

GEORGIA
GOLD
 MEDAL
 PLANTS

WINTER ANNUAL

**Amazon
 Dianthus
 Series**

*Dianthus
 barbatus*
 'Amazon'
 full sun



HERBACEOUS PERENNIAL

**Rozanne
 Cranesbill
 Hardy
 Geranium**

*Geranium
 'Rozanne'*
 full sun/light
 shade

Zones 5-8



**2008
 WINNERS**

Sweet William, *Dianthus barbatus*, was a popular plant in grandmother's garden. Today, thanks to the introduction of the 'Amazon' series, this old-fashioned plant is making a dramatic comeback.

The first introduction, called 'Neon Duo', made its debut in 2002 and was an instant sensation among landscapers and home gardeners. It bears clusters of bright cherry red to purple flowers on the same plant and makes a dazzling statement wherever it is planted.

Other introductions in this series soon followed, including Bouquet Purple, Neon Cherry, Neon Purple, and Rose Magic. They are prized for unique variations in flower color, often on the same plant. The flowers are sweetly fragrant, and attract hummingbirds and butterflies.

The Amazon dianthus series are cool-season annuals, so plant them in fall for winter and spring color. Good companion plants are pansies, parsley, ornamental cabbage and ornamental kale. In some locations, they may live two years, but it's best to grow them like an annual.

The plants have strong stems, easily reaching 24 inches in height, making them excellent for cut floral arrangements. They hold up in a vase for up to two weeks.

All the plants in the series prefer full sun and well-drained soil. Like other annuals, they benefit from organic matter, like compost, added to the planting area. Fertilize at planting, in late winter and again in spring with a granular fertilizer, such as 10-10-10, 16-4-8 or 12-4-8. Amazon dianthus also adapt well to containers.

To ensure a continuous display of blooms and maintain a neat appearance, pinch out the faded blooms.

Cranesbill refers to a type of hardy perennial geranium, prized for its toughness and long bloom period. The plant gets its name from the long, slender beak-like fruit produced after flowering.

Today, cranesbill geraniums are among the hottest plants in the landscape industry, following the introduction of one called 'Rozanne' in 2001. Gardeners and landscapers throughout the Southeast are sing-

ing the praises of this exciting new plant, calling it a floral blockbuster and an exceptional performer, even in the unrelenting summer heat and humidity of the Southeast.

Rozanne Cranesbill Hardy Geranium grows in a well-rounded mound to a height of 18 to 20 inches. From late May until frost, the plant produces an abundance of blue-violet flowers with pale centers, approximately 2 inches across. Deeply-lobed foliage turns brownish red in fall and is quite showy.

Plant Rozanne Cranesbill Hardy Geranium in well-drained, amended soil and full sun to lightly shaded sites. Fertilize at planting time with a complete granular fertilizer, such as 10-10-10, 16-4-8 or 12-4-8, then repeat the application once or twice more during the growing season.

The plant is a vigorous grower and is likely to decline in bloom during mid-summer when the sprawling foliage competes for the plant's energy. At that time, a light shearing will encourage new growth and more flowers to brighten the fall landscape. After the first frost, cut back the plant and mulch it to provide a warm winter rest.

Use Rozanne Cranesbill Hardy Geranium in perennial borders, rock gardens or decorative containers.

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EVERGREEN VINE

Pride of Augusta Carolina Jessamine

*Gelsemium
caroliniana* 'Pride
of Augusta'

full sun/part
shade

Zones 7-10



Gardeners are always searching for ways to disguise a fence, create privacy, cast shade over a patio, or add low-maintenance color to the landscape. Pride of Augusta Carolina Jessamine is an excellent choice for all these uses.

This double-flowered form of our native Carolina Jessamine has bright-yellow, tubular flowers are about 1-inch across and borne in clusters along the stems. Bloom time varies from February to April, depending on geographic location and location within the landscape. Although the spring bloom is most dramatic, additional blossoms are produced sporadically throughout the growing season. Peak bloom lasts two to four weeks.

Also called 'Plena' in some catalogs, this Jessamine is a twining evergreen vine for sun or partial shade. It grows to a manageable 10 to 20 feet and is not invasive. Once established, is it low-maintenance, pest-free and deer resistant.

Like other Carolina Jessamines, Pride of Augusta needs help climbing a support, since it lacks the tendrils and holdfasts that other vines use to cling to a structure. Nylon fishing line wrapped around a post can be used to help guide the vine upward. As it climbs, the plant produces numerous shoots along its main stems, which weep downward if left untrained. Occasional pruning of these shoots directs the energy of the plant upward instead of outward.

Pride of Augusta Carolina Jessamine is a versatile vine. Not only does it adapt well to arbors, trellises and fences, it also can be used to cascade over large containers or walls. The bright yellow flowers contrast particularly well with blues and whites.

DECIDUOUS SHRUB

Paperbush *Edgeworthia chrysantha*

filtered shade

Zones 7-10



Follow your nose to Paperbush, *Edgeworthia chrysantha*, and it will be one of those "gotta-have-it" plants for your landscape. Its heavenly scent blankets the mid-winter landscape and excites the senses, quickly drawing you to the source – clusters of creamy yellow flowers cascading downward from dark brown stems. You'll want to touch the flowers to assure yourself they are real.

Paperbush is a deciduous shrub, 4 to 6 feet tall and 5 feet wide. Coarse-textured, summer foliage is somewhat tropical in appearance, with leaves 4 to 6 inches long and

two-inches wide. They are bluish-green on top and silvery-green below. As fall approaches, the older foliage gradually turns yellow and drops. After the first hard freeze the remaining foliage sheds, exposing the emerging flower buds.

The young silvery flower buds turn white as they expand, then creamy yellow when open. The flowers consist of dozens of tiny florets borne in clusters, 1 to 2 inches in diameter, suspended like bells on short stalks.

Smooth, chocolate-brown bark creates a striking contrast to the flowers while the dark-colored, leafless stems add a dramatic silhouette to the winter landscape, particularly when they are backed up by evergreens.

Paperbush prefers filtered shade and moist, yet well-drained soils to grow and perform well. It does not like drought or wet feet. Organic matter added to the planting area and mulch over the soil surface are recommended.

Paperbush is a plant for all seasons. Enjoy its showy, fragrant flowers and attractive bark from December to February and its bold, pest-free foliage from March to October.

DECIDUOUS TREE

American Hornbeam *Carpinus caroliniana*

full sun/shade

Zones 3-9



Adaptability to a wide variety of soils and growing situations is a criteria considered when choosing a Gold Medal plant. American Hornbeam, *Carpinus caroliniana*, fits this to a tee. This native tree grows from Nova Scotia to Florida and west to Texas, so it certainly has proven its adaptability over a wide range of climates and soil types.

American Hornbeam is an excellent alternative to Bradford Pear, which has problems with weak wood and breakage during storms. Its broad, oval growth habit, similar Bradford Pear, reaches 30 to 40 feet high and 30 feet wide at maturity. Dense foliage casts cooling shade in summer, then turns shades of yellow, orange, or red in fall.

American Hornbeam is sometimes called Ironwood to describe its very hard wood and dark-red to brown twigs. Early settlers valued the durability of the wood and used it for split-rail fences and fence posts. The tree is also called Muscledwood for its smooth, slate-gray bark that becomes ridged with age, looking much like rippling arm muscles of a well-conditioned athlete.

American Hornbeam bears separate male and female flowers on the same tree. In late summer, the female flowers become distinctive clusters of winged nutlets that hang down from the twigs on short stalks.

An interesting use for American Hornbeam, other than as a specimen tree, is to plant it as a hedge or screen plant and to shear it into a formal box-like shape. Although this greatly increases the maintenance requirement of the plant, it adds an interesting, somewhat European element to the landscape.

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Prepared by Gary L. Wade and Bodie V. Pennisi,
Extension Horticulturists, The University of Georgia.