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## PPA Plant of the Year

Matthew Chappell



The Perennial Plant Association just announced the 2022 Perennial Plant of the Year: *Schizachyrium scoparium* and cultivars. The wider selection of little bluestem and cultivars allows the perennial experts in any region to select and promote the cultivars that do best in their location.

PPA Board members selected top performers in their regions and shared appealing details about each one. Highlights of each selection are below:

**Central Region**—Richard Hawke of the Chicago Botanic Garden selects *Schizachyrium scoparium* Jazz for the Central region. Richard notes, “The striking silvery blue leaves of Jazz are most comparable to The Blues, but at 36-in. tall and 30-in. wide, Jazz is a foot shorter than The Blues and has sturdier stems.”

**Southern Region**—Shannon Currey of Hoffman Nursery selects The Blues for the Southern region. Shannon comments, “In the South, our humidity, high nighttime temps and wet springs can slow down some Little

Bluestem. The Blues is a strong, vigorous grower and has fantastic color. Blues, pinks, purples in the summer followed by reds and oranges in the fall. In the right conditions, it stands out for us.”

**Canadian Region**—Tony Post of Brookdale Treeland Nurseries-Valleybrook Farm, chooses Standing Ovation for the Canadian region. Tony says, “This selection adds excellent texture to the summer garden. Burgundy highlights add late-season interest. Seed heads are attractive, particularly when backlit.”

**Western Region**—For the Western region, Nanci Hollerith Allen of MarkWatch Plants notes that little bluestem can be a tricky plant unless you have reasonably dry, well-drained soil. She shares two recommended cultivars for the Pacific Northwest and the Rocky Mountain region: The Blues and Standing Ovation.

**Great Lakes Region**—Patty Steinhauser of Stonehouse Nursery chooses Carousel for the Great Lakes region. Patty says, “This uniquely mounded selection forms a wide clump of blue-green foliage that emerges nearly horizontal and matures into strong, upright stems that remain standing through inclement weather and winter. It takes on pink, copper and orange-red tones in fall topped with tiny seed tufts.”

**Mid-Atlantic Region**—Taylor Pilker of Cavano’s Perennials suggests The Blues, Standing Ovation and Jazz. He also notes, “I like Blue Heaven because it is taller and has good autumn color with a wide range of shades of

burgundy and pink.”

Learn more about the 2022 Perennial Plant of the Year at [perennialplant.org/page/2022PPOY](https://perennialplant.org/page/2022PPOY). **GP**

*Pictured: Schizachyrium scoparium Jazz*