

MESSENGER-INQUIRER



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Plant Award Winners for Our Garden
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With the vast numbers of perennial ornamental plants to select from to purchase, how do I decide what to plant in my garden? What will perform well and fit? Consider looking at the many plant associations that name plants of the year or other special plant award winners with outstanding performance across the United States for home gardens. Perennial Plant of the Year[®], Hosta of the Year, Stout Silver Medal Award for daylilies, and Peony of the Year are popular plant honors.

The Perennial Plant Association annually names an award winner. The 2025 Perennial Plant of the Year[®] is *Pycnanthemum muticum*, clustered mountain mint. Other common names include blunt mountain mint or short-toothed mountain mint. This perennial is native to meadows and open woodlands in Eastern United States toward the west to Texas. The tall 2-to-3-foot plants have upright stems with many branches at the top. It forms a clump with a spread of 1 to 3 feet. This plant spreads by rhizomes so it can spread farther. It is reportedly not invasive like true mints, but could become weedy. The plant is propagated by seed or division. According to the Perennial Plant Association, to slow down the spread of the plant, dig and remove rhizomes along the edge of the clump and pull the shoots in the spring. It will grow in

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full sun to part shade and prefer moist, fertile, well-draining soil but will tolerate dry conditions once established.

Pink flowers are produced mostly at the terminal end of the stem in a cluster from mid to late summer. The flower is described as two-lipped and tubular in shape about 0.5 inch wide. A pair of silvery bracts, modified leaves, are located below the flower cluster. When looking across a grouping of this plant, the silvery color appears to be a light frost or snow resting on top of the plant. The nectar of the small blossoms attract butterflies, hummingbirds, and numerous pollinators. The foliage when crushed gives off a spearmint aroma which is unpalatable to deer and rabbits. This is a great addition to a pollinator garden. Clustered mountain mint can be used in native plant gardens, as part of a background border, or cottage garden.

The American Hosta Growers Association chose 'Skywriter' (*Hosta* 'Skywriter') as the 2025 Hosta of the Year. This medium sized hosta is 15 inches tall and 30 inches wide with an upright to semi-upright growth habit. A unique characteristic of this plant is the dark purple petioles holding up the leaves and purple color of the flower scape, which is the stem with the flowers. Other interesting features are the ruffled leaves which are medium blue on top and white on the backside. The lavender flowers of this hosta are produced in late summer

Hostas grow best in moist, well-drained soil. Also, they prefer to grow in shade, but would tolerate morning sun.

The 2024 daylily awards are named given after the growing season in late summer to fall. The most recent Stout Silver Medal Award winner named by the American Daylily Society for 2024 is 'Breathing in Snowflakes'. This is the highest award given to the daylily which performs the best over a wide geographic area.

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The flower color of ‘Breathing in Snowflakes’ is described by the American Daylily Society as “light lavender with large pale yellow throat surrounded by slightly darker lavender band and almost white halo”. The flower form is described as an unusual form, cascade. The large blooms are 6.5 inches across. It blooms in midseason and is reported to rebloom. Even though a flower is only open for one day, the plant is covered by about 22 blossoms opening over time. The flower scape reaches 29 inches in height. The flowers are fragrant.

Daylilies prefer full sun but can grow in partial shade but will produce fewer flowers. They are desirable perennials for their beautiful blossoms, low maintenance, green foliage, and tolerance to both poor soil and drought conditions. Plants are propagated by division.

The American Peony Society selected ‘Lancaster Imp’ (*Paeonia*) as the 2025 Gold Medal Award winner. The cream-white, double flower looks like a snowball sitting on top of a plate formed by the guard petals. A red fleck may be seen on some petals. The flower is fragrant and works well as a cut flower. The flower stems are sturdy and straight. Flowers are held above deep green foliage. The plant stems are strong and able to support the blossoms. The bloom time is considered midseason from May to early June.

The plant of ‘Lancaster Imp’ reaches 26-30 inches tall. It is easy to grow. It can serve as a background for other perennials. Peonies should be planted in full sun and well-drained soil but will grow in a variety of soil conditions. They are propagated by division mostly to share with family.

For more information about plant honorees, contact the Daviess County Cooperative Extension Service at 270-685-8480 or annette.heisdorffer@uky.edu.

Annette’s tip:

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The second-best time to sow grass seed is from mid-February to mid-March and not later than mid-April. Due to competition from weeds and moisture stress, sowings made from late spring to midsummer are seldom successful.

Upcoming Events:

On February 4 “Propagating Common Houseplants” is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. and the Owensboro Regional Farmers’ Informational Meeting is at 6:00 p.m. Both will be held at the Daviess County Cooperative Extension Service Office.

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