**Tested Nationally & Proven Locally**

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Last fall I had the privilege of attending the America In Bloom Symposium and Awards Ceremony to present an award to two American towns on behalf of All-America Selections. This is just one example of how AAS is developing relationships with the extended horticulture industry and municipalities to introduce our winners to new audiences.

America in Bloom is about building beautiful communities all across this continent.

All-America Selections is about proving the beauty of a new vegetable on the plant and ultimately in your mouth. It is also about trialing for season-long garden performance of beautiful new flowers all across this continent.

Both of our organizations understand the power of beauty: it has the ability to transform people and communities. Some people jokingly say that the horticulture industry isn’t about saving the world, so it’s not a serious job or anything. But when people have food in their bodies, they don’t commit acts of desperation, and when people plant flowers in vacant lots, something amazing happens to the surrounding community.

So as plant breeders work on projects, as AAS judges volunteer this summer, as AAS display gardens show our most recent winning varieties, and as we as an organization reach out to other horticultural organizations, let’s remember that when we work together, beauty becomes a powerful thing.

Connie Dam-Byl
Board President
William Dam Seeds
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Social Media:

Social Media continues to be our most popular platform for getting our message out, both to existing gardeners and to new ones we’re hoping to attract.

We’re actively involved in Social Media, including Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, and are continually looking for ways to engage our audience via these tools. This year we launched a Facebook group (image below) which is talked about more on page 6.

We have not forgotten other forms of media though. By working with AAS Ambassadors Gary Pilarchik (see page 6), Melinda Myers (see page 7) and Jonathan Bardzik (see page 8) we have greatly increased our presence in both print and digital formats.

In addition, we continue to partner with National Garden Bureau on the annual NGB Plant Nerds trips during CAST and the August Veggie Trials. Read more about those trips and our guests on pages 26-27.

Welcome and Thanks for Joining Our Group!
Flower and Vegetable Winners is all about neighbors helping neighbors (we focus solely on North America) sharing our passions for gardening. This post will stay pinned and be updated regularly to reflect the different give-aways, contests and activities that are going on for the month.
Website:

The AAS website continues to evolve, with popular new features like our twice-monthly blogs and our “If you like this, you’ll love that” campaign comparing popular comparison varieties to current and new AAS Winners.

We also added a subscribe option to our blog feature which is gaining new subscribers every day.

A really fun feature is our new Social Share tracker that demonstrates the popularity of posts about AAS Winners.

Stay tuned as we continue to enhance our mobile-friendly website!
Gary Pilarchik

Gary Pilarchik, one of our #NGBPPlantNerd alumni, is all about YouTube and Facebook Groups. His YouTube channel now has over 150,000 followers and is growing all the time. He teamed up with another #NGBPPlantNerd, CaliKim, to start a Facebook page called “Grow It, Cook It, Eat It” that has 81,000 members.

We have hired Gary to launch our Facebook group, build up our YouTube subscribers and establish a base of videos on our YouTube channel.

Thanks to Gary, our Facebook Group went from 0 members to 2,500 members in just a few months, and our YouTube channel went from 7 subscribers to 400 subscribers of 35 videos in even less time. He has coined the phrase (as seen on the front cover of this report) “The Proof is in the Plant”
Melinda Myers

Melinda Myers, another one of our #NGBPlantNerd alumni, has always been a huge proponent of All-America Selections. Via her many books (over 20!), radio shows, TV appearances and speaking engagements, she touts the superiority of AAS Winners.

Melinda has also established a very credible reputation among the media, so when she writes an article and puts it “out on the wire”, it is widely picked up, published and distributed.

In 2018, we contracted Melinda to write 5 articles for AAS, all featuring various AAS Winners.

The 2018 article schedule is:

February: "Hottest Pepper Varieties to Try this Year"

April: “Winning Flowers for Mother’s Day”

Early May: "Pollinator-Friendly Annuals"

Late May: "Unique Vegetables to WOW Your Guests"

August: "Best Bets for Fall and Cool-Season Gardening" OR “Fall Container Gardening” (TBD)

Take a look at our YTD publicity results on page 10 to see the partial results of this partnership!

These videos help the gardening industry promote AAS Edible Winners by explaining the judging process, showcasing AAS winners, and sharing five custom recipes that use more than fifteen recent AAS Winners.

Videos can be viewed, shared and embedded from YouTube.

- **Strawberry Fennel Salad** (featuring Delizz strawberries, Antares fennel, Pepitas pumpkin seeds and Dolce Fresca basil)
- **Minestrone Pasta** (featuring Prism kale, Mad Hatter peppers, Seychelles pole beans and Chef’s Choice Yellow tomatoes)
- **Roasted Okra and Tomatoes** (featuring Candle Fire okra and Candyland currant tomatoes)
- **Watermelon Gazpacho** (featuring Mini Love watermelon, Midnight Snack tomatoes, Chili Pie peppers and Dolce Fresca basil)
- **Spicy Tomato and Cucumber Salad** (featuring Patio Choice Yellow tomatoes, Persian Gherkin cucumbers, Warrior onions and Aji Rico peppers)

Each video and corresponding recipe has been showcased as an AAS blog post on the AAS Website.
You can get involved!!!!

Are you on Social Media? Is an employee? Then follow any or all of our Social Media channels and feel free to comment, share, etc. We LOVE our judges to comment and share information about their experience with AAS Winners. Breeders can also post and share...it’s all about spreading the word of how wonderful these varieties will perform in the garden!

To follow/join any of our Social Media accounts, click on the links below:

Facebook:
- All-America Selections
- AAS Flowers & Vegetable Winners (group)
- National Garden Bureau

Twitter:
- All-America Selections
- National Garden Bureau

Instagram:
- All-America Selections
- National Garden Bureau

Slideshare:
- All-America Selections
- National Garden Bureau

Pinterest:
- National Garden Bureau
  (Promotes AAS Winners)
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We continuously look for ways to improve publicity tracking and 2018 is becoming a year of great SUCCESS! 2016 and 2017 were years of stagnation, not because our publicity efforts were stagnant, but because our means of tracking were falling behind the times.

We did two new things in 2018: started using TalkWalker in addition to Google alerts, and used Melinda Myer as described on page 7. As you can see, our YTD numbers have already exceeded the 2017 totals.

That’s impressive results!
The 2017 Landscape Design Contest theme was: “Foodscaping: Interspersing Edibles in the Ornamental Garden” and our gardens truly impressed us with their creative displays and community involvement.

**Category I: fewer than 10,000 visitors per year**
First Place Winner: University of Wisconsin Spooner Ag Research Station, Spooner, WI
Second Place Winner: Master Gardeners Association of Tippecanoe Country, Lafayette, IN
Third Place Winner: Kenosha County Center AAS Display & Demonstration, Bristol, WI
Honorable Mentions:
First Year Participant Miami University Hamilton Conservatory, Hamilton, OH
Historical Reference Jennings Park Master Gardener Display Garden, Marysville, WA
Edible Sampling Parker F. Scripture Botanical Gardens, Oriskany, NY
Food Bank Donation SW Indiana Master Gardener Demo. Gardens, Evansville, IN
Use of Display Garden Sign Community Arboretum at Virginia Western, Roanoke, VA
Providing Recipes for AAS Winners Rogers Farm Demo. Garden, Old Town, ME

**Category II: 10,001 – 100,000 visitors per year**
First Place: Purdue Extension Marion County Demo. Garden, Indianapolis, IN
Second Place: Jardin Daniel A Seguin, Saint-Hyacinthe, QC, Canada
Third Place (tie): Green Bay Botanical Garden, Green Bay, WI
Third Place (tie): Shell Park, Oakville, Ontario, Canada
Honorable Mention:
Overcoming Challenges St. John’s County Arboretum, St. Augustine, FL

**Category III: Over 100,000 visitors per year**
First Place: Dow Gardens, Midland, MI (Pictured above)
Second Place: Norsec at Botanical Garden of Montreal, Montreal, QC, Canada
Third Place: Boerner Botanic Gardens, Hales Corners, WI
Your Board of Directors

Pak Choi Asian Delight
National Winner

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Officers:

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Connie Dam-Byl
William Dam Seeds
Dundas, ON L9H 5E1
Canada

Vice President
Jenny Kuhn
Raker—Robertta's
Litchfield, MI 49252-9125

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Past President
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Mark Gross
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West Chicago, IL

Justin Hancock
Costa Farms
Miami, FL 33187

Chelsey Lenczyk
Bejo Seeds
Perkasie, PA 18944

Jessie Liebenguth
Reiman Gardens
Ames, IA 50011

Jenny Wegley
Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden
Dallas, TX 75218

Page 12  All-America Selections 2018 Annual Report
Marketing Communications Committee
Mark Gross, Chair; Jim Devereux, Co-chair, Patty Buskirk; Justin Hancock; Chelsey Lenczyk, Gail Pabst

Ornamental Seed Comparison Committee
Jeanne Svob, Chair; Al Gerace; Todd Perkins; Melissa Shepherd, Vicky Rupley

Edible Comparison Committee (tomatoes and peppers)
Josh Kirschenbaum, Chair; Patty Buskirk; Bill Dam

Edible Comparison Committee (all others)
Angus Mellish, Chair; Steve Bellavia; Heather Kibble; Chelsey Lenczyk

Ornamentals from Vegetative Comparison Committee
Vaughn Fletcher, Chair; Al Gerace; Rebecca Lusk

Herbaceous Perennials Comparison Committee
Richard Hawke, Chair; Nanci Allen, Paul Pilon, Mark Dwyer, Jenny Wegley

Finance Committee
Alex Augustyniak, Chair and Treasurer; Connie Dam-Byl, President; Diane Blazek, Executive Director

Combined Judges Committee
Jessie Liebenguth, Chair; Patty Buskirk; Connie Dam-Byl; Angus Mellish, Jenny Wegley

AAS/NGB Liaison Committee
Connie Dam-Byl, AAS President; Tim Hodson, NGB President
Jenny Kuhn, AAS Vice-President; Nick Pucci, NGB Vice-President
Alex Augustyniak, AAS Treasurer; Claire Josephson, NGB Treasurer
Angus Mellish, AAS Past-President, Heather Kibble, NGB Past-President
Strategic Planning Update

This past January when our Board met during the American Seed Trade Association Flower and Vegetable Seed Conference, we engaged our former president, Ron Cramer of Xiant Technologies, to present some thoughts on the future of the horticulture industry and possible evolutions within consumer gardening.

It was a fascinating evening of looking at LED technology and alternatives to traditional farming. During our Board meeting the next day we followed up with a synopsis of our impressions which led to a Strengths and Weaknesses assessment session. Those results are going into our Strategic Business plan with other pieces that are being updated by volunteers from the industry for review at our meeting next January.

As we continue to plan for a successful AAS future, many of our current goals to promote AAS winners in new ways are becoming reality, as you are reading throughout this report. We continue to keep to our mission of “promoting new garden varieties with superior garden performance judged in impartial trials in North America.”
Goals for 2018-2019:

1. Continue building AAS Ambassador programs for Directors, Judges & Display Gardens.
2. Launch closer working relationship with AAS Ambassadors within broker network.
3. Build and refine Lead Ambassador role and action plan
4. Build number of trial entries
5. Write position statement on seed health testing standards for AAS Entries and Winners.
6. Create templates for committee functions and responsibility.
7. Update all new staff procedure manuals now that we have 100% new staff.
8. Build participation in Plant Trial Database
9. Continue to build and solidify relationships and partnerships with other industry associations and organizations.
As the new Treasurer, I am very excited to be part of such an amazing and experienced organization. At meetings and events throughout the year, I continually meet some very passionate and professional Judges as well as members of the board and committees. Thank you for having me on board and I hope that I too can help make a difference with AAS and our focus.

It truly is exciting to see the amount of effort and work being done in the market and behind the scenes to ensure that we are supporting the AAS winners both past and current, as well as the quality of review being done to evaluate the entries.

On the financial side, I’ve spent some time reviewing the financial statements and documents. We are in a great state of affairs. The review of our year end financial statements has been completed, gross revenues are consistent and the AAS staff are doing a fantastic job managing costs. I’m excited to see what the marketing committee has planned for this next year in supporting and promoting the fantastic varieties.

Alex Augustyniak
AAS Treasurer
West Coast Seeds

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$351,531</td>
<td>$270,692</td>
<td>$80,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$331,462</td>
<td>$256,663</td>
<td>$74,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$468,117</td>
<td>$242,624</td>
<td>$225,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$249,509</td>
<td>$203,788</td>
<td>$45,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$239,827</td>
<td>$195,644</td>
<td>$44,183</td>
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Assessment Revenues 2010—2017

AAS Entries vs. Winners 2010—2018
Showcase of 2017 AAS Winners

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- Canna South Pacific Orange
- Corn, sweet American Dream
- Cuphea FloriGlory Diana
- Gypsophila Gypsy White Improved
- Marigold Super Spry
- Ornamental Pepper Onyx Red
- Pak Choi Asian Delight
- Pepper cayenne Red Ember
- Pepper habanero Roulette F1

Tomato Red Racer F1
National Winner
In 2018, we have 12 National Winners (listed above and on page 18) and three Regional Winners (listed below). Congratulations to all winning breeders!
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All-America Selections’ success as the only non-profit national trialing organization in North America would not be possible without our dedicated, unbiased Judges and their hard-working assistants. The Combined Judge’s Committee has welcomed several new judges for the 2018 trials increasing our presence across North America.

2018 Judges:

- Edible
  - 32 judges in 24 states and provinces

- Herbaceous Perennial
  - 23 judges in 21 states and provinces

- Ornamental Seed
  - 49 judges in 31 states and provinces

- Ornamental Vegetative
  - 20 judges in 17 states and provinces

AAS Judges span a variety of businesses and backgrounds including originating breeders, seed companies, growers, public gardens, and universities. AAS will continue to add talented judges across our trials, with an emphasis on adding trial grounds in underrepresented regions.
AAS Display Gardens

AAS Winners are promoted and showcased beautifully at AAS Display Gardens across the United States and Canada.

The AAS Display Garden program is a vital part of the AAS publicity program, introducing scores of consumers to AAS Winners and increasing awareness of AAS. In addition to receiving AAS Winners currently under assessment, many gardens continue to grow their favorite past AAS Winners, further extending the reach of AAS Winners to the public.

To date we have 177 Display Gardens:
- 129 Displaying both Ornamentals and Edibles
- 45 Displaying Ornamentals only
- 3 Displaying Edibles only

Display Garden Regional Distribution:
- 48 Great Lakes
- 37 Heartland
- 15 Mountain/Southwest
- 33 Northeast
- 27 Southeast
- 16 West/Northwest
- 1 Japan

All AAS Display Gardens are encouraged to participate in the yearly AAS Landscape Design Challenge. The theme for 2018 is “Get Social in the Garden” focusing on using social media to promote AAS Display Gardens and AAS Winners.
The 2017 Medallion of Honor recipient was Vicky Rupley of Harris Seeds. Vicky started her career by attending the University of Rhode Island, including a summer internship pollinating tomatoes at Harris Seeds. She then went on to UC Davis in California and received a Masters in Agriculture Education earning her credentials to teach and lecture on vegetable crops. In 1985 Vicky transitioned to the industry, working at Harris Moran Seed Company, Ball Seed, Sluis & Groot and Harris Seeds where today she serves as the company’s Executive Vice President. In addition to her professional career, Vicky has generously given of her time as a member of the National Garden Bureau Board of Directors from 1995-1998 then as a member of the All-America Selections Council of Judges beginning in 2006. While serving as a judge, Vicky then joined the AAS Board of Directors as a Director, Vice President, President, Past-President from 2007-2015. Congratulations Vicky!
AAS and NGB Summer Summit 2017:
September 2017
Rochester, New York

Rochester, New York served as the host city for the 2017 Summer Summit with Harris Seeds setting the bar high for gracious hospitality. A few highlights of the meeting were:

- A guided bus tour of Rochester’s historical significance and urban resurgence
- Harris Seeds’ guided tours of their offices, seed warehouse and trial and display gardens followed by a wonderful catered lunch
- Stops at two urban renewal projects, one at High Falls and the other at Greenvisions flower farm, both projects of the Greentopia EcoDistrict
- Wegman’s guest speaker, organic farm and store tours
- AAS Display Garden at Sonnenburg Gardens in Canandaigua, NY
- Bejo Seeds’ vegetable trials
- AAS Judge’s Meeting
- AAS Awards Banquet
AAS Summer Summit 2018:

Join us in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana!

Overview:

**Tuesday, October 2:** Registration is open from 4-6 p.m. and the Welcome Reception is from 6-8 p.m. at the Drury Inn and Suites New Orleans hotel.

**Wednesday, October 3:** Today is an immersion into New Orleans culture with a walking tour of the Garden District, followed by visits to Perino’s Garden Center then our Display Garden, the New Orleans Botanical Garden, concluding with a “Dinner with Peers” along the esteemed Magazine Street.

Click here to see what Thrillest calls the best things to eat on Magazine Street!

**Thursday, October 4:** Today we’ll travel to Baton Rouge but first, a stop at the Hammond Research Station for their Fall Industry Field Day. Then a quick stop at one of the NGB garden grant applicants, Options garden center. Then on to Baton Rouge for a hearty welcome from our AAS Trial judges at Louisiana State University Agricultural Center including a tour of the very realistic recreated plantation in the LSU Rural Life Museum. The annual Awards Banquet is this evening, held at the beautiful LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens, an AAS Display Garden.

**Friday, October 5:** An optional but short morning bayou tour will precede the trip back to the New Orleans airport in time for afternoon and evening flights home. (Note: those wishing to go directly back to the New Orleans airport first thing on Friday will be able to do so.)

CLICK HERE to register!
For the second year, the AAS Annual report includes an update from our sister organization, National Garden Bureau.

National Garden Bureau promotes AAS Winners through several programs:
- ‘Year of the’ program (see below for 2019 featured crops)
- New Varieties featured on the NGB website
- New Varieties at GWA Annual Symposium
- Growing for Futures Garden Grant
- California Trials with Garden Communicators (#NGBPlantNerds)
  (See details on following page)

To inquire about membership in NGB, please click here.
For the past four years, National Garden Bureau, All-America Selections and our sponsoring breeder companies have hosted and organized a trip to the California Trials for 4-5 influential garden communicators.

The 2018 April PlantNerds were:
(pictured above, l to r)
Gail Pabst, National Garden Bureau
Tracy Blevins, Plants Map
Erin Schanen, The Impatient Gardener
Maria Zampini, UpShoot Marketing
Diane Blazek, All-America Selections
Marianne Wilburn, Small Town Gardener
Karen Chapman, Le Jardinet

The 2017 August PlantNerds were:
(pictured on opposite page, l to r, with our hosts from Heinz Seed)
Jen McGuiness, Frau Zinnie
Brie Arthur, Brie Grows
Mike Irvine, Sunset magazine
Carol Miller, Meister Media
Angie Lituri, The Freckled Rose
Gail Pabst, National Garden Bureau
Diane Blazek, All-America Selections
Cultivate’18  
July 14-17, 2018 in Columbus, Ohio  

GWA Annual Conference and Expo  
August 12-17, 2018 in Chicago, Illinois  

Home Garden Seed Assoc. Conference  
September 5-7, 2018 in California  

America In Bloom Symposium  
September 27-29, 2018 in Lexington, Kentucky  

AAS/NGB Summer Summit  
October 2-5, 2018 in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana  

Great Lakes Expo  
December 4-6, 2018 in Michigan  

ASTA Flower and Seed Conference 2019  
February 2-4, 2019 in Orlando, Florida  

CA Spring Trials 2019  
March 23-27, 2019 in California