



THE
Budget-Wise
GARDENER

With Hundreds of Money-Saving Buying & Design Tips
for Planting the Best for Less


HUGE
PLANT
SALE!

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HOW TO SCORE GREAT PLANTS FOR LESS... OR FOR FREE!

Welcome to the **Academy of Shrewd Plant Hunters!** My mission is to equip you with superior plant scouting skills for capturing the healthiest, best-priced plants and eliminating costly poor decisions. The end goal: heavenly-looking, budget-wise gardens that do not create hell on earth.

The following sharp-shooting, purchasing tips are not only about keeping more money in your wallet, you will also receive insightful briefings

on how to avoid costly mistakes, such as buying plants with inferior genetics or placing the wrong plant in the wrong spot for the wrong reasons.

As a sophisticated plant geek, you will be able to successfully maneuver many different terrains and situations - i.e., garden centers, mail-order catalogs, garage sales, friends bearing plants from their gardens - making informed, money-saving, smarter decisions that will result in luxurious gardens and landscapes.



School Horticulture Programs

Put on your Inspector Clouseau hat and check out what happens to plants at high schools and colleges with horticulture programs. Greenhouses filled with plants grown during semester projects need to be emptied before the next class starts. Our local BOCES vocational school held phenomenal sales. SUNY Farmingdale State College has a HUGE sale each spring. Almost all of the plants are grown by students. The income supports student intern programs, facility upgrades and supplements the Department of Urban Horticulture & Design's budget.



Seed Libraries

Public libraries are now part of the movement to prevent further loss of genetic diversity in the plant world. Library members “check out” seed for free, grow the plants, harvest seeds, and “return” some of these to replenish the library’s seed inventory. To see if there is a seed library near you or to learn how to start one, visit these sites: Seed[KA1] Library Social Network (seedlibraries.org) and Global Map of Seed Libraries (seedlibrarymap.com).

Put more money back in your pocket by planting annuals that grow by leaps and bounds!

As quasi groundcovers, each plant can sweep over three or more square feet. These can also be very effective as solo plantings in containers or hanging baskets. Some swarming annuals include Supertunia Vista petunias, Tidal Wave petunias, Superbena Verbenas, potato vine, fan flower (*Scaevola*), licorice plant (*Helichrysum*), Silver Falls Dichondra and Torenia 'Midnight Blue'.



Supertunia Vista Petunias



T. 'Candy Club'

Two for the price of one!

Many spring blooming bulbs only produce one flower per bulb. Maximize color by planting these tulips that produce multiple flowers on each stem: *T. praestans* 'Unicum' (red); *T. 'Candy Club'* (ivory, pale pinkish-lilac), *T. praestans* 'Fusilier' (red), *T. 'Antoinette'* (soft pink, cream and green) and others known as tall bunch flowering tulips. Daffodils in the Jonquilla, Triandrus and Tazetta divisions (there are 12 divisions based on flower form) also bear numerous flowers per stem. Some outstanding mail-order companies for bulbs include Brent and Becky's Bulbs (NC), John Scheepers (CT), Van Engelens (CT) and ColorBlends (CT).

Axe the Annuals in Containers

I think it is safe to say that most ornamental planters include a majority, if not all, annuals. Annuals require a yearly investment of money, as well as time needed to keep replanting them. Doesn't it make sense to change this absurd seasonal practice?

My 6 Criteria for Container-Worthy Perennials, Flowering Shrubs and Conifers.

They must be:

1. **Cold Qualified.** Plants overwintered in outdoor containers need to be at least two hardiness zones colder than the local zone.
2. **Beauty Queens.** Winning choices should have an exceptional long season of interest with impeccable form.
3. **Polite.** Slow-spreading, non-thuggish plants make good bed partners.
4. **Thirstless.** Well, not really thirstless, but drought tolerance is important.
5. **Restrained.** Plants with smaller root systems are better adapted for confined spaces.
6. **Slender.** Narrow girths are prized for combo containers. Excessively, wide plants outgrow their welcome.



Instead of filling containers with mostly annuals, replace at least half (or more) with hardy perennials and woody plants. Not only will you pocket more of your hard-earned money, but the investment typically “compounds” to yield more plants! Many perennials can be divided in spring. The abundance can then be planted in additional containers, gardens or shared with friends.

When **BIG** can be *better*.

Save money and planting time by purchasing “Godzilla-size” plants instead of average-size plants from the same family. A super-sized perennial can fill a space that would require multiple smaller-scaled siblings to do. Here are some ideas:

AVERAGE-SIZE



**Ligularia
'Desdemona'**

(2-3' tall/1.5-2.5' wide)



**Heucherella
'Sunspot'**

(5" mounds/12" wide)



**Heuchera
'Peach Flambe'**

(7" mounds/14" wide)

GODZILLA-SIZE



**Ligularia
'King Kong'**

(3-4' tall/3-3.5' wide)



**Heucherella
'Catching Fire'**

(10" mounds/20" wide)



**Heuchera
'Black Pearl'**

(10" mounds/20" wide)