

2019 flower All-America Selections



Photos courtesy All-America Selections

Nasturtium 'Baby Rose'

The last nasturtium AAS Winner was back in the early days, in the 1930s. Now it is time to introduce a wonderful rose-colored nasturtium perfect for today's gardens. 'Baby Rose' is a petite-flowered, mounding variety with healthy, dark foliage ideal for containers and small space gardens. AAS expert judges praised the uniformly compact plants that have flowers with consistent coloration. Their compact habit means less "flower flopping" with their blooms remaining upright throughout the season. The rose color is uncommon in nasturtiums and contrasts beautifully with the dark-green foliage. An added bonus, both the leaves and flowers are edible.



Petunia 'Wave-Carmine Velour'

This newest color of the popular Wave petunias was one of the highest-scoring plants in last year's trials. AAS judges enthusiastically came up with an array of ways to describe the unique carmine rose color: "Fabulous," "Stunning," "Intense," "Vibrant," "Lively," "Bright," "Non-fading," "Outstanding," to name a few. Large 2" flowers literally cover the easy-care spreading plants that rarely need deadheading because new blooms continuously pop up and cover the spent blooms. 'Wave Carmine Velour' is an excellent performer and does equally as well in containers or hanging baskets as it does in the landscape.



Marigold 'Big Duck Gold'

'Big Duck Gold' has very large golden-yellow flowers that continue blooming throughout the season, much longer than the comparisons. These marigolds begin the season putting energy into establishing a solid, healthy plant with clean, deep-green foliage. Full, large blooms top the 15" plants, which are slightly taller than the more compact comparison varieties. They continue blooming through the end of the season. These marigolds can be planted everywhere: in beds, containers; in landscapes as mini hedges, back of the border plants or even as a filler in perennial beds.

Source: All America Selections



GARDEN GUIDE

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

Mary Jane Frogge, Extension Associate,
Lancaster Co.

Check all five growing factors if your houseplants are not growing well. Light, temperature, nutrients, moisture, and humidity must be favorable to provide good growth.

Prune fruit trees and grapes in late February or early March after the worst of the winter cold is passed but before spring growth begins.

Check any vegetables you have in storage. Dispose of any that show signs of shriveling or rotting.

Order perennial plants and bulbs now for cut flowers this summer. Particularly good choices are phlox, daisies, coreopsis, asters and lilies.

Order gladiolus corms now for planting later in the spring after all danger of frost has passed. Locate in full sun in well-drained soil.

Branches of forsythia, pussy willow, quince, spirea and dogwood can be forced for indoor bloom. Make long, slanted cuts when collecting the branches and place the stems in a vase of water. Change the water every 4 days. They should bloom in about 3 weeks.

Send off seed orders early this month to take advantage of seasonal discounts. Some companies offer bonus seeds of new varieties to early buyers.

Do not start your vegetable transplants indoors too early. Six weeks ahead of the expected planting date is early enough for the fast-growth species such as tomatoes. Eight weeks allows enough time for the slower-growing types such as peppers.

Check stored bulbs, tubers and corms. Discard any that are soft or diseased.

This year, plan to grow at least one new vegetable you have never grown before; it may be better than what you are already growing. The new dwarf varieties on the market which use less space while producing more food per square foot may be just what you are looking for.

What's going on in the world of early childhood?

Sarah Roberts

Extension Educator, Dixon Co.

Early childhood education can be somewhat of a mystery, especially since many people don't think of it as "education" until children reach elementary school. Early childhood begins at birth and typically goes all the way until children are age eight or entering the third grade.

Unfortunately, early childhood today is changing more and more in our technologically advanced age. Education consultant, Rae Pica, has seen several of these changes occurring throughout her years of service since the 1980s. In her article published in "Community Playthings," she lists three things that seem to be recurring areas in need of improvement in early childhood education:

- More children are unable to cross the midline of the body.
- Children don't know how to play anymore.
- Children have no fine motor control.

More children are unable to cross the midline of the body. Amidst the busy lives of parents all over the world, babies are spending less and less time on their tummies, which is vital in the development of muscles needed to crawl and perform cross-lateral movements. What parents need to remember is that the body and mind work together. Children need to practice moving



Sarah Roberts, Nebraska Extension in Dixon County

in a variety of ways to gain confidence in their skills. Pica writes, "What impacts the body's development impacts the brain's development, and the sooner we acknowledge that, the better off our children will be."

Children don't know how to play anymore.

Almost every animal on our planet plays at some point or another in their lives. Play is necessary to learn the skills needed to become successful adults. Educators are reporting that children are simply imitating on-screen characters or are just standing around during free-play time because they are at a loss as to what to do. With the rise in technology, children are exposed to much more media, thus diminishing the need for imaginative play. As early childhood educators, it is vital we facilitate play and give children the time, space and materials to foster imaginative play.

Children have no fine motor control. This, again,

goes back to technology. Children aren't getting the same opportunities to utilize crayons, scissors and other utensils as much as they are given a tablet or digital device to keep them occupied. Children are also not developing and using large muscles which relates to the development of the small muscles such as those in the hands and fingers. If large muscles are not developed, it becomes very difficult for small muscles to progress as well. Children must have the strength and endurance in large muscles in order to begin using fine motor control skills (Buttfield, 2017). This need stresses the importance of play and practice with a variety of materials and utensils.

Early childhood education is one of the most important times in a child's life. Giving them ample opportunities and experiences with open-ended manipulatives can help overcome the above challenges. For more information on open-ended

activities and ideas, check out www.communityplaythings.com/resources.

Resources:

- Buttfield, J. (2017, April 12). *Big muscles make a big difference to fine motor skills.* [Blog]. Retrieved from <https://childdevelopment.com.au/blog/big-muscles-make-big-difference-fine-motor-skills>.
- Education and Child Development

Experts - About Rae Pica www.raepica.com/education-consultant-rae.

- Pica, R. (2018). *The state of early childhood: Three things that have changed since I became an early childhood consultant.* Community Playthings. Retrieved from www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2018/the-state-of-early-childhood.

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Upcoming early childhood trainings

Nebraska Extension teaches several early childhood development classes for child care providers. Listed are upcoming classes held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Creek Road (unless location otherwise noted). For additional information or to sign up, contact Jaci Foged at jfoged2@unl.edu or 402-441-7180. Some registration forms are at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/family>

Look Who's Hatching — Tuesday, Feb. 26, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Cost is \$10. 2 in-service hours. Register by Feb 19. Learn how to implement Nebraska Extension's curriculum, "Look Who's Hatching," in your program. Participants will have the opportunity to hatch chicks in their own program for an additional cost.

Early Childhood Education Yoga — Thursday, Feb. 28, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Cost is \$30. 6 in-service hours. Register by Feb 21. Learn ways to incorporate children's yoga into an early childhood education program. Lunch will be on your own.

Block Party Training — Tuesday, March 19, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Cost is \$10. 2 in-service hours. Register by March 12. Block Party is a hands-on, engaging workshop for early childhood educators. By taking time to play with a variety of blocks, educators will develop a better understanding of the multitude of ways children learn by playing with blocks. After the workshop, participants are encouraged to plan and host their very own block party as a way to engage families in their programs.

Lincoln Early Childhood Conference — Saturday, March 23, 8:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m. Registration 8-8:30 a.m. This conference is sponsored by the Southeast Early Learning Connection. Cost is \$25. A light breakfast and lunch provided. 6 in-service hours. Register and pay online at www.esu6.org by March 16. For more information, contact Cara Small at carasmall@esu6.org or 402-761-3341.