostahosta.com, 919-309-0649

4 Nimbus™ Pink columbine meadow rue

Thalictrum aquilegifolium

Deer and rabbit resistant, Nimbus Pink puts on quite a show with loads of powder puff blooms in spring. Don't like pink? Try Nimbus White.

Perennial **Best feature:** Fluffy pink flowers in spring **Light:** Full sun to part shade **Soil:** Moist, well-drained **Size:** 24 to 28 in. tall, 12 to 16 in. wide **Cold hardy:** USDA zones 5 to 9 **Introducer:** Terra Nova® Nurseries **Source:** Plant Delights Nursery, Inc., www.plantdelights.com, 919-772-4794

5 Hillside Splashdance Japanese bugbane

Actaea japonica

Showy flowers and variegated foliage make this Japanese bugbane a standout in the shade garden. Even moisture and humus-rich soil will help plants look their best.

Perennial **Best feature:** Variegated foliage and white blooms in fall **Light:** Part to full shade **Soil:** Moist, well-drained **Size:** 12 to 18 in. tall, 12 to 24 in. wide **Cold hardy:** USDA zones 4 to 7 **Introducer and source:** Hillside Nursery, www.hillsidenursery.biz

PHOTOS: Courtesy of Proven Winners (1); courtesy of Walter Blom Plants (2); courtesy of Bob Solberg (3); courtesy of TERRA NOVA® Nurseries, Inc., www.terravanurseries.com (4); courtesy of Hillside Nursery (5)



