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NEWS RELEASE

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2003 MGA GREEN THUMB AWARDS GIVEN TO 10 NEW GARDENING PRODUCTS

Five new plant varieties and five new gardening products have won 2003 MGA Green Thumb Awards presented by the Mailorder Gardening Association.

Bringing home awards in the Plants and Seeds division were *Echinacea purpurea* 'Vintage Wine' from J.W. Jung Seed Co., *Penstemon tubaeiflorus* from High Country Gardens, *Magnolia* 'Vulcan' from Wayside Gardens, *Coreopsis* 'Limerock Ruby' from Wayside Gardens, and the RPM™ System for fruit-tree root development from Stark Bro's Nurseries & Orchards Co.

Honored in the Tools, Supplies and Accessories division were the Levelase Water Tower Garden Sprinkler from Simple Gardening, PlantOasis Pump Protector from Brite-Lite Group, Spacesaver Pyramid Composter™ from Gardener's Supply Co., Biotec 30 Filter from Lilypons Water Gardens, and the 4-Way Analyzer from J.W. Jung Seed Co.

Winners of the 2003 MGA Green Thumb Awards were selected by an independent panel of garden writers and editors. The winning products were selected based on their uniqueness, technological innovation, ability to solve a gardening problem or provide a gardening opportunity, and potential appeal to gardeners.

The MGA Green Thumb Awards recognize outstanding new garden products available by mail or online. The awards are sponsored by the Mailorder Gardening Association, the world's largest nonprofit association of companies that sell garden products directly to consumers. For more information visit the MGA website at www.mailordergardening.com.



2003 GREEN THUMB AWARD WINNERS— BULBS, SEEDS AND PLANTS



ECHINACEA PURPUREA 'VINTAGE WINE' J.W. JUNG SEED CO.

'Vintage Wine' features the reddest flowers available on a "purple coneflower." Each of the three-inch to five-inch blooms is deep raspberry red with a hint of violet, and the petals are horizontal rather than drooping downward as is typical of the species. This widely adapted perennial is easy to grow in the garden or in containers and blooms profusely in July and August. 'Vintage Wine' prefers sunny locations, and it is cold-hardy in USDA zones 3 to 9. Available from J.W. Jung Seed Co., 1-800-247-5864, www.jungseed.com.



Echinacea purpurea
'Vintage Wine'
J.W. Jung Seed Co.

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PENSTEMON TUBAEFLORUS
HIGH COUNTRY GARDENS

Penstemon tubaefflorus, also known as White Plains Beard-tongue, is a showy white-flowered penstemon that blooms in early summer with long flower spikes that push up from a low rosette of large leaves. Mature plants bloom with dozens of 30- to 36-inch flower spikes covered with bright white blossoms. This very rare species, native to Kansas and Nebraska, grows well in well-drained loam or loamy clay soils. With the increased interest in xeric (water thrifty) plants, Penstemon tubaefflorus offers an easy-to-grow species of a popular drought-tolerant genus. This variety is more moisture tolerant than many other Penstemons, and it is also deer and rabbit resistant, heat tolerant and cold hardy in USDA Zones 4-8. Available from High Country Gardens (1-800-925-9387); www.highcountrygardens.com.



Penstemon tubaefflorus
High Country Gardens



Magnolia 'Vulcan'
Wayside Gardens

MAGNOLIA 'VULCAN'
WAYSIDE GARDENS

The darkest red of any Magnolia ever introduced, 'Vulcan' boasts huge blooms in early to mid-spring that darken even further if the weather turns chilly. The slender tree is attractive both as a single specimen and as a dramatic mass planting. Vigorous and easy to grow, this lovely tree reaches 30 to 50 feet tall in just 10 years but stays 18 to 24 feet wide even at full maturity. Bred in New Zealand by Magnolia expert Felix Jury, 'Vulcan' thrives in nearly every type of soil in zones 5-9. Available from Wayside Gardens, 1-800-845-1124, www.waysidegardens.com.

COREOPSIS 'LIMEROCK RUBY'
WAYSIDE GARDENS

'Limerock Ruby' is the first-ever perennial red Coreopsis. Its large blooms (1.5 inches wide) are colorful and profuse, and the plant's low, spreading habit covers the ground beautifully. The bright blooms, which feature yellow centers, begin when the summer heat sets in and continue until fall. Coreopsis 'Limerock Ruby' reaches a mature size of just under two feet tall and three feet wide, and it thrives in sunny locations throughout zones 4 to 9. Available from Wayside Gardens, 1-800-845-1124, www.waysidegardens.com.



Coreopsis 'Limerock Ruby'
Wayside Gardens

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RPM™ SYSTEM
STARK BRO'S NURSERIES & ORCHARDS CO.

The RPM™ (Root Production Method) System is a multi-step tree improvement program that enhances a tree's root system capacity. Trees using this system are grown in "bottomless pots," creating a dense mass of roots that enable the tree to establish quickly once transplanted. The enhanced root system greatly reduces the number of trees lost due to transplanting, significantly accelerates growth rate and induces early flowering and fruiting. Developed by Forrest Keeling Nursery and implemented by Stark Bro's, the RPM System creates trees that are exceptionally strong and vigorous. Stark Bro's currently offers 49 varieties in RPM, including Starkspur® Arkansas Black Semi-Dwarf Apple, Starkrimson® Sweet Semi-Dwarf Cherry and Lake English Walnut. Available from Stark Bro's, 1-800-325-4180, www.starkbros.com.



RPM™ System
Stark Bro's

2003 GREEN THUMB AWARD WINNERS— TOOLS, SUPPLIES AND ACCESSORIES



Levelease Water Tower Sprinkler
Simple Gardening

LEVELEASE WATER TOWER GARDEN SPRINKLER
SIMPLE GARDENING

The Levelease Water Tower Garden Sprinkler literally soars above all other sprinkler systems with its adjustable height mechanism and its patented, adjustable legs. The unique tripod design and its durable fiberglass and aluminum construction make it easy to handle and versatile enough to perform on uneven ground. The oscillating sprinkler head emits a pulsating spray that can be adjusted to cover any size of lawn or garden. Available online from www.simplegardening.com.

PLANTOASIS PUMP PROTECTOR
BRITE-LITE GROUP

The PlantOasis Pump Protector is an innovative filter bag designed to protect submersible pumps by filtering out dirt and debris before they come in contact with the pump. Perfect for ponds, fountains and hydroponic gardens, the PlantOasis Pump Protector eliminates clogged pumps and burned-out motors that can damage or destroy expensive aquatic plants, fish and hydroponic plants. Simply insert a submersible pump into the filter bag for trouble-free use. Made of a rugged outer mesh nylon cover with a microfilter polyfiber lining. Available from Brite-Lite Group, 1-800-489-2215, www.hydroponix.com.



PlantOasis Pump Protector
Brite-Lite Group

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SPACESAVER PYRAMID COMPOSTER™
GARDENER'S SUPPLY CO.

The Spacesaver Pyramid Composter™ is perfect for gardeners who don't have enough space in their gardens for a compost pile. This composter holds seven cubic feet of leaves, garden waste and kitchen scraps, yet has a compact 20-inch by 22-inch footprint that fits any yard. The Spacesaver Pyramid Composter comes with a rain-catching lid designed to keep the compost moist while letting excess water run off. Available from Gardener's Supply Co., 1-800-955-3370, www.gardeners.com.



Spacesaver Pyramid Composter
Gardeners Supply Co.



Biotec 30 Filter
Lilypons Water Gardens

BIOTEC 30 FILTER
LILYPONS WATER GARDENS

Designed to keep ponds clean, clear and healthy, the Biotec 30 Filter features a European four-chambered design that provides both mechanical and biological filtration. The built-in debris indicator signals when it's time to clean, and a water temperature gauge and spiral hose adapters make this workhorse filter easy to use. The Biotec 30 will filter ponds up to 30,000 gallons. (The smaller, Biotec 10 is perfect for ponds up to 7,500 gallons). Available from Lilypons Water Gardens, 1-800-999-5459, www.lilypons.com.

4-WAY ANALYZER
J.W. JUNG SEED CO.

The 4-Way Analyzer is the first meter designed to measure all of the most important aspects of plant health: light, moisture, soil pH and soil fertility. The moisture probe measures the moisture level where it counts—at the plant's roots. Soil pH is measured on a scale of 0 to 9. A combined nitrogen-phosphorus-potash reading for soil nutrients uses a "too little-ideal-too much" scale based on USDA standards. No battery is required to operate this unique and handy instrument. Available from J.W. Jung Seed Co., 1-800-247-5864, www.jungseed.com.



4-Way Analyzer
J.W. Jung Seed Co.

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