

**Get Out and Vote...for Plants**  
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It's that time of the year again, time to get out and vote for your favorite plants. All-America Selections recently announced program called "The American Garden Award" for 2011. This is the second year for this contest, last year over 11,000 gardeners voted. They are asking for gardeners and professional horticulturists to vote on the plant they think have the most garden appeal. For 2011 AAS has selected seven different plants to choose from. They are hoping gardeners will purchase the plants and vote based on how well the plants do in their area. There are several ways to participate in the voting.

Gardeners can vote online at [www.americangardenaward.com](http://www.americangardenaward.com), text a code to a phone number found at AAS display gardens, mailing postage-paid postcards that are available at most garden centers, or by becoming an AAS fan on Facebook. Several public gardens have agreed to display the four plants so that the public can see them in action. The closest gardens to South Dakota are Denver Botanic Garden, Boerner Botanical Gardens, Chicago Botanic Garden, and Chicago Park District gardens. Other sites include Dallas Arboretum & Botanical Garden, Longwood Gardens, Missouri Botanical Garden, and Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City just to name a few. This summer consider visiting a botanical garden while on traveling to see some of these plants.

The seven plants in the running are: Dahlia 'Dahlinova Hypnotica® Lavender', Dianthus 'Kahori®', Ornamental Pepper 'Uchu™', Petunia 'Easy Wave™ Neon Rose', Petunia milliflora 'Picobella™ Rose Star', Scaevola 'Surdiva® Light Blue', and 'SunPatiens® Variegated Spreading White'. Dahlia 'Dahlinova Hypnotica® Lavender' is a strong plant with amazing flower color, it looks best in a partially sunny area. Dianthus 'Kahori®' is a sweet scented carnation with summer long pink flowers, it does well in the landscape as well as in containers. Ornamental Pepper 'Uchu™' is an unusual ornamental pepper with variegated foliage and long slim fruit that starts as a cream color and turns red as they ripen. Petunia 'Easy Wave™ Neon Rose' is a spreading petunia that works well in containers or in the landscape and boasts summer long blooms that do not need cutting or deadheading. Petunia milliflora 'Picobella™ Rose Star' is a miniature petunia with small pink and white striped flowers that say jump out and yell "wow"! Scaevola 'Surdiva® Light Blue' is very heat tolerant and boasts fan shaped flowers all summer long. 'SunPatiens® Variegated Spreading White' is an impatiens that does well in full sun and doesn't mind shade or cool weather providing flowers until first frost in the fall.

Voting will continue until August 31<sup>st</sup> but consider voting today. The AAS website has a graph that illustrates how each plant is doing. While surfing the website be sure to check out all the past All American Selection winners for the past several years.

Feel free to call on me if you have any questions about the voting process or any other horticultural issues. I can be reached at 605-394-2188 or via email at [ricky.abrahamson@sdstate.edu](mailto:ricky.abrahamson@sdstate.edu). Also, be sure to check out our website at <http://www.co.pennington.sd.us/extension/extsvc.html>.