

# NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Shanan Atkinson (706) 298-0022, [satkinson@asginfo.net](mailto:satkinson@asginfo.net)

## New Plants Win 2015 Green Thumb Awards



The five best new plant varieties for 2015 have won 2015 Green Thumb Awards presented by the Direct Gardening Association (formerly called the Mailorder Gardening Association). Honored in the Plants, Bulbs and Seeds division were *Cynodon hybrida* Dog Tuff™ (Dog Tuff™ African Dogtooth Grass) from High Country Gardens, Lemony Lace™ Elderberry from Proven Winners® ColorChoice®, Prairie Milkweed (*Asclepias sullivantii*) from Prairie Moon Nursery, AsparaBest Asparagus Crowns; AsparaBest Seeds from Gardens Alive!, Inc., and Lo & Behold® 'Pink Micro Chip' Buddleia from Proven Winners® ColorChoice®.

Winners of the 2015 Green Thumb Awards were chosen 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 Green Thumb Awards recognize outstanding new garden products available by mail or online. The awards are sponsored by the Direct Gardening Association (DGA), the world's largest nonprofit association of companies that sell garden products directly to consumers via catalogs and websites. For more information visit [www.directgardeningassociation.com](http://www.directgardeningassociation.com).

## 2015 Green Thumb Award Winners ~ Plants, Bulbs and Seeds ~

### ***Cynodon hybrida* Dog Tuff™ (Dog Tuff™ African Dogtooth Grass) High Country Gardens**

*Cynodon hybrida* 'Dog Tuff™' ('Dog Tuff™ African Dogtooth Grass) is a xeric turf grass, perfect for high traffic and play areas, with excellent durability in yards with dogs. A sterile hybrid, this South African native grass was discovered growing as a dense, bright-green area of grass on an isolated ranch in that country. It was brought to the US over thirty years ago, but it has never been available to the public until it was introduced by High Country Gardens in Spring 2014. (The grass was developed by horticulturist Kelly Grummons.)

This low and dense-growing turf grass is very xeric (water thrifty) and provides a tough, wear-resistant lawn. It is ideal for kids' play and stands up to dog traffic and dog urine with little or no damage. Once established this grass is highly weed resistant, deep rooted and provides a soft, cushioned feel for bare feet. This grass





is considered sterile, so it doesn't spread by seed. Rather it spreads by stolons that root into the ground whenever they can take hold, filling in to a thick, luxurious lawn. Well suited for zones 5-9, the grass grows between 2.5-4" tall, so mowing is optional depending on the desired look. You can purchase *Cynodon hybrida* 'Dog Tuff™' ('Dog Tuff™' African Dogtooth Grass) for \$58.95 for a tray of 70 from High Country Gardens, (800) 925-9387 or [www.highcountrygardens.com](http://www.highcountrygardens.com).

### **Lemony Lace™ Elderberry** ***Proven Winners® ColorChoice®***

This showy new cutleaf elderberry has bright golden foliage and improved sunburn resistance. It is a delightful addition to semi-shaded, woodland gardens although it will tolerate full sun in northern climates. Lemony Lace elderberry is a colorful shaggy mound of gold threads with red new growth. The foliage is more deeply cut than 'Sutherland Gold' or Black Lace™ elderberry, resulting in a compact, irregular mound with extremely fine texture. White spring flowers produce red fruit in the fall. This native deer-resistant plant is easy to grow and will thrive in much of North America. You can purchase Lemony Lace™ Elderberry for \$17.99 for a 1 quart container from Garden Crossings, (616) 875-6355, [www.gardencrossings.com](http://www.gardencrossings.com)



### **Prairie Milkweed (*Asclepias sullivantii*)** ***Prairie Moon Nursery***

Prairie Milkweed is also called Sullivant's Milkweed, named by William Starling Sullivant, an American Botanist of the mid-1800s. This Milkweed appears generally similar to Common Milkweed but is less aggressive, has slightly smaller-flowers and an overall smooth appearance on the stem, leaves and seed pods. It is visited by hummingbirds and a wide variety of bees and butterflies (including, of course, Monarchs). Prairie Milkweed is a hardy and necessary addition to any butterfly garden due to our declining Monarchs. It thrives in sunny, medium to medium-moist gardens in Zones 3-7 and bears a very fragrant flower mid-summer atop a 2-3' plant. After just a few years, a new transplant will develop a deep taproot, protecting the plant in times of drought. Prairie Milkweed is sold as a tray of 38 potted plants for \$92 or it may be one of up to 6 species in the exclusive Mix & Match Tray for \$129 from Prairie Moon Nursery, (866) 417-8156, [www.prairiemoon.com](http://www.prairiemoon.com)





## **AsparaBest Asparagus Crowns; AsparaBest Seeds** *Gardens Alive!, Inc.*

Researchers at the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario have been looking for an improved variety of asparagus over conventional Jersey varieties. The researchers wanted:

- Increased yield over current, standard varieties
- Long production cycles
- Excellent flavor

They succeeded with AsparaBest™ asparagus. This purple tipped, green speared asparagus has yielded 2 and 3 times as much marketable spears in research studies. It also has outlasted standard varieties and still produces more spears (again 2 to 3 times) after 15 years. Tests are still ongoing as to the total longevity and high production of AsparaBest asparagus. AsparaBest is a late emerging asparagus which helps it avoid any frost issues and thrives particularly well in cold northern environments. This

asparagus is well suited for almost all soil types found in most home gardens in the U.S. AsparaBest is predominately male hybrid cultivar which allows it to put all its production energy into crown and spear development. AsparaBest Asparagus Crowns and Seeds will be available for sale in the Gardens Alive January 2015 catalog and on their website. The AsparaBest Asparagus Crowns (#4896) sell for \$19.95 for 10 crowns, and the AsparaBest Seeds (#4897) sell for \$6.95 from Gardens Alive!, Inc., (513) 354-1482 or [www.gardensalive.com](http://www.gardensalive.com).



## **Lo & Behold® 'Pink Micro Chip' Buddleia** *Proven Winners® ColorChoice®*

A whole new color for the dwarf, non-invasive Lo & Behold series, 'Pink Micro Chip' is a small plant with an abundance of blooms. The fragrant flowers appear earlier in the season than those of 'Blue Chip,' and continue until frost. This deer-resistant plant attracts hummingbirds and other wildlife to landscapes. Lo & Behold® 'Pink Micro Chip' Buddleia can be purchased for \$29.99 for an 8" pot from Garden Crossings, (616) 875-6355, [www.gardencrossings.com](http://www.gardencrossings.com)

