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All-America Selections winners for 2017: outstanding ornamentals and edible crops for producers and home gardens

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Abstract

Seventeen cultivars became All-America Selections (AAS) National Award Winners for 2017. AAS includes a network of over 80 trial grounds across the United States and Canada where new, never-before-sold cultivars are "Tested Nationally and Proven Locally®" by skilled, impartial AAS Judges. Only the best performers are declared AAS Winners. Once these new cultivars are announced as AAS Winners, they are available for immediate sale and distribution. An additional seven cultivars were selected as AAS Regional Award Winners for 2017. Regional winners undergo the same trialing process as national winners, but are recognized as cultivars that exhibit outstanding performance in specific regional climates.

AAS NATIONAL WINNERS FOR 2017

Abelmoschus esculentus 'Candle Fire' (F₁ okra)

A high-performing, unique red okra with pods that are round, not ribbed, and a brighter red color than the reddish-burgundy okras currently available. Plants thrive in the heat. Fruit are suitable for both kitchen and ornamental uses. Aged fruit can be used in flower arrangements and dry seed can be used to brew caffeine-free coffee. Bred by Known-You Seed.

Capsicum annuum 'Chili Pie' (F₁ pepper)

This unique, miniature bell pepper is mildly hot when fruits turn red. Plants are compact, easy to grow, and adapt well to containers or small gardens. Foliage is dark green, and plants can set fruit under hot, humid conditions. Bred by Clover Seed Co., Ltd.

Capsicum baccatum 'Aji Rico' (F₁ pepper)

This hybrid hot pepper matures early for short-season production. The large plants produce many thin-walled, crunchy peppers with a narrow, conical shape. The peppers mature from green to red and can be eaten at any stage, having a refreshing citrus flavor and warm heat level, perfect for eating fresh or use in salsas or hot sauces. Bred by PanAmerican Seed.

Capsicum baccatum 'Mad Hatter' (F₁ pepper)

'Mad Hatter' peppers have a novel, three-sided shape and a refreshing, citrusy floral flavor that remains sweet, only occasionally expressing mild heat near the seeds. Plants are vigorous, robust, and easy to grow. The abundant fruits may be used raw in salads, pickled, or stuffed with cheese. Bred by PanAmerican Seed.

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***Catharanthus roseus* 'Mega Bloom Orchid Halo' (F₁ vinca)**

'Mega Bloom Orchid Halo' vinca produces huge, bright, rich purple blossoms with a wide white eye. Plants maintain a nice, dense habit with flowers staying on top of the foliage. Plants withstand heat and humidity without succumbing to disease. Growers will like the early bloom time, compactness in the greenhouse, and plant uniformity. Bred by AmeriSeed.

***Catharanthus roseus* 'Mega Bloom Pink Halo' (F₁ vinca)**

'Mega Bloom Pink Halo' vinca produces huge, soft pink flowers with a wide white eye. Plants maintain a nice, dense habit with flowers staying on top of the foliage. Plants tolerate heat and humidity and are resistant to disease. Growers will like the early flowering, compact habit in the greenhouse, and plant uniformity. Bred by AmeriSeed.

***Celosia argentea* 'Asian Garden' (spiked celosia)**

Asian Garden displays good branching with an almost bushy growth habit and early to bloom flower spikes. Plants continue to produce spikes on sturdy stems, keeping their bright pink color all summer long. Flowers are a magnet for pollinators. Bred by Murakami Seed Co., Ltd.

***Citrullus lanatus* 'Gold in Gold' (F₁ watermelon)**

The outer color of the 11- to 16-pound fruit of 'Gold in Gold' is yellow with golden stripes, while the inner flesh is an attractive orange/gold. Plants are high yielding, disease resistant, and have a strong rind that resists cracking and bursting. Bred by Asia Seed Co., Ltd.

***Citrullus lanatus* 'Mini Love' (F₁ watermelon)**

The shorter vines (3-4 feet) of 'Mini Love' produce up to six fruits, so plants can be grown in smaller spaces. This personal-sized, deep red-fleshed Asian watermelon has a high sugar content with a thin, but strong, rind. Bred by HM-Clause.

***Dianthus* 'Supra Pink' (F₁ interspecific dianthus)**

Compact, bushy plants (less than 1 foot in height) are prolifically in producing flowers with novel mottled pink flowers sporting frilly petal edges that hold up from spring through fall. No deadheading is required. Bred by Hem Genetics.

***Foeniculum vulgare* 'Antares' (F₁ bulb fennel)**

'Antares' fennel may be used as an edible bulb, for its ornamental fronds, as a seed producer, or as a food source for caterpillars of the swallowtail butterfly. The bulbs are uniform and pure white with a much improved, almost sweet, licorice/anise flavor in comparison with other market varieties. Plants are also slower to bolt. Bred by Bejo Seeds, Inc.

***Pelargonium Calliope*® Medium Dark Red (interspecific geranium)**

Calliope® Medium Dark Red geranium is an interspecific hybrid with zonal-type flowers and leaves. Plants have a mounded, semi-spreading growth habit with strong stems supporting the flower heads that are loaded with deep red flowers. Plants are more heat and drought tolerant than older geraniums. Plants are vegetatively propagated. Bred by Syngenta Flowers.

***Phaseolus vulgaris* 'Seychelles' (pole bean)**

'Seychelles' pole bean produces high yields of long (5- to 6-inch), uniform, straight, stringless pods with an excellent flavor. Whether grown in the garden or in a patio container, 'Seychelles' grows 7 to 9 feet tall on vigorous dark green vines and should be grown on supports. Bred by Bakker Brothers/Pure Line Seeds, Inc.

***Solanum lycopersicum* 'Midnight Snack' (F₁ tomato)**

This unique indigo-type cherry tomato ripens to red with a beautiful glossy black-purple overlay when exposed to sunlight. The indeterminate vines produce an abundance of healthy, antioxidant-containing fruit. Bred by PanAmerican Seed.

***Solanum lycopersicum* 'Patio Choice Yellow' (F₁ tomato)**

This compact, determinate tomato was developed specifically for small spaces and container gardens. Short vines (only 18 inches tall) produce large yields of one-half-ounce, bright yellow, mild flavored cherry tomatoes. Bred by Seeds by Design.

***Verbena peruviana* EnduraScape™ Pink Bicolor (verbena)**

Vigorous plants are sturdy spreaders that display abundant, soft pink flowers that darken in intensity toward the center of the flower. Plants can tolerate drought and heat, plus survive cooler temperatures down to the low teens. Plants are vegetatively propagated. Bred by Ball FloraPlant.

***Zinnia hybrida* 'Profusion Red' (zinnia)**

The original Profusion zinnias were ground-breaking plants because of their compact form, disease resistance, earliness, continuous flowering through the season, and ease in growing. The true red color of this latest Profusion zinnia does not fade in the summer sun. Uniform plants and outstanding greenhouse and garden performance will be important for growers producing 'Profusion Red' zinnias for retail sales. Bred by Sakata Seed Corporation.

AAS REGIONAL WINNERS FOR 2017

***Capsicum annuum* 'Sweetie Pie' (F₁ pepper) (Regions: Southeast, Heartland, Northeast)**

'Sweetie Pie' is a miniature bell pepper that is easy to grow with excellent fruit set even under hot and humid conditions. The small, 3-ounce peppers are thick-walled, sweet, and flavorful. Bred by Clover Seed Co., Ltd.

***Cucurbita moschata* 'Honeybaby' (F₁ winter squash) (Regions: Heartland)**

The short, wide fruits of 'Honeybaby' are sweet and nutty, and slightly larger and meatier than similar varieties. The vines grow 2 to 3 feet in a semi-bushy habit. Bred by Seeds by Design.

***Cucurbita pepo* 'Sugaretti' (F₁ winter squash) (Regions: Southeast)**

This new spaghetti winter squash produces a generous crop of mid-sized, orange-fleshed, striped fruit on semi-bushy, determinate vines with good powdery mildew resistance. The hard shells protect the flesh for a long shelf life. Bred by Seeds by Design.

***Penstemon barbatus* 'Twizzle Purple' (F₁ penstemon) (Regions: Southeast, Heartland)**

Vibrant purple blooms present a new and unique color in penstemon. This North American native blooms profusely with 1-inch tubular flowers on long, slender stalks that grow up to 35 inches high, making this cultivar a magnet for pollinators from mid- to late summer. Bred by Van Hemert & Co. Seeds.

***Petunia ×atkinsiana* 'Evening Scentsation' (F₁ petunia) (Regions: Heartland, Great Lakes, West/Northwest)**

'Evening Scentsation' is a medium-sized multiflora petunia that produces fragrant flowers with notes of hyacinth, sweet honey and rose. The scent is stronger in the evening hours. Bred by Takii & Co., Ltd.

***Pisum sativum* 'Patio Pride' (pea) (Regions: Southeast)**

This compact pea produces sweet, uniform pods that are very tender when harvested early. This cool-season crop needs only 40 days to maturity. Succession plantings yield a consistent harvest over many weeks. Bred by Terra Organics.

***Solanum lycopersicum* 'Chef's Choice Yellow' F₁ (tomato) (Regions: Southeast)**

'Chef's Choice Yellow' is the fourth addition to the popular Chef's Choice tomato series, producing hearty beefsteak-type tomatoes with a showy yellow color. Disease-resistant plants produce 30 or more 10-ounce fruits on 5-foot, indeterminate vines. Bred by Seeds by Design

In summer 2017, the first three AAS National Winners for 2018 were announced:

***Capsicum annuum* 'Onyx Red' (ornamental pepper)**

Compact, well-branched plants display dark black foliage that contrasts well with a multitude of shiny red fruits. Bred by Takii & Co., Ltd.

***Solanum lycopersicum* 'Red Racer' (F₁ tomato)**

Cocktail-sized tomatoes with great taste are produced on determinate plants that perform well in small gardens and containers. Bred by EarthWork Seeds and distributed by Garden Trends Wholesale.

***Zea mays* 'American Dream' (sweet corn)**

Vigorous, healthy plants produce ears with very tender, super sweet, bicolored kernels with good tip fill. Bred by Illinois Foundation Seeds, Inc.

More information on AAS and AAS winners is available at: www.all-americanselections.org.