

## “New” Plants/“Old” Plants

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Great plants are few and far between. Each year at hundreds of nursery and propagation conferences across the country, audiences are bombarded with a plethora of “new” plants. They have great promise, yet only a few attain commercial success. The following appear to offer more than simply promise and are already in production.

*Abelia* × *grandiflora* ‘Confetti’. *Abelia* × *grandiflora* ‘Sherwoodii’ provided a cream-margined branch sport that was named ‘Confetti’ by Jim Berry, Flowerwood Nursery, Mobile, Alabama. It is compact and mounding with foliage that will brighten shady areas of the garden. Cold weather induces a pinkish to rose tinge to the creamy variegated areas. Ideally, it should be used in mass for maximum effect. I estimate it at 2 to 2½ ft high and 3 to 4 ft wide at maturity.

*Acer buergerianum*. The trident maple is a plant I have mentioned many times for use in hot, dry, stress-laden environments. The lustrous dark green foliage, gray-orange-brown bark, and restrained, 20- to 30-ft growth habit are notable features. Unfortunately, fall color is variable with orange and red more the exception than the rule. Tree Introductions, Inc., Athens, Georgia, has selected a faster-growing, red burgundy fall-coloring clone that has been successfully propagated from summer cuttings using 5,000 to 10,000 ppm KIBA.

*Aesculus parviflora*. The bottlebrush buckeye, a superb summer, white-flowering shrub, is perennially in short supply. Seeds are the logical method of increase and should be planted immediately after collection in September and protected from vermin. Cuttings can be rooted, but are difficult to manage because of size. At Georgia, I am now using stooling beds with about 24 to 30 in. of pine bark. The suckers are divided in late winter and placed in 3-gal containers. The divisions make full plants at the end of one growing season.

*Calycanthus floridus*. The common sweetshrub offers lustrous dark green summer foliage, yellow fall color, and variably fragrant maroon flowers. We have assembled three fragrant clones: ‘Edith Wilder’ from Swarthmore College; ‘Michael Lindsay’ from Allen Bush, Holbrook Farm; and ‘Trainer House’ from a local source. ‘Michael Lindsay’ is outstanding with fruity aroma, lustrous, bullate-puckered, almost black-green leaves and compact habit. Cuttings are rooted using firm wood (June-July), 3,000 to 5,000 ppm KIBA, perlite or 3 perlite : 1 peat (v/v) medium under mist. Cuttings are injured by alcohol-based rooting hormones and excess moisture.

*Carpinus caroliniana* ‘Upright Form’. The upright American hornbeam was selected by Tommy Strickland, for upright habit resembling the upright European hornbeam. This clone could be a valuable addition to the palette of southern native plants for screening and hedging.

*Clethra alnifolia*. The summersweet clethra is becoming fashionable because of handsome foliage and sweetly fragrant summer flowers. The typical species is variable in growth habit and size while ‘Hummingbird’ is low-growing (30 to 40 in.), forms suckers, and colonizes. Plants have lustrous dark green foliage and 4-in. long white flowers. In our work, ‘Hummingbird’ and the other cultivars root

faster, more uniformly, with more profuse root systems when treated with 1,000 to 3,000 ppm KIBA quick dip.

*Fothergilla major* 'Mount Airy'. Mount Airy large fothergilla was selected by this author for large flowers (often 2 in. long and 1 in. wide), superb orange-red fall color, vigorous growth, and ease of rooting. It has performed well in Zones 5 through 8. The parent plant was 5 ft high and 6 ft wide. At Georgia, we root it from soft and firm-wood cuttings with 3,000 to 5,000 ppm KIBA.

*Hydrangea arborescens* subsp. *radiata*. This silver-backed leaf form of the smooth hydrangea is a stunning addition to the shade garden. The 4- to 6-in. diameter, flat-topped flowers have sterile outer sepals with fertile flowers in the center, which are not showy. The cottony-white undersides of the leaves, when buffeted by the wind, are particularly striking. The species will grow 3 to 4 ft high and wide. We are looking for two sterile-flowered forms, which have been described.

*Myrica cerifera*. The southern waxmyrtle is a fragrant-foliaged evergreen shrub that is widely used for screening. Several new compact low-growing types like 'Fairfax' and 'Georgia Gem' can be used for grouping and massing in landscapes. Woodlanders, 1128 Colleton Ave., Aiken, South Carolina 29801, has several low-growing compact selections that should be tested by larger commercial firms. It is easily propagated from summer softwoods—IBA does not improve rooting.

*Illicium* species. Anise species are superb broad-leaved evergreens for use in Zones 7 to 9. They are sturdy, with large rhododendron-like, olive to dark green leaves and white, yellow, pink to red flowers. All species prefer shade. *Illicium henryi* (Henry anise), *I. floridanum* (Florida anise), and *I. parviflorum* (small anise) are the most cold hardy and best adapted for landscape use. All propagate readily from firm cuttings anytime of year with 3,000 ppm KIBA. Use bottom heat if cuttings are rooted in the winter.

*Loropetalum chinense* var. *rubrum*. The pink Chinese loropetalum has the ornamental potential to become a great commercial and landscape success. Outstanding ruby-red to maroon-green evergreen foliage and vibrant salmon-pink flowers on a 4- to 6-ft (10 ft) framework will endear it to gardeners, landscape architects, and nurserymen. Rooted cuttings I brought home from the Arnold Arboretum in mid-September 1991, completely filled a 3-gal container by fall of 1992. Cold hardiness is undefined but I venture adaptability between Zones 7b and 9. Fortunately, it has been easy to root, and extremely soft cuttings forced under lights as well as firmer cuttings respond favorably to 1,000 ppm KIBA.

*Sassafras albidum*. The common sassafras is seldom available in commerce because of transplanting difficulty. Root cuttings taken early February 1992, produced 2- to 3-ft high plants by September. The small cuttings were transplanted to Spin Out™ treated containers to increase root development. Spin Out™ containers contain copper that chemically prunes young root tips and promotes secondary branching. This process has worked extraordinarily well. This root cutting-Spin Out™ process may lead to the selection of superior clones.

*Styrax japonicum* 'Emerald Pagoda' ('Sohuksan'). The emerald pagoda Japanese snowbell was introduced by Dr. J. C. Raulston, North Carolina State University, for its larger, leathery dark green leaves and waxy white flowers. It has proven more heat tolerant than the typical species in Zone 7b. Softwood cuttings can be rooted using 3,000 to 5,000 ppm KIBA. They are slow to root and may prove difficult to overwinter.