

Front Lines

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AAS Winners for 2017

Ellen C. Wells

All-America Selections released another 11 winners for 2017 recently, bringing the total number of varieties receiving AAS Winner designation for 2017 to 16. It's a colorful bunch, too, but being a winner is about more than color. It's about performance, with each variety being trialed side by side with comparative varieties considered best-in-class. So to be a winner, you've got to be more than good. You've got to be great.

What I like about the AAS winners over the last few years is the fact there have been a fair number of vegetables. This year is no different. AAS-winning vegetables in this group include:

- Fennel Antares—A national winner bred by Bejo Seed
- Pepper Mad Hatter—A national winner bred by PanAmerican Seed
- Tomato Chef's Choice Yellow—A Southeast region winner bred by Seeds by Design
- Tomato Patio Choice Yellow—A national winner bred by Seeds by Design

Ornamental winners for 2017 include some new colors in series that have excellent reputations, as well as some newbies:

- Dianthus Supra Pink—A national winner bred by Hem Genetics
- Geranium Calliope Medium Dark Red—A national winner bred by Syngenta Flowers
- Penstemon Twizzle Purple—A Heartland and Southeast regions winner bred by Van Hemert & Co.
- Verbena EnduraScape Pink Bicolor—A national winner bred by Ball FloraPlant
- Vinca Mega Bloom Orchid Halo and Pink Halo—Both national winners and both bred by AmeriSeed
- Zinnia Profusion Red—A national winner bred by Sakata Seed

These varieties will receive a full court press of consumer-focused communications in the next few months. Be prepared! As usual, AAS has bench cards and variety markers for download from the AAS website. Posters can be ordered from GardenCenterMarketing.com. **GP**