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NEW GARDEN SUPERSTARS BLEND CHARM AND PRACTICALITY

From hardy hybrids to stylish, smart gardens, spring 2010 promises exciting new plants and products for garden lovers everywhere.

“People want easy plants and products that are attractive and good for the environment and perform well in their gardens,” says Susan McCoy, garden writer and trend spotter. “And that’s what the new plants and products this spring will deliver.”

McCoy reveals a few of her favorite garden superstars for spring that will chase away those winter blahs as you get ready to get your hands back in the earth and garden.

Next big thing for small gardens

McCoy loves the newest Drift Roses from The Conard-Pyle Co., introducer of the famous Knock Out family of roses. A cross between full-size groundcover roses and miniatures, both Sweet Drift and Apricot Drift Roses offer delicate, double flowers and continuous blooming throughout the season. With exceptional disease resistance and winter hardiness, these low-maintenance beauties are the perfect choice for small gardens or along paths and walkways.

Get a jump on spring

Looking to get a jump on spring planting? McCoy loves FreezePruf - a revolutionary new spray from the Liquid Fence Company (www.liquidfence.com) - that may be the “holy grail” for gardeners. Developed by botanists, FreezePruf protects your lush flower baskets, veggies, herbs and favorite plants from late spring frost/freeze and ice crystal damage. This non-toxic spray can increase a plant’s cold tolerance from 2.2 to 9.4 degrees (depending on the plant variety and the length of the frost/freeze event) and give gardeners about two additional weeks of growing and harvesting in spring and fall. It’s almost like moving your garden 200 miles further south.

Tickled pink

Pink is the new blue. The first-ever pink blueberry (www.briggsnursery.com) - Vaccinium ‘Pink Lemonade’ from Briggs Nursery - is one of the most exciting new plants McCoy has seen in years and is a must-have for your garden. ‘Pink Lemonade’ provides delicious, sweet fruit rich in anti-oxidants, plus four seasons of color: pinkish-white flowers in spring, bright pink fruit in summer, great fall color and dusky auburn stems in winter.

Growing about 5 feet around, this showy ornamental looks great as a hedge border or stand-alone shrub with the added benefit of luscious fruit in your cereal or pies - or by the handful.

Go native, go local

Native plants are clearly the next big thing in gardening, and it's easy to go native with American Beauties native plants (www.ABNativePlants.com). These native shrubs, trees, vines, grasses and perennials are hand-picked for their beauty and low-maintenance, making it simple to attract bees, birds and butterflies to a backyard habitat. The wildlife will appreciate the food and shelter, and when you purchase them, a contribution is made to the National Wildlife Federation Backyard Habitat program (www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife).

Catch daylily fever

Daylily fever is contagious and you're likely to catch the bug as you fall in love with the new fire-engine-red daylily from Centerton Nursery. McCoy loves this new, hardy, early and a repeat bloomer - Jersey Earlybird 'Cardinal'- bred by world-renown daylily hybridizer, Dr. Darrel Apps. This easy-care daylily offers early-blooming great color and reblooms multiple times throughout the season. It's pest- and drought-resistant and is perfect in beds, borders and containers. Check it out at www.centertonnursery.com and earlybirddaylily.com.

Smart and simple

Want to bring the outdoors in and grow fresh herbs (www.fertileearth.com) and vegetables in the kitchen or on the balcony? McCoy loves Simple Gardens, the innovative new plant system from Fertile Earth that comes with soil, seeds and a how-to guide packed in stylish square containers. Perfect for indoor gardens or to start seeds. They come in a variety of hip colors and make wonderful gifts. Now it's a snap to grow kitchen gardens in any bright spot -- just add water.

Grow 'em right

The new Organic Mechanics Planting Mix (www.organicmechanicsoil.com) is like having all the goodness of compost in a bag. At planting time, just mix in the nutrient-rich planting mix to revitalize your garden soil. It helps retain moisture and accelerates root-zone establishment for healthier trees, shrubs, fruits, veggies and flowers. Get it this spring in Mid-Atlantic garden centers and Whole Foods stores.

Outdoor designer decor

McCoy loves the latest “designer” doormats from Imports Unlimited (www.wholesaledoormats.com). Made from 100 percent all-natural coco, these environmentally friendly eco-mats come in array of popular designs and colors. With over 180 unique patterns to choose from, adding your own personal style, whether it’s formal, classical or whimsical, to your outdoor space is now easy and affordable.

All that jazz

For every rose lover, McCoy has discovered a new spray and way to keep roses healthy and strong. Jaz Rose Spray (www.jazsprays.com) naturally reduces damage from disease and common environmental stresses. This new plant-strengthening spray with jasmonate -- which occurs naturally in plants - provides increased resistance to disease, drought, and temperature extremes. Recently endorsed by the American Rose Society (ARS), Jaz Rose Spray boosts your plant’s natural resistance to environmental stress and encourages vigorous roots, growth and blooms.

For more information or high-res images: visit www.gardenmediagroup.com.