



## 2005 AAS WINNERS

All-America Selections (AAS) named 3 flowers and 3 vegetables as award winners for 2005.

The winners were tested at trial grounds across North America. Each one has superior qualities or traits that distinguish it from similar varieties already on the market. Consider some of the following winners for planting on a trial basis in your garden. All photos are courtesy of All-America Selections (<http://www.all-americaelections.org/>).



### First Kiss Blueberry Vinca

*Catharanthus rosea* 'First Kiss Blueberry' is the first vinca with violet blue flowers. The large 2-inch single blooms have a darker eye which accentuates the violet blue color. Breeders have been diligently working towards a blue vinca for decades. This vinca helps fill that color void.

This vinca is easy to grow from transplants and has proven heat and drought tolerance. Plants will grow 11-12 inches tall and 16 inches wide. All vincas need well drained soil and prefer full sun. First Kiss Blueberry can be grown in flower beds and borders or in patio containers or combination planters.



### Arizona Sun Blanket Flower

*Gaillardia aristata* 'Arizona Sun' has three-inch single flowers that are mahogany red with bright yellow petal edges. Its name comes from the bright colors similar to the desert sun in Arizona.

*Gaillardia aristata* is considered a perennial, but Arizona Sun was tested at AAS trial grounds and won the award based on its first summer performance. Like many annuals, the plants produced flowers continuously from June through August. It is possible Arizona Sun may not be fully hardy since AAS says overwintering may depend on the severity of the winter.

The judges also noted that spent blooms turn into attractive tufts of seed. The uniform plants grow 8-10 inches tall and 10-12 inches wide. Use this flower in sunny borders with well-drained soil or in containers. The flowers can attract butterflies in the garden and can be cut and used for summer bouquets.



### **Magellan Coral Zinnia**

*Zinnia elegans* ‘Magellan Coral’ (F<sub>1</sub>) has radiant, fully double, dahlia-flowered blooms that are 5 to 6 inches across with brilliant coral petals. It is described as having superior flower quality and color compared to other *Zinnia elegans*.

The plants of Magellan Coral flower continuously and the old spent blooms are covered with new foliage growth so that the plant always looks fresh. Earliness to bloom is another exceptional trait. It takes only 6 to 9 weeks from sowing seed to first bloom.

The uniform plant growth of Magellan Coral reaches a height of 15-17 inches and spread of 15-19 inches, depending on growing conditions. Like all zinnias, Magellan Coral should be planted in full sun. AAS indicates this plant needs little maintenance in the garden and is adaptable to container culture.



### **Fairy Tale Eggplant**

*Solanum melongena* ‘Fairy Tale’ (F<sub>1</sub>) is the first eggplant to win an AAS award since 1939. Fairy Tale develops decorative, edible miniature eggplants on a petite plant. The eggplants are white with violet/purple stripes. The fruit are described as sweet and non-bitter with a tender skin and few seeds.

Another superior quality is the window for harvest. The elongated oval eggplants can be picked when quite small at 1 to 2 ounces or left on the plant until they reach 5 ounces with good flavor and tenderness. Fairy Tale eggplants are recommended for marinating and grilling whole.

The harvest can begin in just 49-51 days from transplanting. The plant grows 2.5 feet tall and wide so it is a good candidate for container gardening. Grow in full sun like other eggplant.



### Sugary Tomato

*Lycopersicon esculentum* 'Sugary' (F<sub>1</sub>) was named because of the sweet tomato flavor. The half-ounce reddish-pink fruit has sugar content than most others (9.5 percent). The fruit is produced in clusters like grapes and can be eaten like them. Sugary tomatoes have a distinct shape: oval with a pointed blossom end. The fruit may also show a light green shoulder.

In addition to the flavor, Sugary plants produced a high yield with a noticeable lack of cracked fruit. Look for ripe fruit on the strong semi-determinate vines within 60 days from transplanting. The easiest way to grow Sugary is to use cages in the full-sun garden. This cultivar could also be grown in large containers. However, the vigorous plants may need pruning to contain growth. Sugary could set a new standard for "cherry" size tomatoes with sweet flavor.

Information adapted from All-America Selections (<http://www.all-americaelections.org>) by Purdue Extension-Marion County, Indianapolis, IN 46278 (<http://www.ces.purdue.edu/CES/Marion/HortCon.htm>).

Purdue University, Indiana Counties and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating. An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution.



### Bonbon Winter Squash

*Cucurbita maxima* 'Bonbon' (F<sub>1</sub>) has three improved traits: restricted growth habit, earliness and superior eating qualities. Bonbon is a buttercup-type winter squash with an upright, semi-bush habit. The plants will attain a height of 2.5 feet and may spread 8-10 feet. The squash may be ready to pick within 81 days of transplanting. This is a full week earlier than other varieties. Bonbon plants also exhibit tolerance to powdery mildew.

Bonbon squash has a sweeter flavor (hence the name Bonbon) and smoother texture than other varieties. The thick orange flesh is entirely stringless. The squash are about 6 inches in diameter and weigh about 4 pounds. They have a box-like shape and are dark green with silver stripes. There is a prominent button on the blossom end, indicative of all buttercup types. Like other squash, it is easy to grow in a sunny, well-drained soil.

Although there are no AAS testing gardens in Indiana, you can find a couple of AAS display gardens in the state where anyone can view the new AAS winners. The closest location to Indianapolis is maintained by the Hamilton County Master Gardeners on the Hamilton County fairgrounds at 2003 East Pleasant Street, Noblesville, IN 46060.