



'Pretty Much Picasso' petunia



Gazania 'Aztec'



Thunbergia alata



Heliotrope (with impatiens)

From the garden

*It's planting season
and I just couldn't help myself*

By Belinda Gallagher
Head of Horticulture Royal Botanical Gardens



Every year gardeners are tempted.

The process begins just before Christmas with the arrival of the first seed catalogues for the next year. Over the course of the next five months, at least two dozen catalogues

and magazines arrive at the door, all festooned with scrumptious photographs of plants that we just have to have. This year has certainly been no exception in the 'must have' process.

The first for me was the 'Pretty Much Picasso' petunia displaying one of the most popular colour combinations of late— a really strong pink with lime green edges. I think it will look amazing in a container with Talinum 'Kingwood Gold' and perhaps one of the lime green sweet potato vines. It is supposed to be a vigorous petunia, great for all types of containers and just edgy enough to make me have PINK in my garden.

Gazania 'Aztec' is another of those that will find a space in my garden this season. I have grown gazanias (blanket flowers), for 20 years, and frankly, the one disadvantage was that they closed up on cloudy days and when the sun went down. Despite this shyness, the vibrant oranges, yellows and apricots set on crisp green foliage made them keepers. Now this new one has more muted colours, rosy pink, maroon and cream, but the foliage is grey. And it is beautiful. I think I want a very large patch of only this plant in a full sun, hot location right by the deck.

Two or three annuals that I grew in the past but haven't included in recent plantings also appeared on the pages of several catalogues this year. The black-eyed Susan vine, Thunbergia alata, is such a bright orange that it was always out of place in the years of pastels. I would tuck it behind the house so I wouldn't be thought of as garish.

Now, in 2010, not only is the hot orange one of the best colours to place with the popular black and dark maroon foliage plants, there is a cultivar called Thunbergia 'Salmon Shades' which is subtle enough for the 'Sissinghurst' white crowd. This is a really nice twining vine that does well in containers and will even hide the most hideous chain link fence.

Another of the older annuals that I plan to recycle is Heliotropium 'Marine Lemoine Strain' or as my grandmother called it, cherry pie plant for its lovely fragrance.

It is a rich dark purple, which cannot be reasonably photographed and I show it here with a new double white impatiens. It is such a crisp, clean, navy like contrast that reminds me of a cool drink on a hot summer day. The heliotrope needs relentless pinching back through the season, and if you do, you will be rewarded by the fragrance and the flowers



Green Cat

until a hard frost.

Never one to shy away from ornamental grasses, I will even grow annuals if they don't look like lawn. Two very interesting choices jumped into my shopping cart right away. The first I grew long before it was popular enough to be in a seed catalogue— Eleusine coracana 'Green Cat'— a really interesting grass that produces many claw-like flowers over the season. The flowers, really called inflorescences in grasses, can be used in flower arranging both fresh and dried.

And I couldn't help myself when I saw the bright yellow-green with maroon stripe of the Pennisetum 'Jester'. It came out a year or two ago but there has been a bit of a problem with crop failure and supply so this is the first time I got my hands on a plant. I hope it

performs as well as the others in the family. If so, it will be a showstopper out at the front of the driveway.

When I passed the perennial tables there was nothing that could stop me. Fifteen new 'to me' plants joined the Gallagher clan. *Thalictrum* 'Thundercloud', *Acanthus spinosus*, *Heuchera* 'Sweet Tea', *Heuchera* 'Midnight something', and a new *Ligularia* with purple serrated leaves top the list.

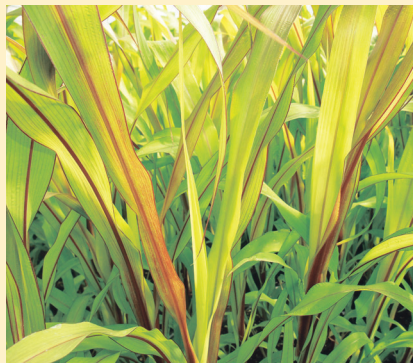
I will have pictures after I get them out of the trunk of the car and into the ground.

On principle alone I did pass by the newest of the purple coneflowers— the orange purple coneflowers, the yellow purple coneflowers and the peach purple coneflowers. And I restrained myself one tiny bit by leaving the new variegated *Phlomis russeliana* on the shelf. I am not convinced that it will be better than the plain green version of the commonly called Jerusalem sage which is not a sage and does not hail from Jerusalem! Maybe I can be convinced in 2011.

Finally, no planting season would be complete without coveting something you can't find in the nurseries or something you aren't able to grow. This year it is a plant that is flowering at work. (You do know that I work at the mother of all plant places, the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton/Burlington.) Well, there I was, admiring the rose bushes that made it through the winter and across the way I spotted a double-flowered wisteria. I have a wisteria in Georgetown and it has flowered once in the 15 years I have had the plant. I nearly cried with joy over the one measly panicle. But a double! I included some pictures of vines at RBG to make you drool with me.

At the end of it all, the catalogues, the magazines, the garden shows, the shopping and the planting, I remain ever in awe of the plant world. I just wish the backyard was big enough for one of everything.

—Belinda Gallagher, Head of Horticulture
Royal Botanical Gardens www.rbg.ca



Pennisetum Jester



Phlomis r best



Single Wisteria



Double Wisteria



GT DRAGON
Chinese Restaurant
Best Food. Fast Take Out

Halton Hills Village
369 Mountainview Rd. S.,
Unit 5,
Georgetown

OPEN:
Monday - Thursday
11:00 am - 9:30 pm
Friday 11:00 am - 11:00 pm
Saturday 12:00 noon - 11:00 pm
Sunday 12:00 noon - 9:30 pm
Holidays 2:00 pm - 10:00 pm

www.gtdragon.com

**FREE CHICKEN
FRIED RICE**
With min. \$15 purchase
(Before Tax * Cash only * Not Including Debit Card)

COUPON

COUPON

Now
Serving
Dim Sum
& Pad
Thai



Tel: 905-702-8688



Fax: 905-702-8565