

12/1/2018

Stuff We Love

Ellen C. Wells, Jennifer Zurko, Jennifer Polanz & Chris Beytes



It Can NOT Be Killed

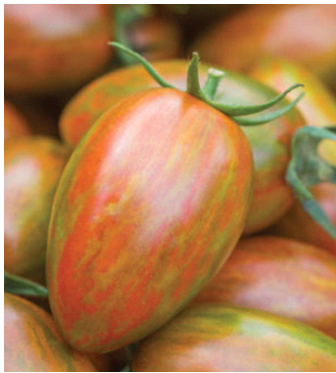
Because I've tried, believe me. I'm what you call a neglectful gardener, which we've been over in this space before. I start out, much like other gardeners, gung-ho about my garden only to realize in late July I can't recall the last time I drug my hose out to water.

That's why **Proven Winners' Lemon Coral Sedum** is something I love. It performs in sun, in shade, in any measure between the two, in drought, in periods of intense rain—you name it, it's been through it. Did I mention I have a constant stream of (hungry) deer through my yard? They don't touch it. I put it in mixed baskets,

monoculture pots and even sometimes in the ground; it looks great everywhere. This is a great plant to recommend to that person who says, "I have a black thumb and I kill everything I grow." Consider it an insurance policy against a future refund. —*Jen Polanz*

It's Party Time

Nothing says summer to me like fresh tomatoes, mozzarella, basil and a balsamic glaze. I could eat that every day for the entire months of July and August, it's THAT good. Two components of that can be homegrown (well, I could make mozzarella, but that's not going to happen) and I'm always on the hunt for a quality basil that sticks around for a while to complement the homegrown tomatoes. I found it this year in **Burpee's Pesto Party Basil**. It grew quickly in my Earthbox, and it stayed lush and ready to party pretty much all summer. I plucked leaves off and paired them with Midnight Snack cherry tomatoes, some fresh mozzarella and a drizzle of balsamic glaze. Yum! —*Jen Polanz*



Tasty Tomato Goodness

I grew waaaaay too many tomato plants for a small urban community garden this summer. And quite honestly, I should have only grown one: **Shimmer hybrid tomato from Burpee**. A plum-shaped tomato that's smaller than a Roma, but bigger than a cherry, Shimmer produced fruits with the sweetness normally reserved for cherry tomatoes that have been slow-roasted for hours. And its flavor is only half the story of Shimmer's fabulousness! It was the healthiest, most well-behaved (i.e. grew practically straight up with minimal supports) and longest lasting indeterminate tomato I've grown—ever. And that's saying something. Did I mention it has a

gorgeous red/green streaked skin? —*Ellen Wells*

Pillow Talk

I've always held that pillows should be more functional than fashionable—that is, until I met this one. I love everything about it—the blood-red-and-white contrast, the chunky cable design, the sweeping curves and abrupt angles of the pattern, the velvety feel of the fabric. Plus, hey, it's actually a comfortable throw pillow. —*Ellen Wells*



It's a Dead Man's (and Woman's) Party

Something I've noticed more of during the fall seasons is **Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)** décor in the garden center. I would say that a lot of IGCs have jumped on the dead train during the last couple of years, especially with the popularity of

movies like "The Book of Life" and Disney's "Coco." Half of my lineage comes from Mexico (my maternal grandparents are from there), so I've always had a fear (as a little kid) and fascination (as an adult) with calaveras (what a lot of people refer to as "sugar skulls"). It's a nice change from pumpkins and ghosts, and you can even keep them out a little longer since Día de los Muertos is from October 31 to November 2. Make your own little ofrenda in your store with photos of your loved ones who've passed to show your customers how they can use the calaveras at home. —*Jen Zurko*



Now THIS is a Garden Center Video

Sorting through a year's worth of photos of garden center visits and trade shows looking for one thing I love is a daunting task. Thankfully, my new favorite appeared in my inbox as I was thinking about it: a video promoting the first Fall Festival at Wheaton Nursery of Wheaton, Illinois, just west of Chicago and not too far from the Ball offices. The Lederman family has run the business for 123 years and four generations (the fifth is tiny but adorable).

This video came about via a friend (the young woman in the intro), an intern at a local TV station, which is evident in the obvious "news report" approach, with high-quality images, sound and editing, good interviews and lots of b-roll and voiceover. But it's also light-hearted—as evidenced by the hearty laugh by Steve Lederman after he said, "This

is my 50th year here ... not that I'm done, but I'm getting tired of this." They posted it to Facebook, where it had had 2,000 views in less than a week. View it at tinyurl.com/wheatonnurseries and borrow the style for your own company event or history video.—*Chris Beytes* **GP**