**Plant Select**

You know what they say about variety being the spice of life. This observation could easily be applied to shopping for plants at Garden Centers of Colorado, your best destination for an extensive pallet of beautiful plants. However, if you are new to gardening, or want the newest plant on the market, or perhaps you have a tired landscape that has become dated and boring—how do you choose from all these flourishing plants that want to go home with you?

The answer is easy. Ask a friendly, knowledgeable Garden Center of Colorado sales associate to show you the collection of plants given the special title—Plant Select®.

Don’t know what Plant Select® means?

Your GCC associate will happily explain why this group of plants have been given this distinct designation and answer questions about placement in your yard and more.

Here is a short primer and quick history on Plant Select® before you head out the door.

Plant Select® is a brand of plants that commonly share plant characteristics that takes the guess work out of whether the plant is a good choice for Colorado. Think of them as plants specifically chosen to thrive in our challenging Rocky Mountain Region. These are plants that shrug off our dry air, crummy soil and limited yearly rainfall and still give what gardeners want for their gardens—pretty blooms, attractive foliage, and easy care. Many Plant Select® plants are pollinator and bird friendly and have native origins.

Plant Select® includes perennials, groundcovers, shrubs, trees, annuals, grasses, vines, and smaller plants called petites. Among them you will find beautiful roses, aromatic herbs and edibles that double as ornamental plants.

Every plant is clearly tagged with the Plant Select® logo along with growing instructions that include plant size, bloom time, plus soil and sunlight requirements. Planting is no different than any other new plant you put in—they will need regular watering the first season or two for the roots to get well established. After that, water and care as directed on the plant tag and enjoy the showy results!

The Plant Select® program began in 1997 as a collaboration between Colorado State University horticulturists, Denver Botanic Gardens, and other professional horticulturists. This group of experts know plants and what traits plants need to successfully grow here.

Plants (usually under ten) are introduced each year into the collection. All plants have passed a five-year 7-point **smart selection** process which includes:

* Thrive in a broad range of growing conditions
* Flourish with less water
* Tough and resilient in challenging climates
* One of a kind/unique
* Disease/insect resistance
* Long-lasting beauty
* Non-invasive

Other **smart plant features** of these plantsinclude:

* Beautiful
* Adaptable
* Durable
* Water-wise
* Easy to care for
* Have lower negative environmental impact and higher positive impact
* Tough and beautiful at the same time

There’s not enough room in this article to list my favorites, but one of them includes a medium sized tree or large shrub which is a must have for small to large landscapes. The late summer blooming Seven-Son-Flower (*Heptacodium miconiodides*) is quite unique with exfoliating bark and delightful fragrant bee loving flowers followed by cherry-red sepals.

I love a no-nonsense groundcover that does what the name implies and does so while allowing other perennials and plants to coexist in the same area. Goldhill-Golden Aster *(Heterotheca jonesii x villosa ‘Goldhill’)* offers more than just being a great neighbor. It blooms all summer and well into fall with bright yellow daisy flowers on low mounds that are fuzzy grey in color—an attractive contrast to nearby green plants. Bees and butterflies love this plant too!

The Plant Select® brand is more than just terrific plants, the website is a one stop gardener’s resource. Plants have a history, just like us—read interesting stories about how some of the plants were discovered and propagated at plantselect.org. Check out the videos from garden professionals with helpful planting ideas and solutions for some of your tougher landscape areas. There are free downloadable landscape designs, plus garden ideas to fit your landscape theme and locations for demonstration gardens where you can view Plant Select® plants through the seasons. Need a specific plant based on type, size, color, sun/shade conditions and other characteristics, then use the handy search engine feature under the PLANTS heading.

**Resources**

Plant Select®  <https://plantselect.org/>

Plant Select® Downloadable Plant Designs

<https://plantselect.org/design/downloadable-designs/>

Betty Cahill is a freelance writer and garden instructor. She’s written the popular garden "Punch List" column for the Denver Post for eight years. Betty has been teaching gardening classes around the metro area since the early 2000s. For additional gardening tips, information, and garden stories, follow her on her blog at <http://gardenpunchlist.blogspot.com/>.

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