

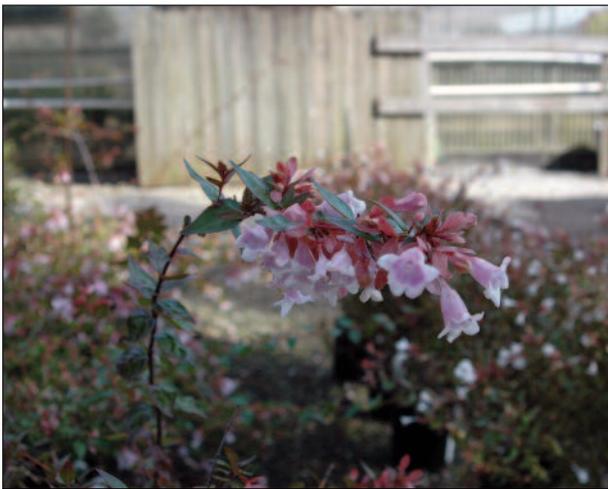
Mississippi Medallion Plants: 2003

The Mississippi Medallion program was established in 1996 by the Mississippi Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA) to increase awareness of plant materials and to promote sales and production of ornamental plants in Mississippi. Compared to national campaigns such as All-American Selections and Perennial Plant of the Year, the Mississippi Medallion program focuses on plants adapted to the environment in Mississippi to benefit both consumers and the green industry. This publication gives an introduction to the 2003 Mississippi Medallion Plants and is part of a series of publications that promote awareness of these plants.

'Edward Goucher' Abelia

(*Abelia grandiflora* x *A. schumannii*)

Characteristics: flowering shrub; year-long interest



'Edward Goucher' abelia (Photo by Mengmeng Gu)

For gardeners—'Edward Goucher' abelia is a hybrid between glossy abelia (*Abelia x grandiflora*) and Schumannii abelia (*A. schumannii*). 'Edward Goucher' abelia has phenotypic characteristics of both parent plants, with the dark green, glossy leaves resembling glossy abelia and the darker pink flowers resembling Schumannii abelia. 'Edward Goucher' starts to flower at the tips of branches, with the 2- to 4-inch-long inflorescences consisting of about 30 thumb-sized, five-petaled, trumpet-like flowers from early May in

Mississippi and continuing through frost. Sepals (the structures at the bottom of the flowers) are dark rosy pink, and the color gets more intense later in the season. Sepals retained on the plants through the winter create continuous interest throughout the season. Plants reach 5 feet tall and wide when mature.

'Edward Goucher' is almost a maintenance-free flowering shrub. It could be pruned to various shapes in formal landscapes or left in its natural arching habit. It flowers on new growth, and pruning may delay flowering early in the season but encourage re-blooming later in the season.

For growers—Summer softwood cuttings are the best for rooting abelia, with close to 100 percent rooting. Hardwood cuttings collected from fall to winter will work, too, but with a much lower rooting percentage. Rooting hormone (1,000–2,000 ppm IBA in liquid or talc formula; 1,000 ppm NAA) expedites the rooting process. Transplanting immediately after rooting without hardening process does not seem to be a problem.

Autumn Blaze® Maple

(*Acer x freemanii* 'Jeffersred')

Characteristics: deciduous shade tree; red fall foliage

For gardeners—Autumn Blaze® maple is a hybrid between red (*A. rubrum*) and silver (*A. saccharinum*) maples, both of which are native to Mississippi. It is a fast-growing shade tree, known for its exceptionally bright red fall foliage. At maturity, it reaches 50 feet tall and 40 feet in spread. It has an upright, broadly oval growth habit. The leaves are deeply five-lobed, resembling silver maple. During the summer, the leaf color is medium green, which turns to a long-lasting orange-red in the fall.

Autumn Blaze® maple is an excellent shade tree with full sun bringing its best color potential. It is adaptable to many conditions, as it is tolerant of heat, cold, and drought and is not picky about soil conditions. It normally has a strong central leader, and pruning is necessary only for removing dead or disease- or insect-infested branches.



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Autumn Blaze maple (Photo by Jim Robbins/University of Arkansas)

For growers—Cutting propagation: select cuttings during early summer; make 9-inch cuttings with two to four nodes; treat cuttings with 1,000 ppm IBA and 500 ppm NAA solution; use rooting substrate with peat and perlite; supply both macronutrients and micronutrients; put under mist; harden off outdoors when cuttings have another 6 inches of new growth; grafting: summer budding on silver maple rootstock.

‘Sonset’ Lantana

(*Lantana hybrida* PP#12883)

Characteristics: moisture-loving, full-sun perennial

For gardeners—‘Sonset’ lantana is a tender perennial in most of Mississippi. It has a mounding habit and reaches 2 feet tall and 3 to 4 feet wide. What is unique about ‘Sonset’ lantana is the flower color of the five-lobed florets—they show a more golden-yellow in the morning and a more orange-red or purple in the afternoon. As with many other lantanas, ‘Sonset’ is very drought tolerant once established and does not require too much maintenance. ‘Sonset’ lantana flowers from spring to frost, and attracts hummingbirds and butterflies.



‘Sonset’ lantana (Photo by Norman Winter/Mississippi State University)

‘Sonset’ lantana could be used for mass plantings, as a component in a hummingbird/butterfly garden in the sunny landscape, or in large containers. Lantana lacebugs and whiteflies may be potential problems. Please refer to Publication 2369 *Insect Pests of Ornamental Plants in the Home Landscape* (<http://msucares.com/pubs/publications/p2369.pdf>) for control methods.

For growers—Growing medium: moderate to moist; pH 5.5–6.2, EC 0.6–1.5 for 2:1 extraction method; growing temperature: 70–75 °F/65–72 °F day/night; holding temperature 50–60 °F; fertigation: 150–250 ppm N; high light level; spring through summer finish; pinch at liner planting and as necessary to shape the plant; PGRs not necessary; finish time: 4–6 weeks for 4- to 5-inch containers, 5–7 weeks for 6-inch/1-gallon containers, 7–9 weeks for 8-inch containers, and 10–12 weeks for 10- to 12-inch containers.

‘Costa Rica Blue’ Salvia

(*Salvia guaranitica*)

Characteristics: tender perennial; dark blue flower spikes

For gardeners—‘Costa Rica Blue’ salvia is a large salvia with dark blue flowers. It reaches 4 to 6 feet in both height and width. Flower spikes could be as long as a foot and emerge from summer to frost, attracting hummingbirds. Dark purplish sepals retained on the spikes after flowering provide great contrast with the lighter, heart-shaped leaves.

In the landscape, ‘Costa Rica Blue’ requires full sun and plenty of moisture, but soil should be slightly dry between waterings. Good companion plants include those with bright foliage or flower colors (for example, 2006 Medallion winners ‘Kong’ coleus and ‘Profusion’ zinnia or 2008 winner ‘All Around Purple’ gomphrena).

For growers—Growing medium: moderate to moist; pH 5.5–6.2, EC 0.6–0.9 for 2:1 extraction method; grow-



'Costa Rica Blue salvia' (Photo by Norman Winter/
Mississippi State University)

ing temperature: 65–72 °F/55–65 °F day/night; holding temperature 50–60 °F; fertigation: 150–200 ppm N; moderate light level; spring through summer finish; pinching at liner planting; PGRs not necessary; finish time: 4–5 weeks for 4- to 5-inch containers, 6–7 weeks for 6-inch/1-gallon containers, and 8–10 weeks for 8-inch containers.

References

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By **Dr. Mengmeng Gu**, Assistant Extension Professor, Plant and Soil Sciences.

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