ALL-AMERICA SELECTIONS

2019
ANNUAL REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As the incoming president this past January I have had the pleasure of experiencing the scope and commitment of the All-America Selections Board, Judges and Trial facilities. We all represent a unified approach of delivering recommendations on the most outstanding cultivars in vegetables, seed annuals and perennials as well as vegetative perennials and annuals for the American garden. Since 1932, AAS has devoted its process to the home gardener and in return, the home gardener has prospered from our relationships with breeders around the world.

As an organization we continue to evolve and position ourselves to the benefit of the horticultural community. It is this sense of community that we hold in the highest regard. Our strategic plan outlines the focus for the AAS brand and how we can continue to convey our ultimate goal of successful gardening from coast to coast. It is a multi-level system of symbiotic support that enhances all of our gardens one at a time.

JIM DEVEREUX

AAS President, GreenFuse Botanicals

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Our Mission:

"To promote new garden varieties with superior garden performance judged in impartial trials in North America."

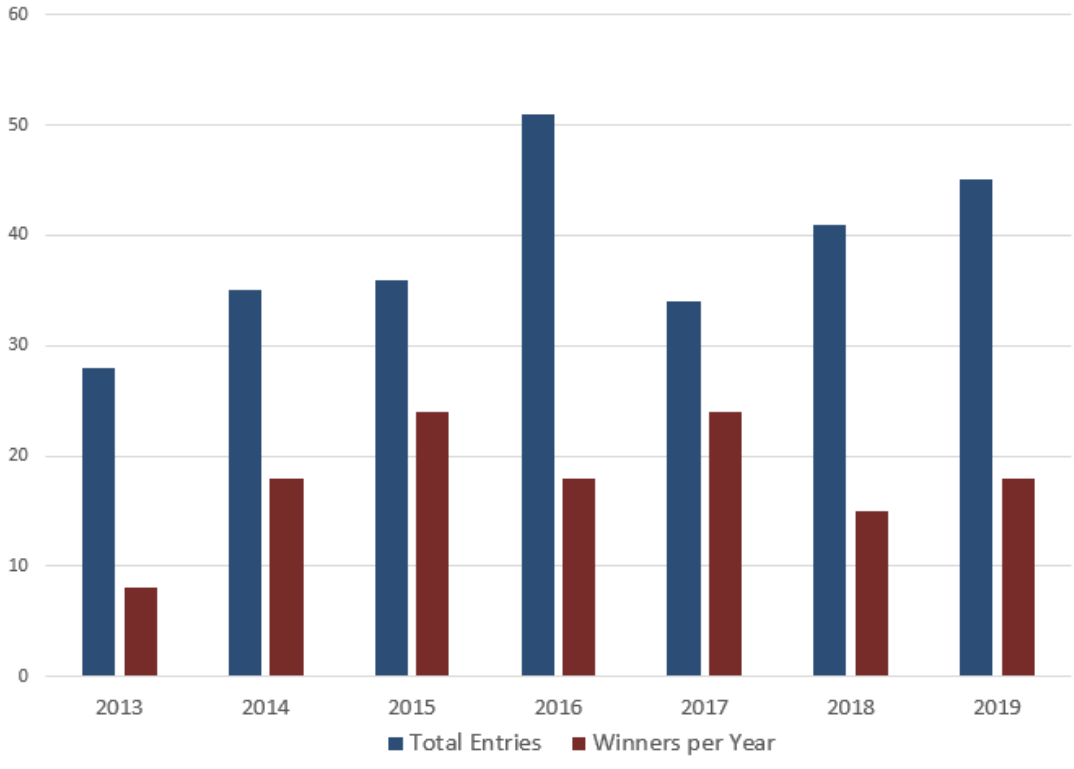
FINANCIAL DETAILS

Year	Revenues	Expenses	Net
2018	$ 289,834	$ 283,704	$ 6,130
2017	$ 351,531	$ 270,692	$ 80,839
2016	$ 331,462	$ 256,663	$ 74,799
2015	$ 468,117	$ 242,624	$ 225,493*
2014	$ 249,509	$ 203,788	$ 45,721
2013	$ 239,827	$ 195,644	$ 44,183

*2015 was the year AAS moved from a cash to accrual accounting system which resulted in a bump of revenues for that year.

Entries vs. Winners 2013 - 2019

Without entries, there would be no winners!



FINANCIAL REPORT

In 2018 it was exciting to see all the entries and strong comparisons in the trials. The breeders have their work cut out, as many of the current varieties are fantastic, yet we see all the hard work they have put in over the years paying off in some absolutely amazing new varieties.

At AAS, the staff has been hard at work managing costs and ensuring we provide the display gardens with each year's winners. Over the last few years AAS has built up some additional funds to use for new marketing and media advertising, directly related to selling more AAS winners. AAS continues to invest in focused ads and customer engagement. Many of the AAS volunteers, no matter where they are or which role they are in, are continually promoting AAS Winners and the excitement they bring is contagious.

On the financial side, again AAS remains very strong in its operations and financial viability. We have at least 2 years of operating reserves to ensure that we will continue to promote and advertise AAS Winners. We continue to increase spending on marketing as seen in the strategic plan. AAS continues to improve its focus, ensuring we keep the energy and excitement in the market regarding All-America Selections and our 90+ independent judges.

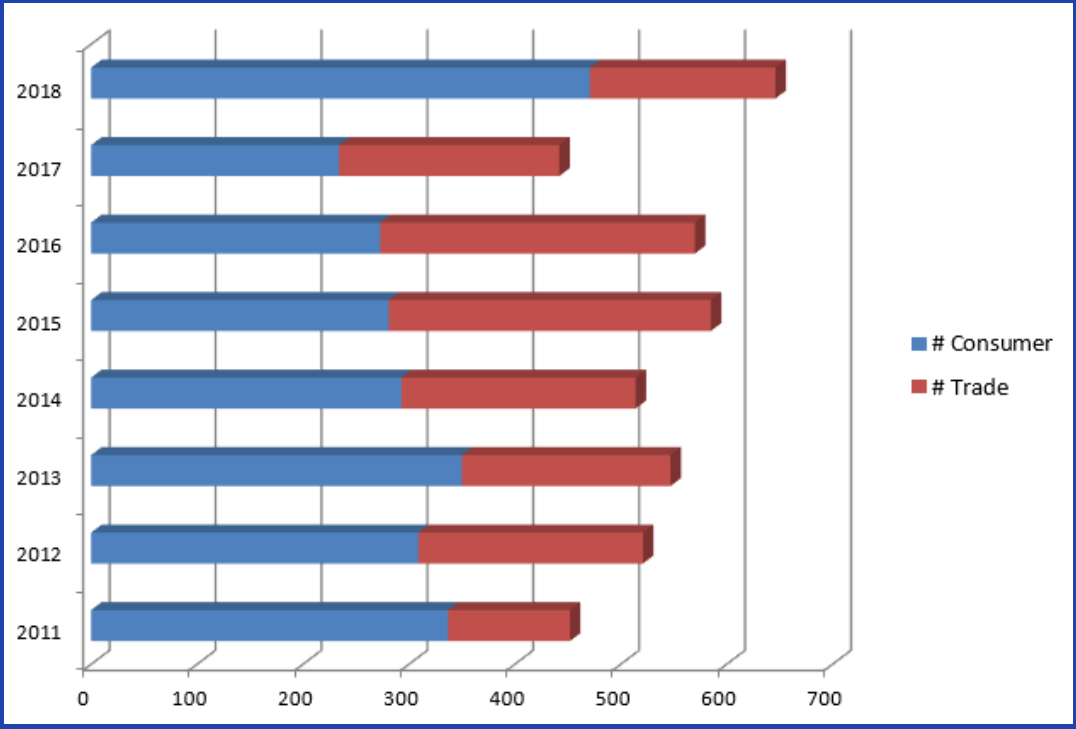
ALEX AUGUSTYNIAK

AAS Treasurer, West Coast Seeds

MARKETING REPORT

One of AAS' primary goals is to promote our winners: it uses the largest part of our annual budget and much of our office resources. As our revenues increase, so do the marketing efforts and ambassador opportunities.

We have an active Marketing Committee that acts as a sounding board for many creative ideas that our office staff and volunteers develop to engage the horticulture industry and gardening public. There are so many good ideas that we now have the task of selecting the best of them. Throughout this report you will see ways in which AAS uses professionals to promote our winners, as well as utilizing our community of judges, breeders, and display gardens.



PUBLICITY HITS
2011-2018

The increase in marketing has boosted our publicity hits to an all-time high

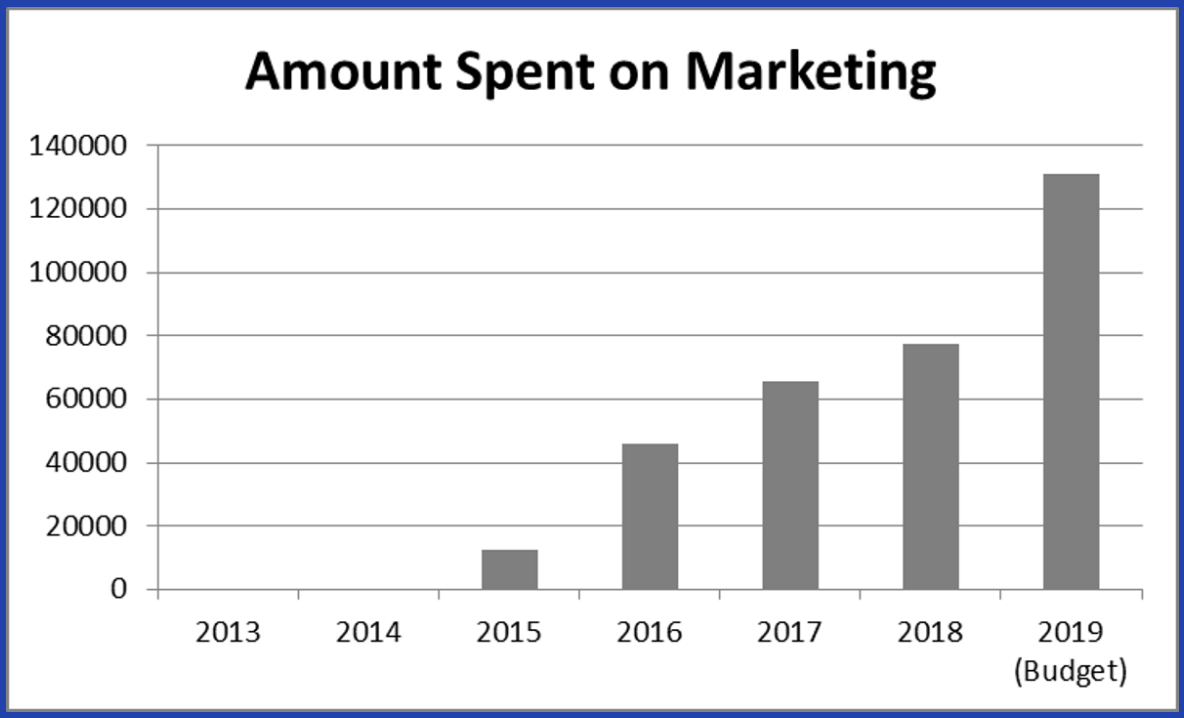
MARKETING REPORT

We get out of the office!
By attending trade shows and working with other similarly minded organizations, we continue to grow our brand recognition throughout the horticulture industry. Introducing ourselves to new people has gained more display gardens, judges, and other volunteers (or Ambassadors) for AAS.

One exciting new venture that we are doing with America In Bloom involves their towns planting mini-AAS display gardens. The goal is to win an AAS sponsored prize that we will present to them at their Fall Symposium in St Charles, Illinois.

CONNIE DAM-BYL

AAS Past-President/Marketing Chair, Wm. Dam Seeds



The dollar amount of assessments reinvested in marketing continues to climb every year.

AAS BRAND AMBASSADOR: GARY PILARCHIK

From an early age, Gary was taught gardening by his grandfather and never lost his passion for it. For the last 20 years Gary's daytime career is serving as clinical mental health therapist where he provides therapy for people with major mental illnesses. He rediscovered gardening about 15 years ago as a way to manage stress and enjoy life. Then he started a YT Channel called The Rusted Garden in 2011 which has grown to 250,000 subscribers. He recently purchased a 1867 farmhouse with 2 acres with a goal of transforming it into an edible landscape. For AAS, he is vlogging the entire process from first dig through last harvest and is using a huge number of AAS Winners to show "The Proof is in the Plant" when it comes to garden performance. This way, Gary will help build a larger following of the AAS YouTube channel.

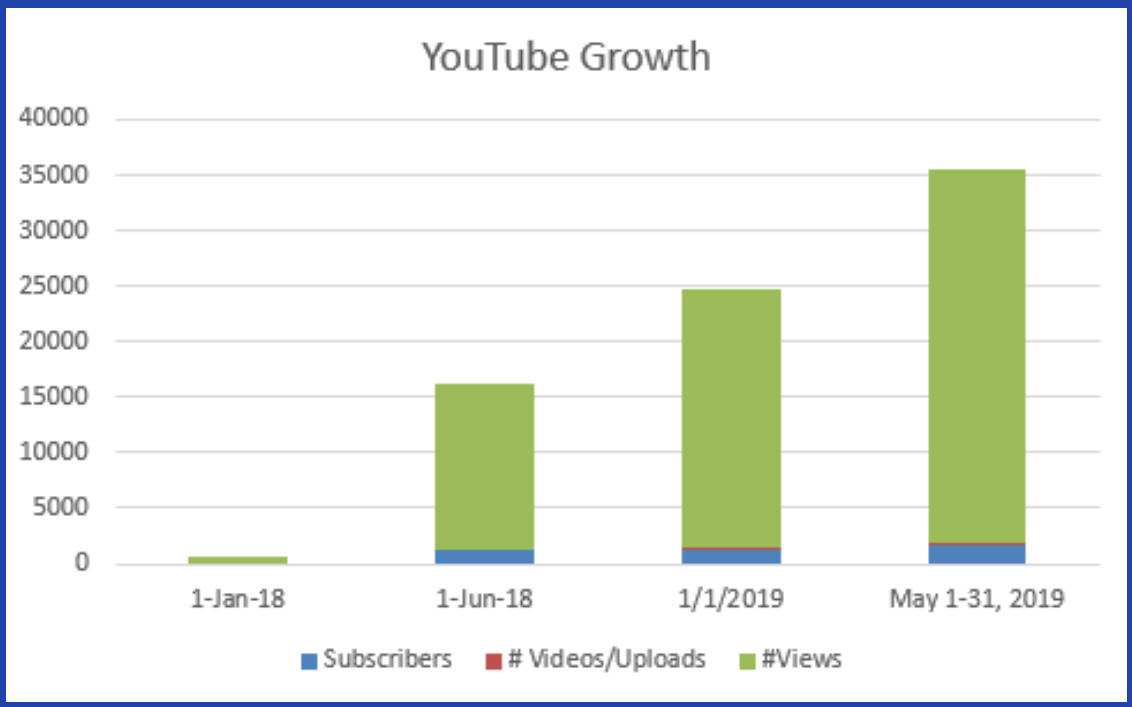


FIGURE 1.

Gary's expertise is on YouTube and this graphic shows the growth in the AAS YouTube channel in just over one year's time

AAS BRAND AMBASSADOR: MELINDA MYERS

Nationally known gardening expert Melinda Myers has 30+ years of horticulture experience and has written more than 20 gardening books. She hosts the nationally-syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" program which airs on over 115 TV and radio stations throughout the U.S.

In 2019 Melinda produced a series of "Garden Moment" radio spots that explain the AAS Trials and urges listeners to ask for AAS Winners by name. The spots did/will air 3-5 times per week for 12 weeks on all 115 radio partners for a total of **almost 6,000 commercial airings valued at $76,000.**

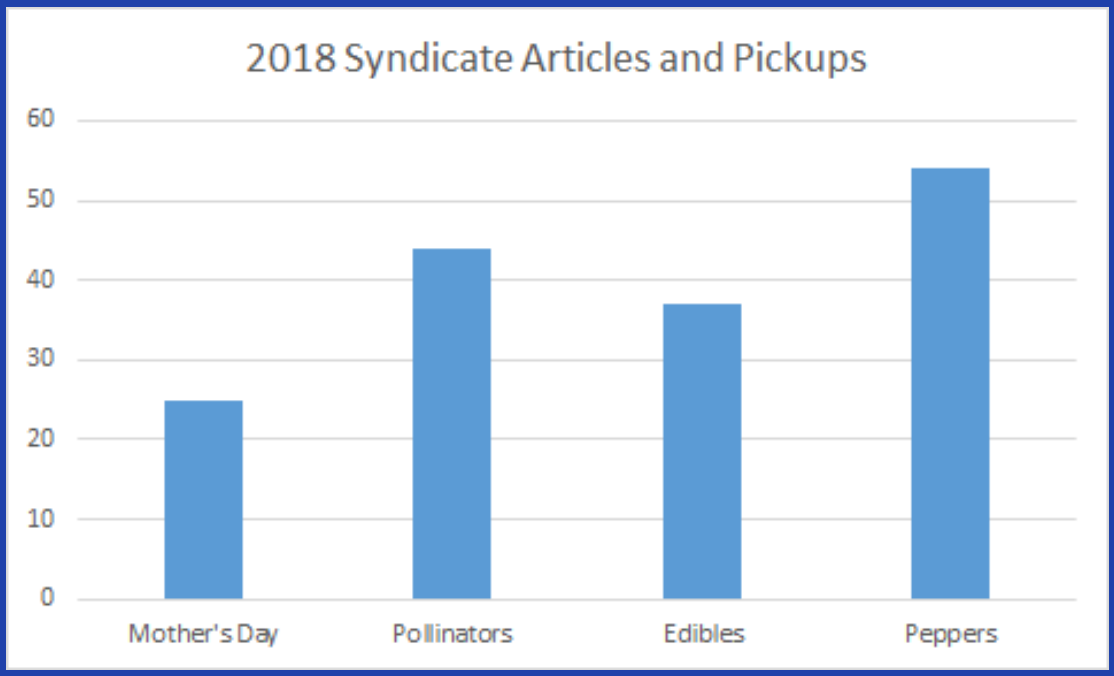


FIGURE 1.

Results from the AAS partnership with Melinda in 2018 helped us reach an all-time high for publicity hits. The pepper article "Hot Pepper Varieties to Try this Year" was quite popular!

SHOWCASING OUR AAS JUDGES

This year we are highlighting our valuable judges through two series:

The first is a series of AAS Judge Profiles on social media explaining the judge's qualifications and adding personal information to connect them with the audience.

The second is a video series produced from raw video footage we are collecting now that will debut late 2019 into into 2020. Stay tuned!

AAS PLANT SAMPLE PROGRAM

This spring AAS initiated their first sample plant program for broker sales reps and Preview Gardens.

In May, almost 200 individuals received samples of 12 recent AAS National Winners and we're looking forward to their feedback! These two groups are some of our best brand ambassadors and they are key in helping sell product.

AAS AMBASSADORS WIN TRIP TO LOUISIANA

In 2018, we granted FOUR AAS Ambassadors complimentary trips to our Summer Summit. Our Judge, Bernadette, was chosen for her superior knowledge of the AAS Trials and her informative garden tours.

Our three Display Garden representatives were all first place winners in our 2017 Display Garden Landscape Challenge. Congrats to all!

* Bernadette Clark - JC Raulston Arboretum, Raleigh, NC
* Kevin Schoessow, UW Spooner Ag Research Station, Spooner, WI
* Steve Mayer, Purdue Extension-Marion County, Indianapolis, IN
* Melissa Eddy, Dow Gardens, Midland, MI

Spooner Research Station
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

PURDUE EXTENSION | MARION COUNTY

DOW GARDENS

AAS BREEDER'S CUP AWARD

The prestigious AAS Breeder's Cup is presented to an individual who has given a lifelong dedication to the advancement of horticulture.

All-America Selections was pleased to announce that the 2018 Breeder's Cup recipient was Doug Holden, recently retired Global Head of Breeding at Benary.

Doug's family and co-workers were present to honor his lifetime of breeding accomplishments, many of which were AAS Winners. Thank you Doug for your commitment and successes!

DISPLAY GARDEN DESIGN CHALLENGE

All AAS Display Gardens are encouraged to participate in the popular annual Landscape Design Challenge. The theme for 2019 is "Re-Use, Recycle, Re-Imagine." The challenge allows the gardens to push their creative limits while promoting AAS Winners to their visitors in new and exciting ways. Amazing ingenuity is exhibited by the gardens each year, with the winning gardens receiving a complimentary trip to the AAS Summit! (See page 12 for the winners from the 2017 contest)

The 2018 Challenge winners were:

Category 1: MSU-South Mississippi Branch Exp. Station, Poplarville, MS
Category 2: Purdue Extension Marion County Demonstration Garden, Indianapolis, IN
Category 3: Denver Botanic Garden, Denver, CO

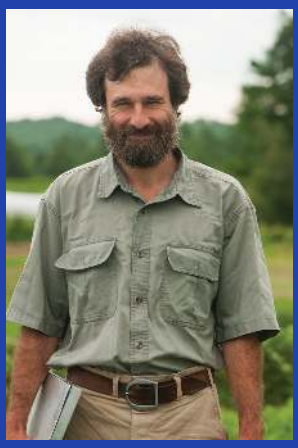
AAS SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

The AAS/NGB office is very active on social media, posting multiple times per day, at key times of the year, for maximum impact, shares and likes.

Follow us (and tag us) on any or all of our social media channels!

- Facebook page
- Facebook group
- NGB Facebook page
- Instagram
- NGB Instagram
- YouTube channel
- NGB's YouTube channel
- AAS/NGB Pinterest
- Twitter
- NGB Twitter

Use our hashtags when posting about an AAS Winner!
#AASWinner
#AASWinners
#AASWinnerinmydinner



AAS TRIAL JUDGES

The All-America Selections trials are made possible by our dedicated group of 93 AAS Judges. These horticulture professionals are committed to providing unbiased feedback in our four trials:

*Edibles from seed
*Herbaceous Perennial
*Ornamental Seed
*Ornamental Vegetative

Our engaged volunteer judges hail from a variety of businesses and backgrounds including originating breeders, seed companies, growers, public gardens, and universities. Our success as the only non-profit national trialing organization in North America continues to attract top-quality judges.

In 2019 we welcomed 18 new judges to our organization, and 3 existing AAS Judges elected to add additional trials to their responsibilities.

Click here to see all Judge's bios.

(Photos: Just a few of our many new judges (top to bottom):
Joy Longfellow, Johnny's
Steve Bellavia, Johnny's
Jessie Keith, SunGro Horticulture
Jason Reeves, University of Tennesse;
Rose Oberholzer, Mast Young Plant.

AAS DISPLAY GARDENS

Want to see the latest AAS Winners? Look no further than one of our 190 AAS Display Gardens.

The AAS Display Garden program is one of the many benefits enjoyed by the breeders of AAS Winners. Public gardens, arboretums, schools and universities, master gardeners and municipalities participate as AAS Display Gardens, showcasing the latest AAS Winner varieties and educating the public on AAS and AAS Winners. Each year the gardens receive and grow the AAS Winners currently under assessment, either seed or vegetatively propagated varieties.

Of the 190 AAS Display Gardens:

138	display Flowers and Edibles
47	display Flowers only
5	display Edibles only

ORNAMENTAL WINNERS

NATIONAL

NATIONAL

EDIBLE WINNERS

ORNAMENTAL WINNERS

REGIONAL

REGIONAL

EDIBLE WINNERS

THE AAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers:

President: Jim Devereux, Green Fuse Botanicals
Santa Monica, CA 90402

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

Vice President: Scott Rusch, PanAmerican Seed
West Chicago, IL 60185

Treasurer: Alex Augustyniak, West Coast Seeds
Delta, BC V4L 2P1, Canada

Directors:

Alicain Carlson, Syngenta Flowers, Gilroy, CA 95020

Vaughn Fletcher, Fletcher Consulting, Liberty, MO 64068

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

AAS COMMITTEES

Marketing/Communications Committee
Connie Dam-Byl, Chair
Jenny Kuhn
Justin Hancock
Gail Pabst
Chelsey Lenczyk
Alicain Carlson
Jim Devereux, ex officio

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

Vegetative Ornamental Comparison Committee
Vaughan Fletcher, Chair
Rebecca Lusk
Al Gerace
Mark Konlock with Horticulturist, Seth Heder

Edible (Other) Comparison Committee
Heather Kibble, Chair
Chelsey Fields
Steve Bellavia
Stephanie Ludwig

Edible (Tomatoes and Peppers) Comparison Committee
Josh Kirschenbaum, Chair
Patty Buskirk
Bill Dam
Greg Styers

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

Combined Judges Committee
Jessie Liebenguth, Chair, judge
Patty Buskirk, retired judge
Jenny Kuhn, judge
Connie Dam-Byl, Past President, judge
Rodger Tschantz, judge

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

It's been a busy several months since joining the AAS Board in January 2019. Diane and the Board have been very gracious and patient with their time explaining AAS, the roles and expectations. Throughout the on-boarding process, I have had a lot of opportunities to ask the "newbie" questions...what is this, why do we do that, what is the benefit to our customers, etc.

As the incoming VP, I was asked to help with the next strategic plan. The Executive Committee met in January with the list of priorities, tactics and current planning document. We acknowledged that many of the tactics on the current document were weighing us down and were not always aligned with where we think our constituency needs us to be. We had a productive discussion and narrowed down to four key goals for the future:

1. Grow the Brand
2. Generate Quality Entries and Winners
3. Expand Reach Into New Segments
4. Streamline for Operational Excellence

The board meeting at ASTA in February allowed us to share these goals, get feedback and start vetting tactics and prioritizing. A lot of new ideas were generated then prioritized by the smaller Strategic Planning Task Force. After the busy spring season finished, we were able to further refine the plan for 2020 and beyond.

We look forward to your feedback on the plan and your participation to make it successful for the benefit of our consitituents and ambassadors all across the horticulture industry.

Scott Rusch

AAS Vice President, Strategic Planning Chair, PanAmerican Seed

AAS FUTURE GOALS

1. **Grow the Brand**
- Engage Brokers and Plug producers to increase visibility of AAS.
- Educate growers to Mass Markets about why AAS matters.
- Create a task force to expand Landscape industry promotions and trialing.

2. Generate Quality Entries & Winners
- Analyze current trial entry rules, break down barriers to entry and open up options for seed and vegetative in ground and container trialing.
- Launch the two-tier promotional plan for AAS winners that reach maximum assessments

3. Expand Reach into New Segments
- Create task force for to analyze market potential with goal of new trial targeting one or more of the following segments: Landscape, Row Crops, Cut Flowers, Patio.
- Court Vegetative breeding companies and educate on benefits of AAS trials and promotion.

4. Streamline for Operational Excellence
- Digitize the trialing process.
- Implement a board secretary position in 2020
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of officers and committee chairs then delegate responsibilities

AMBASSADOR RESOURCES

Yes, we have tools to help you be an AAS Ambassador. And yes, we have done the work for you to save you time!

Click on this link to find each of the items listed below:
https://all-americaselections.org/aas-ambassador-tools/

A "What is AAS?" Power Point Presentation
Yearly AAS Winner Power Point Presentations
AAS Explanation Signage
AAS Winner signs and benchcards
AAS Variety Markers
AAS Logos
Point-of-Purchase materials

#NGB PLANTNERDS

Educating our constituents, four plant nerds at a time!

For the fifth straight year, AAS, NGB and our sponsoring breeders have hosted four significant influencers on a trip to California for the CA Spring Trials. Our guests this year were:

Mark Dwyer, Rotary Botanical Gardens
Mark Konlock, Green Bay Botanical Garden
Steven Poppe, West Central Research & Outreach Center
Gail Pabst, AAS/NGB Social Media Coordinator
Jeff Kuehny, LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens
Diane Blazek, AAS/NGB Executive Director

All four guests are AAS Judges and/or AAS Display Gardens and are involved in public education and outreach.

Announcing...
National Garden Bureau's
Year of crop classes for 2020

2018 SUMMER SUMMIT IN LOUISIANA

If you missed it, we're so sorry...it was a fantastic show of Southern hospitality with the LSU Ag Center being the source of that welcoming kindness.

We started in New Orleans with a tour of the Garden District followed by Perino's Garden Center and the New Orleans Botanical Garden, an AAS Display Garden. The next day we traveled to Baton Rouge (via Hammond and the LSU Hammond Research Center) for a complete tour of the LSU Ag Center culminating with our Awards Banquet in their lovely pavilion.

2019 SUMMER SUMMIT IN CHICAGO

Another first! This year we are partnering with the Perennial Plant Association to co-host the 2019 meeting together, in Chicago, where we'll announce the first AAS Winners from our Herbaceous Perennial Trial.

Planned visits include: Chicago Botanic Garden (Perennial Trial), Cantigny Gardens (Display Garden) and The Gardens at Ball (Edibles and Ornamentals from Seed trials)

2020 SUMMER SUMMIT IN VANCOUVER

Vancouver!
Hard to say no to this beautiful area of North America!

Join AAS, along with National Garden Bureau and the Home Garden Seed Association in late summer 2020 for an amazing adventure visiting these and and many other beautiful Pacific Northwest growing and research operations:

* West Coast Seeds
* Minter Country Garden
* VanBelle Nursery
* VanDusen Botanical Garden
* UBC Botanical Gardens
* Qualitree Propagators

SAVE THE DATE!!!

West Coast Seeds

VANBELLE
WHOLESALE NURSERY & PROPAGATION

Minter Country Garden