

Front Lines

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Mt. Cuba's Top Performers Now Available for Retail

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Perennials are an increasingly sought-after category with gardening consumers. One of the struggles these consumers have, though, is finding the natives in the sea of other items in the nursery yard or on the benches. For gardeners in the Mid-Atlantic, this is about to get easier.

Mt. Cuba Center, the native plant garden and research facility in Delaware, is partnering with Cavano's Perennials to offer Mid-Atlantic garden centers the Top Performer program. The program is recognizable with a purple tag that designates plants as ones that have

performed exceedingly well in Mt. Cuba's rigorous multi-year trialing process.

Since Mt. Cuba began studying native plants and related cultivars for their horticultural and ecological value in 2002, the institution has evaluated and published 14 reports on various genera. The latest report features amsonia, and other trialed plants include carex, wild hydrangea, echinacea, helenium, phlox, monarda, baptisia, coreopsis, heuchera and asters. If you want to check them out for yourself, you can view them all on Mt. Cuba's website.

"We study native plants to inform home gardeners and the horticulture industry about plants that are most likely to succeed in gardens and provide attractive food sources for wildlife," said Mt. Cuba's Executive Director Jeff Downing. "Our Top Performer retail initiative is meant to take the guesswork out of plant shopping by identifying plants that have performed well over several years of close observation."

For more details, visit mtcubacenter.org/research/top-performers. **GP**