

REGIONAL PLANT PICKS: The best summer-flowering shrubs

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HEALTHY  
GARDEN

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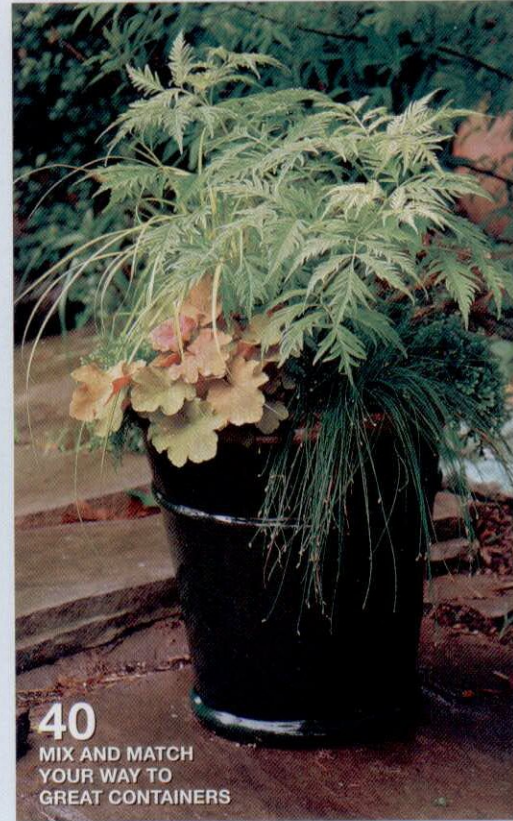
The Drucker Garden in Wilmette, Illinois, designed by Doug Hoerr and Ryan Kettlekamp.  
Photo by Daryl Beyers



The Taunton Press  
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**40**  
MIX AND MATCH  
YOUR WAY TO  
GREAT CONTAINERS



**34**  
A FRONT-YARD  
GARDEN IN  
JUST ONE YEAR



One of the early challenges of my job as head gardener on a north Florida estate was to provide nearly continuous color and interest from early spring through fall—a period of nearly 10 months.

When I first undertook the task, it seemed quite daunting. In the years since, I've grown countless plants, observed many bloom cycles, and, through a lot of trial and error, I've assembled a collection of plants that give me nearly continuous color the entire growing season.

While a portion of this collection is made up of flowering shrubs, I rely on a good selection

of reblooming perennials to fill beds and borders with ongoing color. Some of these grand performers have naturally long blooming periods, and others can be nudged into reblooming with a little effort. Here's a short list of some of my favorites that will provide you with color from spring until frost.

'Wonder of Staffa' aster (*Aster* × *frikartii* 'Wonder of Staffa', USDA Hardiness Zones 5–8, bottom left photo, p. 30) is an excellent repeat bloomer, lasting from midsummer until well into fall. It produces knockout, electric blue flowers over 2 inches across surrounding a pale yellow eye. The stems are the perfect



# encore perennials

These tried-and-true favorites don't stop blooming



addition to cut-flower arrangements. This selection is similar to the 2-foot-tall lavender-blue 'Mönch' Frikart's aster (*Aster* × *frikartii* 'Mönch', Zones 5–8), but the color of the blooms is lighter and the plant can grow slightly taller, finishing out at nearly 3 feet, and 1 to 2 feet wide. The bloom period is naturally quite long, so deadheading isn't really necessary; if carried out, cuts should be made carefully because the new buds develop close to the old. Cutting the plants back by half or more in mid-spring helps make them more compact and can also delay flowering. 'Wonder of Staffa' grows well in full sun and average, well-drained soil.

It's a bit tender, so if grown in colder climates, it will appreciate some winter protection.

'Just Plum Happy' daylily (*Hemerocallis* 'Just Plum Happy', Zones 3–9, bottom right photo, p. 30), one of the newer arrivals from the Happy Ever Appster® series, is perhaps one of the best reblooming daylilies around. Though diminutive, not reaching much more than 12 to 16 inches high and 18 to 23 inches wide, it is startling because of its large, 5- to 6-inch-wide flowers. The peachy pink blooms with a dark plum eye begin to open in early summer and keep on coming until well into fall. This hardy, repeat bloomer needs little help. It prefers a



# nials

by Richard Devine

after just one performance





**'Fragrant Angel' coneflower**  
Zones 3 to 9 • Full sun to partial shade



**'Wonder of Staffa' aster**  
Zones 5 to 8 • Full sun

**'Just Plum Happy' daylily**  
Zones 3 to 9 • Full sun



rich, organic, well-draining soil and does just as well in the dappled sun of the South as it does in the full sun of the North. 'Just Plum Happy' is a bright, cheery delight as it rings in the welcome days of summer.

Come early summer, **'Fragrant Angel' coneflower** (*Echinacea purpurea* 'Fragrant Angel', Zones 3–9) sends up strong, multibranched stems, up to 30 to 40 inches tall and 24 inches wide, bearing 4- to 5-inch-wide flowers, each with a double row of white petals and a central orange-yellow cone. The blooms look great both close-up and from a distance, and are wonderful fresh or dried for arrangements. Even without deadheading, 'Fragrant Angel' will bloom all summer long. As with many perennials, the bloom can be delayed into fall by cutting stems back one-third to one-half in late spring before flowering begins. This perennial has become a mainstay in my gardens. It seems to thrive on neglect and will perform under hot, dry conditions once established. For the reward of abundant flowers that last all summer, however, give 'Fragrant Angel' full sun or partial shade and light, loamy soil with even moisture.

**'Goldsturm' coneflower** (*Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm', Zones 4–9) is certainly an oldie but a goodie. Hailing from a tough, long-lived clan, this husky variety produces 3- to 4-inch-wide, golden yellow flowers atop 2- to 3-foot-tall stems on a plant 1½ feet wide. The flowers begin to form and grow skyward in late spring; they open in mid-