

SPROUTS

Ideas, information and inspiration for gardeners in Canadian climates.

Gilmour Flexogen Super Duty Hose

I'm a fan of Gilmour nozzles, sprinklers and other watering products, and their new Flexogen Super Duty Hose doesn't disappoint. The 8-layer construction of the hose ensures durability and maintains flexibility at all temperatures, yet is remarkably kink resistant. Its outer layer is smooth and easy to clean. It's also designed to prevent scratching deck and patio surfaces, even as the hose is dragged around full of water. The 5/8" diameter and full-flow brass couplings mean less pressure loss and higher water flow. Gilmour even offers a lifetime warranty, so this should be the last hose you ever need to buy. Available in lengths from 25 ft. to 100 ft. at many retail centres.



(Courtesy All-America Selections)



(Courtesy All-America Selections)

AAS selections

All-America Selections is always reviewing and recommending new cultivars of flowers and vegetables. Every spring, we highlight our top picks in our Plant Picks and AAS feature. But more plants are introduced after our spring issue; here are two we think are worthy of a mention.

'Aji Rico'

This 2017 National Edible Winner is the first of its kind—a hybrid hot pepper from the *Capsicum baccatum* species that matures early for short season production. These large plants produce many thin-walled, crunchy fruits. Fruit matures from green to red (55 days following transplant for mature green peppers or 75 days for ripe red), but can be eaten at any stage. The peppers have a refreshing citrus flavour and warm heat level, perfect for eating fresh or cooking in salsas or hot sauces. Simply incorporate the desired number of seeds from the pepper to add some heat. 'Aji Rico' also dries well for tasty homemade paprika.

'Profusion Red' zinnia

The original Profusion Zinnias were ground-breaking plants because of their compact form, disease resistance and early, continuous blooms. 'Profusion Red' zinnia matches this high standard with its vibrant, perfectly true red colour, which doesn't fade in the heat of summer. The 2017 National Flower Winner grows to 35 cm (14 in.) tall and displays 6 cm (2.5 in.) solid red flowers from late spring to frost. Also a favourite of pollinators, the plants are drought, heat and wind tolerant. Ideal in containers, in the garden or used as a long-lasting cut flower.

Use Plants to Improve Indoor Air Quality

Benzene, formaldehyde, xylene, ammonia ... these nasty sounding chemicals are common indoor air pollutants. They come from paints, plastics, furniture, cleaning supplies and other products. While they are usually found in extremely low concentrations and unlikely to cause major health issues, most of us spend the majority of our lives indoors, at home and at work, which means we are constantly exposed.

Indoor plants reduce concentrations of these chemicals as well as airborne microbes (bacteria and mold spores) in our air. According to NASA research from the late 1980s, some of the most effective air-cleaning plants include spider plant, mother-in-law tongue (*Sansevieria*), peace-lily, English ivy and chrysanthemum.



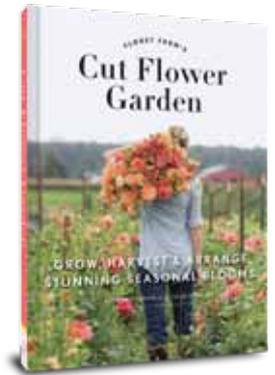
Mother-in-law tongue
(*Sansevieria trifasciata laurentii*)
(Peter Mansfeld)



Peace-lily (*Spathiphyllum cochlearispathum*)
(JJ Harrison)

Floret Farm's Cut Flower Garden

Erin Benzakein and Julie Chai
Chronicle Books
\$29.95 (US)



For gardeners interested in cut flowers, *Floret Farm's Cut Flower Garden* is a must have. This beautiful book is bursting with stunning photos and information on how to plan, grow and harvest a cut flower garden.

The first part of the book contains short sections on planning and planting to ensure you and your plants get off to the best start. The bulk of the book is dedicated to specific flowering plants, including details on how to grow and a list of the authors' favourite cultivars. Sections are organized by crop type and season of bloom. At the end of each seasonal section, you'll find step-by-step ideas on how to display and enjoy what you grow.

Whether you're starting from scratch or a seasoned gardener looking to improve, the *Cut Flower Garden* will provide the inspiration you need to produce a great crop of cut flowers.

Reviewed by William Hrycan

Trix Tick Lasso

Gardening season is well underway and, for some of us across Canada, so is tick season. A quick online search will reveal countless tips, tricks and old wives' tales on the best way to remove ticks, but few are as easy, safe or effective as the Trix Tick Lasso. The lasso is fast and easy to use, even on squirmy kids, pets or squeamish gardeners. It is roughly the size and shape of a pen, and slides easily into nooks and crannies (where ticks often like to attach). The looped lasso end holds tightly to the tick's mouth parts, even after detaching, allowing you to remove and dispose of the tick without having to touch it. Recommended by gardeners and veterinarians.

Available at outdoor stores, garden centres and vet clinics.

