Last week we talked about the new Texas Superstars for 2016- Whopper begonia, Basham’s Party Pink crape myrtle and Alternanthra Brazallian Red Hots. There are some past Texas Superstars that are also worthy of considering for your landscape.

Laura Bush petunia was selected as a Superstar because it is a fast growing spreading plant with attractive pink or violet blooms. Additionally it is more heat tolerant than most petunias. If it is planted now it can be expected to bloom strongly until July, hang on through the summer and then renew itself for a long bloom period through the fall and into the winter.

 If we had a winter like this year it will bloom through the winter. If we have a cold spell in January and the plants freeze back, expect it to reseed and new plants will germinate in the spring. In my landscape I have naturalized Laura Bush areas in containers and raised beds among the satsumas and lemons. Laura Bush petunias also do well in hanging baskets. Plant them in full sun.

Another Texas Superstar that prospers in full sun is the Cora vinca. It is available with red, pink, violet and white blooms. For years vinca was the favorite summer annual flower and then it became overrun with a fungal disease, aerial phytophera. The prevalence of the disease made it necessary to limit vinca planting until June and even then you could expect the disease to attack if the temperatures cooled and moisture sat on the foliage.

The introduction of Cora vinca greatly reduced the threat of aerial phytophera. Now we can plant it in April or May and expect it to survive cool, rainy spells or foliage wetting. Cora is blooming when you obtain transplants from the nursery and blooms everyday until cold weather arrives about Thanksgiving.

Cora is drought tolerant. Grow it in a container or garden bed in full sun. It is a favorite nectar source for butterflies. Deer do not eat vinca. There is a spreading version of Cora vinca called \_\_\_\_\_\_ that has the disease resistance of Cora and makes an excellent hanging basket plant.