

# YOUR GARDEN

## Tropical Plants Add Vibrant Color—In Any Climate

(NAPSA)—One of the hottest trends in gardening right now is tropical plants—even in colder climates, where gardeners either overwinter the plants or just grow them as annuals. Tropical plants are characterized by bright colored flowers, large leaves and vibrant foliage. If you're new to growing tropicals, try some heavy bloomers that are easy to grow, like *MidKnight Blue* Agapanthus; *Purple Queen* Bougainvillea or *Oo-La-La* Bougainvillea; or brightly colored *Itsy Bitsy Red* Hibiscus or the double-flowered yellow *Full Moon* Hibiscus.

According to Nicholas Staddon of Monrovia, the leading grower of premium plants, another great choice is Lantana, which blooms continuously and comes in a range of colors from bright yellow to cool lavender. Mandevillas are fast growing tropical vines with elegant trumpet-like flowers. Some newer varieties, like *Pink Parfait* and *Moonlight Parfait* Mandevilla and the new *Tango Twirl* Mandevilla, have spectacular double flowers.

"To create a great look with interesting foliage, start with some banana trees—either the *Ensete Red-Leaf Banana*, or the *Musa Blood Banana*, with its red-striped leaves," Staddon suggests. *Tropicanna* Canna not only has bright orange flowers, but its beautiful burgundy leaves are striped with red, yellow and green. *Variegated Shell Ginger* has gorgeous yellow and green leaves and produces 12-inch, pale pink blooms.

"Citrus trees bring wonderful fragrance into the tropical garden and are easy to bring inside if



**Tropical plants like this Cherie Hibiscus add vibrant color—in any climate.**

you're in a cold climate," Staddon said. "Try varieties such as *Variegated Calamondin Orange*, *Nagami Kumquat*, *Dwarf Campbell Valencia Orange* or *Sungold Lemon*."

### Tips for Overwintering Tropicals

- Grow your tropicals in containers, and when weather dips below 50 degrees at night, just bring the container into your garage, basement or sunroom.
- If you will be digging up the plants, just cover their roots well with burlap or bubble wrap.
- Check with your local garden center on whether a particular plant variety needs the roots kept moist or dry.
- Make sure the plants are healthy before you overwinter. Remove dead leaves and flowers, and then make sure they are free of pests or fungus.

For more great ideas on creating a tropical paradise in your garden and tips on overwintering, visit [www.monrovia.com](http://www.monrovia.com).