

Drought? Sun? Bring it On!

Plants that do well in drought conditions

BY CARLA BURGESS

For low-maintenance annuals that deliver a riot of bloom, you can't go wrong with these oldies and newbies. Mass them in the landscape or plant them in pots in a sunny location, and get ready for a spring-through-fall flowerthon. All of these selections are exceptionally drought-tolerant, though you'll want to water regularly for a few weeks after planting until roots become established (containers will require more frequent watering).

A WINNING AFRICAN DAISY

Osteospermum 'Asti White' cinched the 2008 All-America Selections bedding plant award. It has pure-white, 2- to 2½-inch flowers with blue eyes borne on neat, compact plants about 20 inches tall and wide. It is the first white African daisy that can be propagated from seed—17 weeks from sowing to flowering. If you're too impatient, look for this and other *Osteospermum* varieties on shelves this spring.

DIAMOND FROST

Euphorbia 'Diamond Frost' seems like the plant world's equivalent of the new "it" girl. Mark Weathington, assistant director of the J.C. Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh, raved about its ever-blooming performance in the clench of the drought last year. With its clouds of tiny, white flowers amid airy foliage, 'Diamond Frost' is reminiscent of baby's breath. It's about 20 inches tall and just as wide. It's charming in groups, in containers, or tucked among other annuals or perennials. No deadheading required—looks great from start to finish!

ZINNIAS A'PLENTY

The 'Profusion' hybrid zinnia series has been snagging awards for almost a decade. 'Cherry' (pictured), 'White' and 'Orange' are past AAS Gold Medal winners. Cheery, 2-inch flowers are borne atop a neat mound of foliage about 15 inches tall and wide. As you'd imagine, these zinnias bloom profusely and are excellent landscaping annuals in well-drained soil. Unlike many zinnias, these are resistant to mildew and handle heat, humidity and drought with finesse.

PETUNIA HEAVEN

You better like pink! With 2-to 3-inch flowers on mounding 20-inch-tall plants, Supertunia® 'Vista Bubblegum' (pictured) is unbelievably floriferous. No flopping, and no messy heads. It's a knockout in hanging baskets, beds or borders. The series Surfinia® is a super-cascading petunia with dozens of varieties to choose from. About a foot in height, it may trail to 4 feet long in beds, branching and blooming all the way. 'Baby Pink Ice' and 'Mini Mini White' were a splash on the arboretum trial grounds. 🌱

Carla Burgess can be reached at nccgardenshare@mindspring.com.

For more gardening advice, go to the "Carolina Gardens" section of www.carolinacountry.com.



African daisy *Osteospermum* 'Asti White'



Euphorbia 'Diamond Frost'



'Profusion' hybrid zinnia series, 'Cherry'



Petunia Supertunia® 'Vista Bubblegum'

All-America Selections

Proven Winners—www.provenwinners.com

All-America Selections

Proven Winners—www.provenwinners.com