

**The GCA PLANT OF THE YEAR  
MONTINE MCDANIEL FREEMAN  
HORTICULTURE MEDAL**

***PRESENTED ANNUALLY TO A NORTH AMERICAN  
PLANT WORTHY OF SPECIAL RECOGNITION***

The *GCA Plant of the Year: Montine McDaniel Freeman Horticulture Medal* strives to acknowledge the cultivation and use of native plants: trees, shrubs, ground covers, vines and perennials that are under-utilized but worthy of preservation, propagation and promotion.

The medal shall be awarded to an **herbaceous plant in the even years** and to a **tree or shrub in the odd years**. As vines may fall into either category, please consult the Zone Representative serving on the GCA Horticulture Committee in your area.

It is the goal of the *Freeman Horticulture Medal* to draw attention to select native plants and their cultivars, to encourage their use in the landscape, to make them familiar to the gardener and more available in the nurseries. Each year a plant will be selected by the *Freeman Horticulture Medal* Selection Committee with the award being presented to the group or individual nominating the plant. In the case of cultivars, the award will be presented to the originator of the cultivar.

In complex cases such as those where a cultivar was found in the garden of one person, propagated and named by another, marketed by a third party, and /or nominated for the award by a fourth party, the *Freeman Horticulture Medal* will be awarded, when possible, to the person most closely connected to the recognition of the plant's superiority. Certificates will be sent to all others. In the case of species, the medal will be presented to the individual or group nominating the plant.

***I. Criteria for Plant Selection:*** To be eligible for the *Freeman Horticulture Medal*, the nominated plant must meet the following criteria:

- A.** Outstanding or unusual species or cultivar of a North American native plant.
- B.** Not readily available for landscape use in at least one major portion of the country. However, it must be in propagation for commercial distribution.
- C.** In the case of a hybrid, at least one-half of the plant's parentage must be native to North America.
- D.** The plant should have attributes that enhance the landscape, are attractive to wildlife, and/or are effective environmental plants, i.e. erosion control.

## ***II. Nomination Procedure:***

- A.** A nomination may be made by a member of a GCA club or by a member club of The Garden Club of America.
- B.** Nominations may be accepted from an individual or an organization outside of GCA with endorsement by a GCA club.
- C.** Nomination forms will be available to applicants on the website or from the GCA Horticulture Committee Administrator at GCA Headquarters.
- D.** Nomination forms should be completed by the applicant, and two copies should be sent to GCA Headquarters, addressed to the Horticulture Committee Vice- Chairman for the *Freeman Horticulture Medal*, along with 3 – 5 color images. Digital photos are preferred and may be sent to Mary Jane Tooker at Headquarters. One copy of the nomination application should be sent to the Zone Horticulture Representative for the area.
- E.** Color images should include:
  - 1. One image of habit of mature plant.
  - 2. Three to four close-ups of outstanding features – i.e. bloom, bark, foliage, or other special features and seasonal changes per nomination. Images (other than digital) will be returned to the proposer upon request.
  - 3. Labels for each image with botanical and common names, plus the proposer's name.
  - 4. A release for copying if submitting a copyrighted image.
- F.** One medal will be awarded annually and up to two honorable mentions may also be awarded, if merited. Non-winning proposals (including honorable mentions) may be resubmitted for two additional years following the alternate year system.
- G.** Presentation of the medal will take place at the Business Meeting at the GCA Annual Meeting.

### ***III. Selection Committee:***

- A.** At least five professionals in the field of horticulture will be chosen by the GCA Horticulture Committee to serve on the Freeman Medal Selection Committee. They will represent the widest possible geographic diversity.
- B.** The Horticulture Committee Vice Chairman for the *Freeman Horticulture Medal* will chair the committee and in case of a tie will cast the deciding vote. The Chairman of the GCA Horticulture Committee is considered a voting member.
- C.** Term of service on the Selection Committee will be at the discretion of the GCA Horticulture Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman.

### ***IV. Schedule:***

- A.** Entry Deadline: **December 1<sup>st</sup>** of the year submitted.
- B.** Copies of application will be distributed to the Freeman Medal Selection Committee for review. Conference calls will be used to discuss proposals.
- C.** The Selection Committee will vote by conference call in late February of the year the medal is awarded. . The Horticulture Committee Vice Chairman for the *Freeman Horticulture Medal* will organize and preside during the conference call.

### ***V. Financial Responsibility:***

- A.** The expense of designing and striking the medal shall be paid from the original funding.
- B.** The yearly administrative expenses shall be paid from the annual income and/or realized gain accruing to The *GCA Plant of the Year: Montine McDaniel Freeman Horticulture Medal* Endowment Fund.