

# Wisconsin Nursery Association's 2009 Plants of the Year

The Plant of the Year Program was initiated by the Wisconsin Nursery Association to promote quality—and underused—plants to the public. Two categories were created to consider all plants:

- Woody Ornamental Plant of the Year, including deciduous trees, evergreens, deciduous shrubs and shade trees
- Perennial of the Year, including herbaceous perennials, subshrubs, grasses, ferns, and vines

## Woody Ornamental Plant of the Year: *Chionanthus virginicus* - White Fringetree



A small tree to large shrub, the *Chionanthus virginicus* is a spreading, multi-stemmed form with a slow to moderate growth rate. Its showy, white, lacy, fragrant flowers bloom in late May, and the female plants give clusters of bluish-black fruit in late summer. Its thick, leathery leaves turn a striking yellow in autumn, against its smooth, gray bark. It prefers full sun to partial shade, and deep, fertile soil. However, it is pH adaptable. It is best planted in spring in moist, well-drained soil. It has moderate drought tolerance, it's a deer resistant plant, and tolerant to air pollution, with no pest problems. It is not an invasive plant and is low maintenance, requiring little, if any, pruning. It has separate male and female plants and is native to the southeastern U.S. to Texas.

**Height: 12'-15' tall, 6'-12' wide**  
**Prefers moist, well-drained soil in full sun to partial shade**  
**Hardy to zone 4b**

## Perennial Plant of the Year: *Baptisia australis* - Blue False Indigo



Photos courtesy of Walters Gardens, Inc.

*Baptisia australis* is a large prairie plant that is native to the Midwest. It has outstanding blue green foliage coupled with deep blue flower spikes, which cover the plant in June and July. From fall into winter, attractive black seed pods replace the foliage. Once established, this plant has no insect or disease problems. It is deep rooted, slow growing, and long-lived. *Baptisia australis* needs rich, well drained soil, and should be planted in full sun or light shade. It makes an excellent specimen plant individually or in clusters in a prairie meadow.

**Height: 3' -4', with an equal spread**  
**Prefers rich, well-drained soil in full sun or light shade**  
**Hardy to zone 3**

## Past Plant of the Year Selections

**2002**  
 Woody: *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Unique'  
 Perennial: *Phlox paniculata* 'David'

**2003**  
 Woody: *Syringa reticulata* 'Ivory Silk'  
 Perennial: *Solidago rugosa* 'Fireworks'

**2004**  
 Woody: *Amelanchier x grandiflora* 'Princess Diana'  
 Perennial: *Polygonatum falcatum* 'Variegatum'

**2005**  
 Woody: *Ilex verticillata* 'Red Sprite'  
 Perennial: *Hosta* 'Patriot'

**2006**  
 Woody: *Crataegus viridis* 'Winter King'  
 Perennial: *Panicum virgatum* 'Northwinds'

**2007**  
 Woody: *Malus* 'Louisa'  
 Perennial: *Pulmonaria longifolia* subsp. *cevennensis*

**2008**  
 Woody: *Cornus mas* 'Golden Glory'  
 Perennial: *Amsonia* 'Blue Ice'

