

Georgia “Gold Medal” Plants — Winners for Your Garden!



Japanese Plum Yew

Pink Chinese Loropetalum

Hummingbird Clethra

Annabelle Hydrangea

In the early 1990's, a group of Horticulture Professionals and faculty from the University of Georgia formed the Georgia Plant Selections Committee, Inc. The purpose of this non-profit organization is to promote the production, sale, and use of superior ornamental plants in Georgia.

Each year, the committee selects an annual flower, herbaceous perennial, a shrub, and a tree to receive its coveted Georgia Gold Medal Award for exceptional performance in the Georgia Landscape. Nurseries are notified 2-3 years in advance of the selection so that they can produce enough plants to meet increased demand. Only the best in each category can earn the award, and this growing list of plants is an excellent starting point for selecting plants that will do well in your garden or landscape. We have provided a list of Georgia Gold Medal plants for the past 5 years. Next time you are looking for a new plant for your landscape - pick a Gold Medal winner! For more information on the Georgia Gold Medal program, contact the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service or Nature Scapes, Inc.

Georgia “Gold Medal” Winners Outstanding Plants For Retailers, Growers and Landscapers

1998 Georgia Gold Medal Winners are:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Kalimeris | <i>Kalimeris pinnatifida</i> ‘Hortensis’ (<i>Asteromoea mongolica</i>) |
| Athens Gem | <i>Plectranthus</i> ‘Athens Gem’ |
| Bottlebrush Buckeye | <i>Aesculus parviflora</i> |
| Trident Maple | <i>Acer buergeranum</i> |

1997 Georgia Gold Medal Winners are:

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Blue Fan Flower | <i>Scaevola</i> ‘New Blue Wonder’ |
| Three Lobed Coneflower | <i>Rudbeckia triloba</i> |
| Pink Chinese Loropetalum | <i>Loropetalum chinese rubrum</i> |
| Yoshino Japanese Cedar | <i>Cryptomeria japonica</i> ‘Yoshino’ |

1996 Georgia Gold Medal Winners are:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Purple Wave Petunia | <i>Petunia</i> ‘Purple Wave’ |
| Wild Indigo | <i>Baptisia</i> sp. |
| Hummingbird Clethra | <i>Clethra alnifolia</i> ‘Hummingbird’ |
| Lipan Crapemyrtle | <i>Lagerstroemia</i> ‘Lipan’ |
| Sioux Crapemyrtle | <i>Lagerstroemia</i> ‘Sioux’ |
| Tonto Crapemyrtle | <i>Lagerstroemia</i> ‘Tonto’ |
| Yuma Crapemyrtle | <i>Lagerstroemia</i> ‘Yuma’ |

1995 Georgia Gold Medal Winners are:

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| New Gold Lantana | <i>Lantana</i> ‘New Gold’ |
| Blue Anise Sage | <i>Salvia guaranitica</i> |
| Annabelle Hydrangea | <i>Hydrangea</i> ‘Annabelle’ |
| Athena® Elm | <i>Ulmus parvifolia</i> Athena® |

1994 Georgia Gold Medal Winners are:

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Bath's Pink Dianthus | <i>Dianthus</i> ‘Bath's Pink’ |
| Homestead Purple Verbena | <i>Verbena</i> ‘Homestead Purple’ |
| Mount Airy Fothergilla | <i>Fothergilla gardenii</i> ‘Mount Airy’ |
| Japanese Plum Yew (low forms) | <i>Cephalotaxus harringtonia</i> |



Employee Spotlight

—Cynthia Upchurch

May 18, 1998 marked a 10-year anniversary for our Maintenance Supervisor, David Johnson.

In his honor, we had a special dinner celebration at Little Gardens Restaurant that included all managers and David's wife, Laura. It was nice to get together, enjoy good food and give a toast to such an occasion. It is vital to have such an employee as David. One who shows stability and gives his "all" to the company.

Nature Scapes reaches its 15-year anniversary in business this year.

It goes without saying that David has grown with the company. He started as a Maintenance Foreman when the company operated with 4 crews. Presently, he is the Maintenance Supervisor in an operation that oversees 50 employees. He attended Ornamental Horticulture School at North Georgia Technical and hopes to further his education in business and sales.

His outside interests include singing with the Gwinnett Choral Guild and occasionally with the Atlanta Boy's Choir Alumni. He has traveled to many foreign countries. The most recent trip was with the Gwinnett Choral to St. Petersburg, Russia to perform with their choir, Nero and other groups.

When asked what his future plans were, David replied, "For now, I hope to stay with Nature Scapes and continue to grow as it does and maintain quality and dependability in the job, as well as in my personal life."

T h a n k s D a v i d , f o r t h e l a s t 1 0 y e a r s !

A Personal View

—Cynthia Upchurch

I was asked to write the article regarding Nature Scapes fifteen-year anniversary. I could go on about how the company began, what size it is now, how many trucks are on the road, how many employees it now demands, all opposed to "when we first started." However, I would rather write about what it takes to have a successful landscape business for fifteen years.

As the wife of the owner, I have seen it all.

First, as for the owner, it takes a person that believes in himself and what he offers the client. He must have the tenacity to withstand the hard times and the smarts to keep his head on straight with the good times. In other words, a well-balanced person. He must relate well with all types of people. He must always demand quality and perfection for his clients. He must be able to keep his chin up during those rainy days. He must offer a good place to work to employ good people. He must love what he does! Yes, I know I'm his wife, but Rick does have these qualities.

Second, a company must have a strong employee base. Nature Scapes has been truly blessed with a good amount of long-term employees. We have a wonderful office staff that truly is fun and pleasant to work around. Our managers and foremen all work diligently trying to keep Rick and all of the clients happy. They all comply with strict policies and procedures. The mesh of employees we have is really good and that type of attribute reflects in our service!

Last, but certainly not least of importance in our fifteen years of success is our client base. If it weren't for you the client, Nature Scapes would not be celebrating this December. We owe everything to our clients and hope to continue serving you the best lawn maintenance and landscape service that Atlanta has to offer.

Fescue Turf Renovation

—Rodney Anderson

The hot, dry months of June, July and August have taken their toll on Fescue turf. Drought stress has caused turf to become weak or has, in extreme cases, caused turf to die back.

September is the time to aerate & overseed Fescue to re-establish the turf. If the ground is still very hard, a good watering is necessary to soften it and allow proper penetration of the aerator tines; hard ground will allow the aerator only to bounce over it. When aerating turf, do not be afraid to really "tear up the ground." Areas with trees should be done earlier so that seedlings have more time to get established before leaf fall. Be sure to keep the turf watered after the seed is down. For bare areas in the sun, it is a good idea to cover them with wheat straw after seeding to help prevent moisture evaporation. Fescue should be aerated and overseeded each year to keep its appearance lush and attractive.



Islands of Genetic Diversity

—Rick Barnes

If you have ever grown Cleome in your garden, you know that the prettiest time of day for the flowers is right at dusk, when the new florets open. This summer I had a large bed of Cleome seeded by last year's plants. One evening I was noticing it was overrunning my driveway and was contemplating removing the whole bed. Then I noticed a Hummingbird making her rounds around the evenings' newly opened flowers! I was struck by the fact that my bed of Cleome was a key ingredient in the habitat of that animal, and I began to think twice about pulling out the flowers.

I was reminded of an article that I read in the Home & Garden section of the Atlanta Journal recently. Several years ago, the superintendent of the Fuqua Conservatory at the Atlanta Botanical Garden, Ron Determann, discovered a new variety of Stoke's Aster growing on some unimproved pastureland in South Georgia. He collected some specimens of the plant and shared them with Saul Nurseries Inc., an annual and perennial grower out of Dahlonega, for propagation. When Determann later returned to the site, the original colony of *Stokesia laevis* "Omega Skyrocket" had been wiped out by the application of herbicides.

The world's plants are under siege! I recently read that, of the 270,000 species of plants on earth, 10 percent are threatened with extinction. It's even worse in the United States, where 29 percent of all plant species are threatened. Internationally, 1/3 of the Lily family, 1/3 of the Palm family, and 1/3 of economically important timber species of Southeast Asia comprise a large portion of the 38,000 species of plants struggling for survival on earth. These statistics are particularly alarming in light of the fact that natural extinctions occur at a rate of 2 species per century!

The culprit? Habitat destruction!

Plants are increasingly dependent upon small islands of habitat for their survival. Consider for example the Great Plains. This vast area once extended from Central Canada to Texas, from Arizona and Colorado on the West to as far East as a small section in Georgia! During the 19th century, westward expansion fragmented the Great Plains as roads and railroads were built, huge tracts of land fenced off, plowed, and planted with monocultural crops such as corn, wheat, or grasses for the grazing of cattle. The great herds of American bison that roamed the Great Plains, feeding on numerous species of plants, aerating and fertilizing as they roamed, were exploited nearly to the point of extinction. Fire, a natural process of fertilization, weed control, and renewal in the Great Plains, had all but been eliminated as a management tool, further rendering this vast area an artificial environment. Today, small islands of the Great Plains are being preserved by such organizations as the Nature Conservancy to insure that the genetic diversity of this once vast ecosystem is not lost forever to habitat destruction.

In 1992 at the Atlanta Botanical Garden I attended a lecture by Donald Falk, Director of the Center for Plant Conservation in St. Louis. As he painted the grim picture for me that I have expressed in the preceding paragraphs, the only question I could think about was "What can we do to curb this loss of genetic diversity?" The good news is - there are things we can do:

1. Support the Green Industry! Many growers incorporate plant species conservation into their daily operations. Without the conscientious efforts of nurseries, plants like *Stokesia laevis* "Omega Skyrocket" would be lost forever. Another example of a plant saved by the nursery industry is *Franklinia altamaha*, a tree that has not been seen in its native habitat since William Bartram, the explorer and botanist, saw it growing along the Altamaha river in South Georgia in 1790. However, even the best efforts of nurseries can be frustrating. Since *Franklinia* has not become re-established in the wild, it is now considered "genetically extinct".
2. Political involvement. Being politically active can help thwart the rampant, unplanned developmental sprawl which gobbles up habitat for the sake of "progress." Political awareness will also lead to better protection of endangered plants and animals through better, fairer laws.
3. Support groups that help protect genetic diversity! I am not a proponent of laying down in front of the bulldozers, sitting in trees, or vandalizing the property of others for the sake of stopping development. There are several excellent organizations out there such as the Nature Conservancy, which protect species and habitats by buying the lands which contain them. They also work with people to establish land use alternatives that allow economic prosperity with ecological integrity.
4. Keep on gardening! Good gardening practices are the essence of proper stewardship of the land. Each and every garden is a sanctuary from the development that surrounds it - an island of genetic diversity!

Sources cited for this article.

Atlanta Journal & Constitution "Discover" by Mike Toner Sunday, May 17, 1998

Atlanta Journal & Constitution Home & Garden, Gardener's Notebook by Martha Tate Saturday, May 30, 1998



Stokesia laevis
"Omega Skyrocket"

Who We Are



Cultivated News is published four times a year by Nature Scapes, Inc., for fifteen years a provider of landscaping, maintenance, irrigation and floriculture services to the metropolitan Atlanta area.

Nature Scapes, Inc. is a charter member of GGIA — Georgia Green Industry Association, MALTA — Metro Atlanta Landscape & Turf Association and GTA — Georgia Turfgrass Association, Inc. We also belong to the Southern Nurseryman's Association.

Nature Scapes, Inc. operates a drug-free workplace as certified by the State Board of Workers' Compensation.

If you have any topics or questions you would like to see discussed or elaborated on in a future issue of the newsletter, please call and let us know.

Nature Scapes, Inc.

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TAKE TIME

- Take time to think —
It is the source of power.
- Take time to play —
It is the secret of perpetual youth.
- Take time to pray —
It is the greatest power on earth.
- Take time to love and be loved —
It is a God-given privilege.
- Take time to be friendly —
It is the road to happiness.
- Take time to laugh —
It is the music of the soul.
- Take time to give —
It is too short a day to be selfish.
- Take time to work —
It is the price of success.



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