

Best Performing Annuals & Perennials

The University of Minnesota conducts performance and hardiness trials for annual and perennial flowers each year at three sites around their state. The sites are St. Paul (Zone 5), Morris (Zone 4), and Grand Rapids (Zone 3). Below are the listings of the top ten performers at the Grand Rapids test site. These plants performed the best throughout the 2003 growing season, with the highest ratings in their class.

1. *Petunia* 'Jamboree Light Blue'--this is a large-flowered, trailing series of petunia that will create itself as the center of attention. A noise-maker!
2. *Petunia* 'Sweet Surprise Purple'—as its name suggests, this petunia packs a surprise in flowers as the season progresses.
3. *Petunia*, wave type 'Misty Lilac'—wonderful panoply of lilac tints & tones continuously unfold in this wave petunia that has remained a favorite since its recent introduction.
4. *Dianthus* 'Amazon Rose Magic'--this hybrid dianthus provides a colorful display of white, lavender, and rose flowers. Each stem is truly a bouquet that will delight any floral designer; it is an excellent cut flower.
5. *Begonia*, Hiemalis type, 'Barkos'—a great, deep red bouquet of intense flowers will brighten any shady corner or provide delightful accents in containers.
6. *Begonia* 'Prelude Pink Improved'—a wax begonia with brilliant pink flowers and a deep yellow center of pollen. Spectacular in the garden or in containers.
7. *Begonia*, Angelwing type, Dragon Wing 'Pink', 'Red'—these seed-propagated begonias will wow your customers and friends when they see these in large containers or hanging baskets. Truly remarkable, continuously flowering begonias.
8. *Petunia* 'Tidal Wave Silver'—this aggressive, fast-growing petunia continues to perform well in all conditions for northern gardeners. It has excellent performance in large hanging baskets (by itself!) or ground beds. Give it plenty of room!
9. *Perilla* 'Magilla'—foliage in this plant looks similar to basil, its close relative.
10. Geranium Rocky Mountain 'White', 'Orange'--a spectacular geranium that provided continuous flower power throughout the growing season, even without deadheading! Great for containers due to its compact habit, but does equally well in garden settings.