

## in the garden by Stephen and Kristin Pategas



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### Florida Garden Select Plants To Try

It may take a bit of sleuthing to find new or underutilized plants for your garden. So here's a tip on an excellent source for interesting plants - the Florida Garden Select program ([www.floridagardening.org](http://www.floridagardening.org)) sponsored by the Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association.

This statewide organization for nursery and landscape professionals developed this program over thirteen years ago (then called Florida Plants of the Year) and since then, we along with other judges from around the state have selected a diverse group of plants each year. The 2011 winners are a stellar group. All of this year's six selections thrive in Central Florida and four of them are successfully growing in our garden. And now for some introductions...

#### **Callaeum macropterum**

(formerly *Mascagnia macropterum*)

- **yellow butterfly vine**

Expect lots of color through the warm weather months from this climbing and scrambling vine with yellow blossoms. The butterfly shaped seed pods are lime



*Yellow butterfly vine with its trademark seed pod*

green, turning to tan then brown. They are on the vine even while it is blooming which is a sure sign of a long blossoming period. Plant in full sun to part shade and you need to only water sparingly once established. Ours is happily climbing two arches over a walkway but would work well on a pergola, trellis, or fence.

#### **Cephalotaxus harringtonia 'Prostrata'**

- **prostrate yew or Japanese plum yew**

Find an area in shade or part shade and you will have a good home for this low, two to three foot height by three to four foot spread evergreen. If you are from "up north" it will remind you of the



*Prostrate yew makes a great groundcover*

ubiquitous northern yews (*Taxus* spp.) but it is not related. A bonus is that unlike the northern look-alike, deer don't like it. We have three planted alongside our driveway in a narrow planting strip in part shade. They are slow to grow so the maintenance is low. Once established they require little water.

#### **Cassia leptophylla**

- **gold medallion tree**

This colorful semi-evergreen tree isn't in our garden yet but we hope to remedy that soon. Reaching a height of 25 to 30 feet with a spread of 15 to 25 feet this medium size tree will fit in even smaller gardens. Expect a month of yel-



*Bloom clusters on the gold medallion tree*

low flowers in the early summer with some repeat autumn bloom. Flower clusters may reach twelve inches across. The flowers are followed by long seed pods which will cause some litter when they fall. This tree will lose some of its leaves each year and may suffer some cold damage if temperatures reach the mid-twenties. Once established the gold medallion needs little water. It can be seen at Disneyland in California and locally blooming during the Epcot International Flower and Garden Festival.

Try these out, tell us how they grow, and we'll visit the other three plants in a future article. ■

*All photography by Stephen G. Pategas/Hortus Oasis*