



# Voters pick their Farwest favorites

This year's New Varieties Showcase highlighted 39 selections, with voting taking place online

BY ZEN LANDIS

**T**HE 2020 NEW VARIETIES SHOWCASE was held online this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so Farwest Show fanatics could vote for their favorite new plant varieties from the safety of their homes, offices — or home offices.

The virtual contest, sponsored by **Hip Labels**, featured 39 of the hottest new plant introductions slated to hit the market next spring.

All were featured in the August issue of *Digger*, and at [www.FarwestShow.com](http://www.FarwestShow.com). Each selection in the showcase demonstrated improved qualities such as color, form, habit or disease resistance.

After collecting more than 1,000 votes, organizers are pleased to announce the three highest-voted plants, as well as some honorable mentions.

## FIRST PLACE:

### Treasure Island™ Makatea Sweet Potato Vine

(*Ipomoea batatas* '17-527' PPAF)

Bred by Louisiana State University (LSU) and introduced by Concept Plants.

The Treasure Island™ sweet potato series combines flavor and beauty, making it a real treasure for growers and gardeners alike. Makatea bears vigorous vines with chartreuse heart-shaped leaves which look luscious spilling out of hanging baskets or containers. At the end of the season, gardeners can harvest the edible white-flesh tubers, which are ideal for Asian and Caribbean cuisine. Available as liners and finished plants from Metrolina Greenhouses, and Raker-Roberta's Young Plants. **»»**



## New Varieties Showcase

### SECOND PLACE:

#### Alpine Wood Fern 'Jurassic Gold' (*Dryopteris wallichiana* 'Jurassic Gold' PPAF)

Discovered by Bob Hollister near the Jurassic Coast, United Kingdom and introduced by Concept Plants.

*Dryopteris* 'Jurassic Gold' is a unique fern that has an excellent spring foliage color. The young shoots are golden orange fading to bright golden-yellow and green. Compared to *Dryopteris erythrosora* (autumn fern), the new shoots of Jurassic Gold are bigger, bolder and richer in color. Its fresh orange fronds brighten up shaded places in the garden or on the terrace. Plant Jurassic Gold in a moist, humus-rich soil. It performs well in USDA Hardiness Zones 5–9 and so far, no diseases have been observed. Remove the dead leaves of this deciduous plant after winter. Available as tissue culture and liners from Emerald Coast Growers, JRT Nurseries and Meridian Young Plants.

### THIRD PLACE:

#### Clematis Little Lemons

##### (*Clematis tangutica* 'Zo14100' PPAF)

Hybridized by J. van Zoest B.V. in the Netherlands. Introduced by Concept Plants.

When life gives you Little Lemons, plant them! This unique variety was selected because of its compact size, yellow bell-shaped flowers, seed heads, and long flowering period. Perfect as a garden plant, in containers and hanging baskets. Cheerful yellow blooms contrast nicely against the shiny, compact foliage. After flowering, the shiny seed heads appear, giving an extra decorative effect. Little Lemons flowers from mid-May to early September. Prune in March to 4 inches above the ground. Available as tissue culture, liners and finished plants from JRT Nurseries and Meridian Young Plants.

### HONORABLE MENTIONS

The following plants exhibited a style and grace which set them apart in the contest and earned them runner-up titles.

**Trees:** The Miss Congeniality-Tree Award goes to ... **Ruby Sunset® Maple.** Introduced by J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.



With its compact form, heat and drought resistance and stunning scarlet fall color, this tree has earned a place in your nursery or landscape.



**Shrubs:** The Brilliant Blossom Award goes to ... **Akadama™ Hydrangea.** Introduced by Star Roses & Plants.

The vibrant flowers of this haute *Hydrangea* are guaranteed to turn heads. Rich reddish-pink flowers change to a deeper shade of magenta throughout the season, adding a splash of color to any container or flower bed.



**Perennials:** The Pinnacle of Perennials Award goes to ... **Artisan™ Coneflower 'Red Ombre'.** Introduced by PanAmerican Seed

This hot new flowering perennial is the first F1 hybrid *Echinacea* from seed and will delight growers and gardeners alike with its vermilion flowers, drought tolerance and winter hardiness.



**Annuals:** The Five-Star Foliage Award goes to ... **Heartbreaker™ Coleus.** Introduced by Ball FloraPlant

We can't help but fall in love with the velvety multi-color foliage of this

gorgeous *Solenostemon!* The frilly chartreuse margins of each leaf gives way to a luxurious maroon border which contrasts against the hot pink center.



A special thank you goes out to all the growers participating in the New Varieties Showcase this year. We also send our gratitude to the thousands of individuals who voted through the HIP Engager™ augmented reality technology and online platform.

The Farwest Show was canceled in late May, while Oregon and other states were struggling to contain the spread of COVID-19. Large public events were prohibited from taking place throughout the state by Governor Kate Brown at least through the end of September, or until treatments or vaccinations for the coronavirus were made available. As a result, the Oregon Convention Center determined it could not host the event as scheduled.

The next Farwest Show — to include the New Varieties Showcase — is scheduled to take place August 18–20, 2021 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon. ☺