



ALL-AMERICA SELECTIONS®

5201 Walnut Ave., Suite 3, Downers Grove, IL 60515-5625

P: (630) 963-0770

www.aaswinners.com or www.all-america-selections.org

Winners of the 2021 AAS Display Garden Landscape Design Challenge Provide Heart-Warming Stories of Diversity

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DOWNERS GROVE, IL – October 25, 2021 – All-America Selections' 2021 Landscape Design Challenge theme was Diversity in the Garden, inspiring the AAS Display Gardens with a platform to create their own diverse garden using the resources they choose to represent the theme.



For the challenge, AAS provides the gardens with recent AAS Winner seeds and plants. The gardens have the option to incorporate older AAS Winners in their design to illustrate the theme. Gardens are encouraged to generate publicity and hold events to share the story of All-America Selections and AAS Winners.

Gardens are divided into three categories based on the number of visitors per year:

Category I: fewer than 10,000 visitors per year

Category II: 10,001 – 100,000 visitors per year

Category III: Over 100,000 visitors per year

All-America Selections recognizes and thanks the contest judges who are industry experts in the field of horticulture and landscaping:

Jeff Gibson, Landscape Business Manager, Ball Horticultural Company

Ron Cramer, Retired, Sakata Ornamentals and AAS Former President

Barbara Wise, Sales and Marketing Manager, Crescent Garden

A complete collection of photos from all contest entrants can be found on the All-America Selections [website](#).

AAS is proud to announce the following winning gardens from the 2021 Design Challenge:

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Category III: Over 100,000 visitors per year

First Place Winner: Ashton Gardens at Thanksgiving Point, Lehi, Utah



For a garden that already follows the principles of Biodiversity in their garden every season, Ashton Garden simply added another element this year. They highlighted the people in the community who had experiences with cultures and plants outside of Utah. That ranged from living in other states or countries to experiences with memorable plants throughout their lives. By actively marketing this message to their garden's visitors, Ashton Garden came out tops in their category!

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Second Place Winner: State Botanical Garden, Athens, Georgia.



“Diversity in the Garden” for the State Botanical Garden of Georgia began by using a diverse group of college-student interns to help design the 2021 AAS Display Garden. One student specializing in Environment + Design lead the project and worked with a group of student interns on a design that was approved and implemented by the group. Human diversity was the primary focus with a goal of having visitors enter the AAS planting bed and explore the plants up-close, and not just view them from behind a fence. Another type of diversity designed by the group was diversity in plant types and textures. Non-AAS winners like Muhley grass and sedges were used to provide such texture and create habitat for a diverse number of animal visitors.

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Third Place Winner: Montreal Botanical Garden, Montreal, Quebec



“Diversity in the garden is made possible by the contributions of researchers, hybridizers and gardeners from all over the world.” This statement by Montreal Botanic Garden inspired their use of AAS Winners in a design using each color in the chromatic circle in a lively and harmonious undulating dance. While Montreal Botanical Garden has been affected by the pandemic which has deprived them of international visitors, they are embracing their many local visitors with beautiful garden displays such as the one seen above.

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Category II: 10,001 – 100,000 visitors per year

[First Place Winner: Purdue Extension-Marion County Demonstration Garden, Indianapolis, Indiana](#)



Extension Master Gardener volunteers worked with the local Purdue University Extension office to plan, plant, maintain, and harvest the Purdue Extension Marion County Demonstration Garden. In planning the Diversity in the Garden theme, they focused on using a variety of plants and cultivars as well as using a greater mix of colors. To help promote plant diversity this year, they also used AAS Winners from several of National Garden Bureau's 2021 "Year Of The" plants in the garden. They also used AAS cultivars of three native plant species (Echinacea, Rudbeckia & Gaillardia). The largest event for the garden is the Indiana State Fair when they had almost 12,000 visitors during the 18-day event.

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[Second Place Winner: Powell Gardens, Kingsville, Missouri.](#)



Powell Gardens chose to incorporate diversity primarily through the use of many 'diverse' gardening techniques that included raised beds, containers, and trellises made of varying materials. Diversity was also displayed in various other ways such as a variety of colors, shapes, sizes and types of flowers, fruits, and vegetables that they incorporated into the garden. Each AAS Winner was grown in a manner best fitting that variety's growth habit and in a way that showed its diversity to garden visitors.

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[Third Place Winner: Domaine Joly-De Lotbinière, Sainte-Croix, Quebec.](#)



Le Domaine Joly-De Lotbinière interpreted Diversity as all the fights humankind have faced recently such as Black Lives Matter, Native Lives Matter, All Lives Matter, etc. They used Ornamental Pepper Onyx Red to create a mosaiculture of an open black hand to salute all that pain people endured. Petunia Scentsation was planted nearby to enclose the display with the color blue, reminiscent of the AAS logo. Plants were spaced close together, not regarding heights or widths, just as humans in society should be interlaced. The display was in the Jardins Français, the heart of the garden, allowing it to be viewed by everyone who came to visit. In addition, the display was in front of the potager, which was made up of AAS vegetables and flowers, to optimize the theme of diversity through flowers and edibles.

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Category I: fewer than 10,000 visitors per year

First Place Winner: Lee College Horticulture Program, Huntsville, Texas.



The horticulturists at Lee College looked to different structures, textures, and colors that play off each other to create a pleasing aesthetic to represent diversity. This year's assortment of AAS Winners for the Diversity challenge provided the Lee College Horticulture Program with some truly unique plants to use in their landscapes and gardens. The AAS Design Challenge provides Lee College students with an opportunity to come together, bringing their own diverse backgrounds and perspectives into a collaboration that produces beautiful effects. It also helps show that diversity is not exclusive, but inclusive and can yield powerful and positive results in the Texas prison system.

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Second Place Winner (tie): Mississippi State Univ-South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station, Poplarville, Mississippi.



The AAS display garden is the center piece of the larger trial and research garden space at the MSU South MS Branch Experiment Station (SMBES) in Poplarville, MS. It is composed of several hard landscape features including a small bridge over a dry creek bed, a fountain, a gazebo and split rail fences with arbors. The Master Gardener group from Pearl River County provided virtually all of the support needed to plan, plant and care for this garden. The theme of 'Diversity in the Garden' was taken to heart on several fronts by the designers. First, the garden was designed with a diverse blend of AAS winning ornamentals and edibles. A total of 17 varieties of ornamentals and 16 edibles were included in this year's garden. Additionally, a diverse number of planting methods were incorporated which included in-ground, traditional containers, whiskey half-barrels, rail planters, hanging bag planters and elevated tables.

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[Second Place Winner \(tie\): Pima County Master Gardener Demonstration Garden, Tucson, Arizona.](#)



The Pima County Master Gardeners program answered the call to create a garden reflecting diversity by choosing a 700 square foot raised garden bed to showcase past and present AAS Winners. The diversity theme had some unplanned rewards. During planning, committee members had an open dialog about diversity, not only in the garden, but also in the local community and in the larger American society. Through these conversations, the gardeners realized that many diverse plants can be grown together in Southern Arizona. A sign in the garden distilled their mission:

"Arizona is not only rich culturally, but the state is also blessed with many habitats and growing seasons. The AAS Display Garden, part of the Pima County Master Gardeners program, celebrates diversity in 2021 by representing the variety of plants found in our deserts, mountains, and canyons. The selected plants highlight a variety of colors, sizes, and fragrances. Whether you enjoy Arizona's hospitality during visits or call the state your home, please welcome our diverse showcase of succulents, flowers, fruits, and vegetables grown in Arizona's sunshine."

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[Third Place Winner: Knitting Mill Creek Community Garden, Norfolk, Virginia.](#)



Knitting Mill Creek Community Garden wanted to plant a display garden to expose passersby to tried and true plants that they could plant in their own yards. Covid was still in full swing, but they interpreted the theme of "Diversity" by planting edibles along with ornamentals and native pollinator plants - a little something for everyone! Their spring educational event for the public featured tomatoes - the different types, growing conditions for success, etc. It also provided an open space during the pandemic that they could visit and feel safe because it was outdoors and because they required masks and social distancing. This garden became a safe haven for a hugely diverse group - gardeners, neighbors and their children and people from around the city trying to find a little beauty and joy during a very stressful time in their lives. The garden provided a respite from all the stress and provided a constantly evolving place of peace and beauty.

Honorable Mention Winners in each category can be found on the AAS website.

For more information about the contest winners or how to participate in 2021, contact [Diane Blazek](#), All-America Selections.

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