

## HORTICULTURE

# Tough Tests For New Plants

Competition keen in development of new flower and vegetable varieties. Independent research groups, like All-America Selections, put new varieties through tests.

By HORACE LOFTIN

► THE ANNOUNCEMENT of newer, brighter, stronger, larger varieties of flowers and vegetables for your garden each year is one of the clearest-cut examples of the constructive competition inherent in the American way of doing things.

Scores of private companies, research centers and individual plant enthusiasts vie with each other to produce flowers and vegetables showing advances over older types in characteristics ranging from color to disease resistance.

The final judge as to the value of new varieties is you, the man or woman who buys the seeds and grows the plants. Many highly-advertised varieties have fallen into oblivion after a single season, when they failed to meet the test of gardeners over the country. But generally, new varieties are tested and grown experimentally by impartial experts for several seasons before their breeders will allow them to be offered to the public.

One of the best known research institutions for testing new flower and vegetable varieties is All-America Selections, with headquarters in Harrisburg, Pa. This institution is an independent, non-profit organization, largely financed by the seed industry itself.

## Testing Is Nation-Wide

All-America Selections tests new varieties submitted to it in trial gardens all over the nation—22 trial grounds for vegetables and 18 for flowers. The entries are compared with the best similar kinds already on the market.

After two years of testing, the experimenters from each of the trial grounds, plus several "traveling judges," rate the varieties. If they prove outstanding, they may be awarded the All-America gold, silver or bronze medals. To rate even an honorable mention from All-America Selections, the varieties must be superior.

And so the annual announcement of All-America Selections awards is one of the high spots of the garden enthusiasts' year.

Winner of the 1953 All-America silver medal for flowers was Royal Carpet alyssum, the first new variety of alyssum to come out in 12 years. Bronze medal winner was a new red petunia, Comanche, a true-breeding first generation hybrid. No other flowers and no vegetables were chosen for All-America Selections awards this year.

Royal Carpet alyssum grows only two or three inches above the ground, but each plant spreads a rug of fragrant flowers over an area ten inches in diameter. Spaced about six to eight inches apart, Royal Carpet alyssum plants make an almost solid mat of deep violet blossoms, lasting from spring to the first killing frost. It is ideal for groundcover and edging purposes.

In its shortness and abundance of blossoms, Royal Carpet alyssum is like an older variety, Carpet of Snow, which has white flowers. In color, Royal Carpet is like Violet Gem; but this plant grows six or seven inches tall and its blossoms do not form such a solid sheet of color as do those of Royal Carpet.

The Comanche petunia, bronze medal winner, marks a distinct advance over the very first red petunia, Fire Chief, winner of the 1950 gold medal. Comanches, as easy to grow as the Fire Chiefs, are somewhat larger and stronger plants and bear

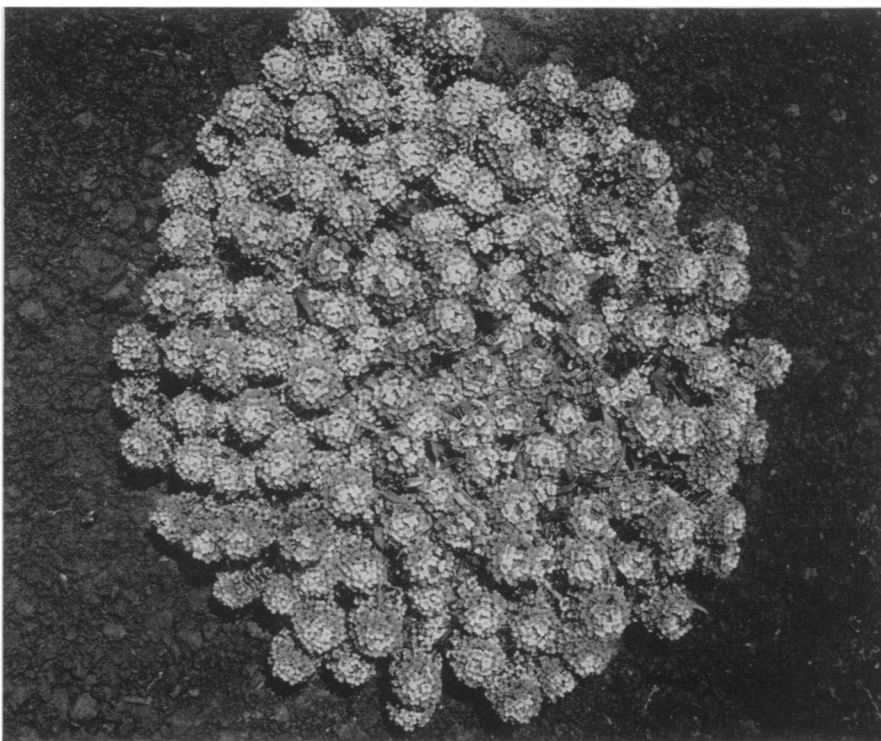
more flowers. The blossoms of Comanches are rich scarlet red in color, compared to the more or less rose color of Fire Chief flowers.

Comanche petunias grow about 15 inches tall and resist flopping over with just a minimum of care. Their strong branches are covered with handsome red blossoms from early spring to the return of cold weather.

## First Offered This Season

This year is the first season Royal Carpet alyssum and Comanche petunia have been offered to the general public. No entry for an All-America Selections award is put on the market until it has been tested and the results announced. And because of a standing rule of All-America Selections, winning entries are co-introduced to the public by all seed dealers who care to handle the new varieties. This means you can buy Royal Carpet alyssum and Comanche petunia seeds from almost any seedsman.

There is almost always a scramble for seeds of All-America winners their first year out, with the result that stocks are often soon depleted. A bit of good advice



**1953 PRIZE WINNER**—Royal Carpet alyssum, a new flower variety only two or three inches tall, makes an almost solid mat of deep violet blossoms, lasting from spring to killing frost. It is the silver medal winner of All-America Selections this year.

to gardeners is to shop early for this season's winners.

Winners of past years, however, are generally available in quantity. Flower and vegetable varieties that have received All-America Selections awards usually have a statement to that effect printed on the seed packets. Seed catalogues always note if a variety is an All-America winner in their description of flowers and vegetables.

Last year, 1952, was a big year for prize-winning varieties. The rarely-given gold medal was awarded to two vegetable varieties; one flower and two vegetables took silver medals; two vegetables won bronze medals; and three flowers received honorable mention.

Gold medal winners were the Wade snap bean and the Salad Bowl lettuce. Both were developed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Less than a half-dozen vegetables have been honored with the gold medal award in the last 15 years.

### Fiesta Cosmos Won in 1952

The Fiesta cosmos won the silver medal as the best new flower variety of 1952. Its petals are striped lengthwise in red and orange, and the plants grow about two feet tall. Fiesta cosmos is one of the easiest garden flowers to grow. It can be seeded directly in place, without need of transplanting, and it is highly resistant to insects and disease.

Honorable mentions were awarded to a dwarf fringed petunia, named Ballerina; Persian Carpet zinnia, with three-inch flowers on bushy plants of two feet height; and a phlox from Japan, the Globe phlox, especially suitable for pot plants, window boxes and rock gardens.

Vegetables also took high honors in 1951. Two of them, Iochief corn and New Hampshire Midget watermelon, won gold medals; two won bronze medals; and four were given honorable mention.

Two new flower varieties received awards that year. Torch tithonia, a bushy, long-stemmed plant with bright scarlet blossoms, won the silver medal. The highly successful Glitters marigold, with large, clear-yellow, chrysanthemum-like flowers, took the bronze medal.

SCIENCE SERVICE has selected *Royal Carpet alyssum*, silver medal winner of *All-America Selections for 1953*, to be included in the new springtime seed kit of *THINGS of science*. Besides the *alyssum*, four garden vegetable varieties were chosen for the annual seed unit.

This kit is available to readers for 75 cents. Write Science Service, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for the 1953 Seed Unit. Past kits, containing *All-America Selections winners*, are still available, too.

Science News Letter, April 18, 1953

The quality of tomatoes that ripen after harvest can be improved in shipping if the temperature is held between 50 and 65 degrees Fahrenheit.

Planets travel at different speeds in different parts of their orbits.

A model of the Navy's atomic submarine power plant now is in test operation.

Time-lapse movies are revealing in great microscopic detail the behavior of the cancer cell.

It takes two years to gear a single new aircraft plant for jet fighter production.

A powdered orange juice has been developed that dissolves in ice water.

Swarming termites bite wings off each other before crawling into the ground where they may start new colonies.

# Encyclopedia of ABERRATIONS

## A PSYCHIATRIC HANDBOOK

Edited by EDWARD PODOLSKY, M.D.

State University of New York Medical College

With a Foreword by ALEXANDRA ADLER, M.D.  
New York University College of Medicine

This is the first systematic exposition of human aberrational behavior. In this volume over fifty eminent psychologists and psychiatrists discuss all types of aberrations, with particular emphasis on their psychodynamics. The material is arranged in alphabetical sequence for easy reference.

### SOME OF THE ENTRIES:

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Amnesia	Frigidity	Murderer, mind of
Anal eroticism	Frottage	Mutism
Anancasm	Gambling	Myophobia
Anti-Semitic attitudes	Gammacism	Narcolepsy
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Autism, infantile	Gynephobia	Nudism
Auto-punishment	Hair-plucking	Nymphomania
Benzedrine, addiction	Hallucinations	Ochlophobia
Bestiality	Haptodysphoria	Onanism
Body image disturbances	Hashish, addiction	Opium, addiction
Boredom	Head banging	Pavor nocturnus
Brontophobia	Heroin, addiction	Pessimism
Cacodaemonomania	Heterolalia	Pethidine, addiction
Chloral delirium	Homosexuality	Phobias
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Cocaine, addiction	Inferiority feelings	Sadism
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Criminality	Kainotophobia	Somnambulism
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