

# Alabama GARDENER

ALABAMA'S OWN GUIDE TO GREAT GARDENING & LANDSCAPING



*What's New &  
Exciting for 2009!*

**ANYONE CAN COMPOST**

*And We'll Show  
You How!*

**HOW TO ENTICE BIRDS TO  
YOUR ALABAMA GARDEN**

**THE TOP 10  
HERBS FOR THE SOUTH**

*Also inside!*

**THE BEST VARIETIES FOR THE  
ALABAMA VEGETABLE GARDEN**

**A DO-IT-YOURSELF WATER  
FEATURE IN 6 EASY STEPS**

**ALABAMA HOT PLANTS** CALADIUM • TWINING SNAPDRAGON

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## On the Cover

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**New Plants for 2009**

*This month we take a look at some new varieties being offered up by growers for the home gardener*

*Photo courtesy of Anthony Tesselaar.*

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Alabama Gardener  
(ISSN-1539-4808)

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Periodical Postage rate paid at Ruston, Louisiana Post Office and additional mailing offices.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Alabama Gardener, PO Box 13070, Ruston, LA 71273-3070.

Subscriptions: \$24.95 for one year (nine issues)

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Nemesia Bedazzle™ 'Topaz'  
from Novalis® Plants that  
Work® By Color™.

Photo courtesy of Novalis® Plants that Work®.

# Hot Plants for 2009

## Exciting new plants for southern gardens

Story by Gaye Rice Ingram

Ask a southern gardener about his or her favorite garden plants and you are likely to hear the history of that Lady Banks rose that tumbles over the pergola (a great-grandmother brought it to Alabama from South Carolina in the 1840s) or the rain lilies that spring miraculously from the poor sandy soil at the foot of the back steps (the owner dug them from a family homeplace when she moved into her first home and they've been moving with her ever since). Every December my sister's Christmas cactus blooms its head off, just like its parent that grew next to our grandmother's front

door, a plant her mother had brought from Tennessee. Written in careful script across the bottom of an early photograph is not their names, but "The Japonica." An offspring of that *Camellia japonica* blooms faithfully in my garden today and accounts for the others that fill the garden's winters with bloom.

Like southerners in general, southern gardeners care deeply about their pasts. They preserve and nurture the old garden plants that have people and places attached to them and that have stood the tests of time.

On the other hand, no one loves new plants more than southern gardeners. Faced with long hot summers, mildew and blackspot, bugs and pests beyond number, southern gardeners are always on the lookout for improved varieties of old favorites or new plants that will add a little no-hassle pizzazz to the coming year. From the many fine introductions to the horticultural trade in 2009, we've selected a group we believe readers will find particularly useful in a year when gardeners are demanding more value for their plant dollars.

While we are thinking of shade plants, Terra Nova Nurseries this year is introducing two dramatic new varieties – the tropical begonia, ‘Curly Fireflush’™ begonia and a much-improved pulmonaria, ‘Silver Bouquet’™ pulmonaria. A spiraled design highlights ‘Curly Fireflush’™ and a red edge and center contrasts with the deep-green leaves. It thrives in humidity, and a single plant placed among ferns creates instant drama. Hardy in Zones 11-13, ‘Curly Fireflush’™ has a mounding habit that makes it a good summer bedding plant in most of the South, and the bright red coloration of emerging green leaves makes it a good container plant and mixer. In organic soil, it forms mounds of 25 inches. Imagine its picking up the color of a Japanese maple like ‘Fireglow’ (*Acer palmatum* ‘Fireglow’) or in a container with Festival Grass™ (*Cordyline hybrida bansii* x *australis* x *pumillo*), available from Tesselaar.

I think it’s hard to find a less-than-terrific pulmonaria. Despite warnings to the contrary, in my Zone 8 garden *Pulmonaria longifolia* ssp. grows disease-free and large, even when neglected in periods of drought. The mottled silver lance-shaped leaves shine and cool down summer heat and afford interesting contrast with hostas and other shade or part-shade garden plants. The pink and blue flowers that rise above the plants in early spring echo the color of flowering bulbs, roses, and perennials. The landscape value of this faithful plant extends to planting beneath high arching shrubs and in mixed borders, and it thrives in pots, where it can be easily root pruned. ‘Silver Bouquet’™ pulmonaria is an improved version of the species, bred for better markings, much larger flowers that turn from pink to blue, and more dramatic markings on its slightly shorter leaves that give the variety a more mounding habit. It also has increased mildew resistance.



*Begonia* ‘Curly Fireflush’



*Pulmonaria* ‘Silver Bouquet’

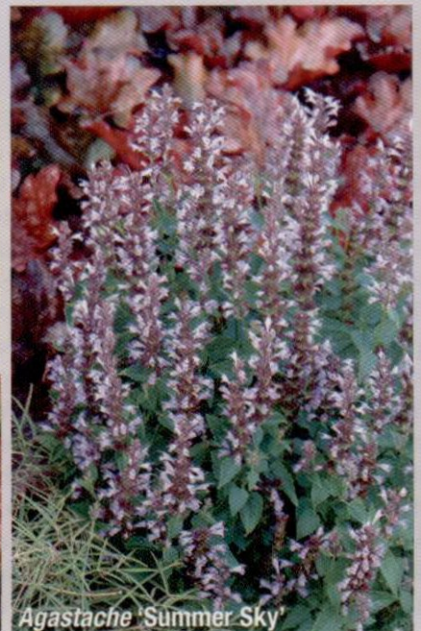
### Other new plants from Terra Nova for 2009



*Heuchera* ‘Plum Royale’



*Tiarella* ‘Mystic Mist’



*Agastache* ‘Summer Sky’



*Echinacea* ‘Tomato Soup’

Photos on this page courtesy of Terra Nova Nurseries, Inc.