

**Friday's Feature****By****Theresa Friday**

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**Exciting new plants are named All-America Selection winners**

Gardeners are always looking for reliable new plants. One source helping us judge new plants is All-America Selections. Each year new plants are chosen by a network of independent judges who determined their garden performance.

All-America Selections is a nonprofit organization that tests newly developed cultivars of flowers and vegetables in garden plots all across the United States. Duplicating conditions found in average home gardens, the testing program is independent and unbiased.

The 2007 All-America Selection Winners were judged in side-by-side comparison tests with standard varieties and were selected based entirely on their performance.

Celosia 'Fresh Look Gold' is the 2007 Flower Award winner. Correctly named, these plants look as fresh in September as they did when planted in the spring. 'Fresh Look Gold' plants have bright golden plumes that remain colorful all season, not "browning" with maturity.

Since the plumes remain attractive, there is no reason to deadhead and no pest problems are expected, thus it needs little maintenance in a sunny garden. It is a carefree annual useful in any garden.

'Fresh Look Gold' proved to be heat, humidity and rain tolerant in AAS Trials across North America. Plants will grow to a height of one foot. This celosia is one of the best annuals for season-long performance.

Vinca 'Pacifica Burgundy Halo' is a 2007 Bedding Plant winner. It is the first Vinca with a burgundy halo surrounding a large white center. The vivid contrast of this bicolor bloom makes it exceptionally visible in the garden. Early flowering with a well balanced plant form, 'Pacifica Burgundy Halo' is highly recommended for spring or summer plantings.

With proven heat and drought tolerance, the garden performance of 'Pacifica Burgundy Halo' is assured. In a full sun garden location, these Vinca plants will reach a foot tall and wide when mature.

Due to the ease of growing and continuous flowering, 'Pacifica Burgundy Halo' is perfectly suitable for any garden or container that receives sun. Because Vinca needs less water than other annuals, planting 'Pacifica Burgundy Halo' in containers means fewer trips with the hose to water. Gardeners can rely on this plant to provide color all summer without pinching.

Finally, the vegetable award winner named this year is Pepper 'Holy Molé.' 'Holy Molé' is the first hybrid pasilla-type pepper, which is used to make the famous molé sauce. This pepper showed improved vigor, earliness and considerably higher yield than the comparisons in side-by-side trials. A reason for the higher yield is the virus resistances bred into the variety. 'Holy Molé' is resistant to two common viruses that stunt plants and reduce pepper production.

The immature green peppers are seven to nine inches long and can be harvested in about 85 days from transplanting. If fruit is left on the plant, they will mature to a dark chocolate color. Mature plants are three feet tall; a perfect size for patio containers. 'Holy Molé' is easily grown in a sunny location and thrives on summer heat.

For more information on where you can buy the seed to start these exciting new plants, visit the All-America Selections website at [www.all-americaselections.org/Seed\\_Source.asp](http://www.all-americaselections.org/Seed_Source.asp).

Theresa Friday is the Residential Horticulture Extension Agent for Santa Rosa County. The use of trade names, if used in this article, is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. It is not a guarantee, warranty, or endorsement of the product name(s) and does not signify that they are approved to the exclusion of others. For additional information about all of the county extension services and other articles of interest go to: <http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/extension>.