

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 3-01-06) Great Plant Picks 2006 © 2006

The Elizabeth Carey Miller Botanical Garden “Great Plant Picks” have been announced for 2006. If you attended the Northwest Flower and Garden Show you may have gotten a sneak peak at them. If you didn’t make it to the show, then start haunting our own Kitsap local nurseries. These plants will make you long for more garden space. Bring money, you won’t be able to resist them all.

More than 40 local expert horticulturists extensively test these plants making sure they’ll grow and thrive in our Pacific Northwest. I’ll tell you the ones that may show up in my garden this year. You’ll want to visit www.greatplantpicks.org to see all the plants selected in previous years. If you don’t have email call the Miller Garden at 206-362-8612 to be mailed information.

Keep in mind I’ve taken to gardening in containers because I’ve nearly run out of space in my garden so most of my choices are of the smaller variety. I simply must have: *Corylopsis glabrescens* (Japanese winterhazel); *Adiantum venustum* (Himalayan maidenhair fern); *Daphne x transatlantica* ‘Summer Ice’ (variegated hybrid daphne); *Vaccinium* ‘Sunshine Blue’ (blueberry); *Epimedium* ‘Black Sea:’ and *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides* (dwarf plumbago).

My one splurge would be *Corylopsis glabrescens* (Japanese winterhazel) because it will ultimately reach 10 feet by 10 feet which means at least 20 feet by 20 feet in my garden where everything grows much much larger than the tag stipulates. Even though our garden is full of woody plants I love plants with winter interest and this one fits the bill. Deciduous *Corylopsis glabrescens* has pendent yellow flowers in late winter. Plant in partial shade.

Ferns are always welcome in my garden so how could I resist *Adiantum venustum* (Himalayan maidenhair fern)? This evergreen fern is only eight inches tall but spreads to four feet wide. The description says, “new fronds have bronze blush that matures to green.” Doesn’t that sound perfect? I can just see it in a tall container with its fronds spilling over the edges.

Every garden needs a daphne or two or three. I only have one so I know I’ll be adding *Daphne x transatlantica* ‘Summer Ice’ to my garden very soon. This variegated hybrid daphne is deciduous with wonderfully fragrant flowers and a very long bloomtime. It needs sun and will grow 4 feet tall by 6 feet wide.

I already have two blueberry bushes and many native evergreen and deciduous huckleberries in my garden so I’ll be adding *Vaccinium* ‘Sunshine Blue’ to the mix. The foliage is purply blue with red veins. Splendid. The description says, “sky-blue new growth, pink bell flowers develop into delicious fruit, evergreen.” This plant will thrive in sun or partial shade and grows to 3 feet tall by 3 feet wide.

Northwest gardens are perfect for any epimedium and Epimedium 'Black Sea' promises to please. This plant has copper flowers in February and is drought tolerant. Flowers and foliage are exquisite. It will grow to 15 inches tall by 5 feet wide. Loves partial sun or shade and is evergreen.

Last but not least I must have Ceratostigma plumbaginoides (dwarf plumbago). You'll love the intense blue flowers of plumbago. Dwarf plumbago description says, "late blue flowers coincide with reddish autumnal tints; attractive groundcover." It grows to 12 inches tall by 4 feet wide, surviving in sun or partial shade.

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