

# GARDEN NEWS

## COCKTAIL COLLECTION

Time to plan a summer cocktail party! This year we debut our Cocktail Collection, a select new group of plants used to mix and garnish some favorite warm-weather beverages.



'Mojito' Mint – For years North Americans have enjoyed the famed Cuban cocktail of rum, lime, sugar, and mint, but until now we've had to make do with any old spearmint. Not anymore! In 2006 plant collector and mojito fan Catherine Nasmith visited Cuba and brought back the real thing. *Mentha x villosa* 'Mojito' Mint is the authentic Cuban spearmint, with a distinctive flavor that's mild and warm, not overly pungent or sweet like many mints. It grows just as easily as other mint varieties, though, and will produce a generous supply of sprigs to muddle in your summer mojitos. So cue the Latin music, set out some black beans and rice, and start mixing!

'Margarita' Mint – This big bold lime-scented mint contributes to an extra-refreshing variation on another classic summer cocktail. Strong vigorous plants produce an abundance of well-shaped, textured leaves with a hint of dark bronze at the tips. The cool and tart blend of mint and lime flavors are perfect for making a minty margarita, shaken with ice, poured into a tall salted glass, and garnished with a handsome sprig of 'Margarita' Mint.



Agave tequilana Blue Agave – Or you can stick with the basic tequila and lime margarita. Granted, distilling tequila from agave is a little more involved than grabbing a few mint sprigs for a mojito, but still, you can plant a few of these impressive and beautiful succulents in the garden to admire while you sip your concoction of Cuervo or Patron and lime juice. Blue agave plants form large rosettes of thick, fleshy leaves with spiny edges and a sharp tip, and after several years, each plant will send up a large stalk that produces short tubular flowers. We started growing these after a friend of ours visited a tequila distillery in Mexico last year and collected a number of

“pups,” or small shoots, that were being thrown away.

We're growing this special summer collection in terra cotta clay pots, with drink recipes included on each label. Visit our website for more cooling [summer cocktail](#) and mocktail recipes.

## CERINTHE

Cerinth major 'Purpurescens,' or honeywort, is one of those gorgeous plants that manages to look like a high maintenance exotic and a carefree wildflower at the same time. Luckily, the "carefree" part is true. Cerinthe is an easy, long-blooming addition to the garden, with handsome, fleshy, lustrous grey-blue foliage and cream-lined tubular blooms in intense blues and purples. It grows in a wide range of conditions, flourishing in sunny well-watered beds, but still managing to look good in poor soils, part shade, or dry locations.



The richly colored pendant blooms can be used in cut arrangements or left in the garden to draw crowds of bees and hummingbirds all summer, and the brilliant blue bracts remain on display long after the blooms are gone. While not hardy, cerinthe plants will seed themselves and pop up early in the garden next season. What a great plant! We could go on.....and we do, in the [Cerinthe article](#) on our website.

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