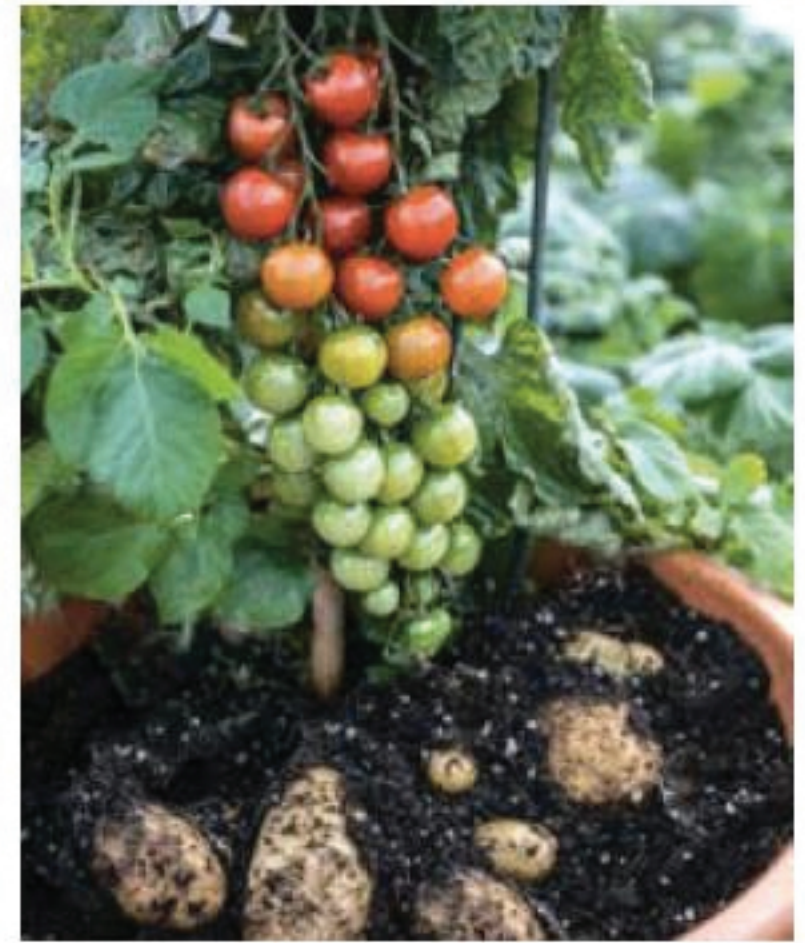


RESTYLE YOUR HOME

> GARDENING



VALLEYBROOK GARDENS



TERRITORIALSEED/TERRITORIALSEED

At left, see the birds and the bees flock to the Coreopsis Cruizin. At right, this Ketchup 'n' Fries plant variety is an eye-catcher, with cherry tomatoes on top and spuds under the soil.

Get green with these top plant picks

From eye-catching blooms to mouth-watering edibles, there's foliage available for any size or type of garden

TARA NOLAN
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Spring has taken its sweet time getting here, but on the bright side, it means more time for green thumbs to figure out which new plants will make it into the cart at the garden centre. There is so much to choose from, it can be overwhelming walking through a maze of potted beauties.

Here are a few standouts for gardens of all sizes.

Conversation starters

It's always fun to feature a plant or two that inspires questions from guests or inquisitive neighbours. Take the new ketchup 'n' fries, for instance. It's a tomato plant grafted to a potato plant. That means cherry tomatoes on top and spuds under the soil.

It will be interesting to hear if gardeners are successful reaping this double yield later in the summer. It's also worth noting this is not a GMO plant. It's simply two plants from the nightshade family grafted together.

On the flower side, PC's gigantic calibrachoa aloha grape cartwheel is sure to elicit an up-close petal inspection. It looks as though a fine paintbrush dipped in purple has painstakingly hand-drawn a feather-like pattern on the pale yellow flowers. These showy blooms love sun and calibrachoa don't need to be deadheaded like their petunia doppelgängers.

Plants for small spaces

If you have big dreams for your small

garden, consider growing dwarf varieties of certain shrubs. For example, the little quick fire hardy hydrangea from Proven Winners thrives in a container or a tight space in the garden, but still produces lots of gorgeous blooms that you can dry for indoor arrangements.

Sun lovers

Rio has added white to its line of dipladenias. These hardy tropicals flower all season long and are very drought tolerant. They store water and nutrients in their tubers, so they'll still bloom without water for one to two weeks.

Speaking of drought-tolerant, there seems to be a wider variety of sedums offered at nurseries these days. Besides tried and true standbys such as autumn joy, there are some lovely new varieties, like Sedum SunSparkler firecracker, which has fuchsia flowers and green foliage that slowly turns red as the season progresses.

Shade lovers

Brighten up a shady spot in the garden with the silvery white variegated leaves of the Brunnera mac Alexander's Great. This mounding perennial is hardy to zone 4 and flowers in the spring.

Heucheras and hostas are also great shade-happy choices.

Attract pollinators

Provide nectar for the pollinators that visit your garden. Not only will your garden be a valuable food source, you can help increase your edible harvest. Hanging basket nas-



PRESIDENT'S CHOICE

President's Choice has added the goji berry plant, seen here, to its fruit and veggie lineup.

turtiums Little Firebirds from Renee's Garden deliver burgundy-, coral- and pumpkin-coloured trailing blooms. Both the flowers and leaves of nasturtiums are edible — toss 'em in a salad.

The bees and butterflies also love coreopsis. You might be used to seeing yellow coreopsis in gardens, but coreopsis v. cruizin' Broad Street is a vibrant shade of red.

Fabulous foliage

The National Garden Bureau declared 2015 to be the year of the coleus, proving that all the attention doesn't have to always be on the blooms. There are multitudes of colour combos available, like the lively

lime green and burgundy foliage of Kong Lime Sprite.

Bouquet-worthy blooms

If you don't want to sacrifice blooms from your ornamental garden, consider planting a few flowers in a corner of your veggie patch. Heirloom cutting zinnias Moulin Rouge feature frilly red blooms that will add glamour to summer vases.

I-didn't-know-I-could-grow-that-here edibles

Over the past few years, certain fruits and veggies have started appearing at garden centres — think fig trees and okra. This year, President's Choice has added goji berries to its lineup.

Edibles that double as ornamentals

When considering plants to add into your beds and borders, consider tucking in a few edibles, like the aforementioned amaranth, colourful Swiss chard or sorrel.

If you're looking for something to sit on a patio, consider the pink icing blueberry bush from the Brazelberries Collection.

The leaves are pink in the spring, with a tinge of blue and green, and turn to a lovely shade of turquoise by the winter.

And a new All-America Selections (AAS) variety of garlic chives called geisha will add height to a container arrangement.