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Horticulture

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expertpicks

Steve Hutton

BY MARIA ZAMPINI

Steve Hutton is a third-generation nurseryman. After a number of non-paying nursery jobs, he landed his first paying gig at age 12. Today Steve is the president and CEO of the Conard-Pyle Company, known for breeding and introducing roses, perennials and woody plants. Steve says his favorite aspects of his job are evaluating new plants, working with plant breeders from around the world and taking a slow walk around the nursery to see how everything is growing. Here are three of his favorite plants to recommend:

1. Peach Drift rose (*Rosa* 'Meiggili')

Steve's roots are in roses, so it is only natural he leads off with one. As yards get smaller, gardeners need smaller plants. The Drift series of small groundcover roses is a wonderful solution, because they grow just one to two feet tall and two feet wide. These disease-resistant roses can bloom heavily for six to eight months a year (depending on climate). Drift roses like six hours of direct sun each day—full sun is even better. The series comes in a number of shades. Steve likes Peach Drift (shown), a warm blend of yellows, pinks and oranges. USDA Zones 4–11.

2. 'Sunshine Superman' star tickseed (*Coreopsis pubescens* 'Sunshine Superman')

Steve says this is the best kind of perennial—it acts just like an annual in terms of bloom quantity and length, yet it comes back year after year. In his southeastern Pennsylvania garden it starts blooming in early to mid-May and goes full-blast into early October. Its yellow tone blends well with many other colors. The three small plants Steve planted a few years ago now gracefully cover 10 square feet in his garden. Zones 5–9.

3. Pink Knock Out rose (*Rosa* 'Radcon')

Steve can't help but pick another rose! The first of the Knock Out shrub roses was introduced a dozen years ago, yet demand for these breakthrough plants keeps growing. They're loved for their resistance to pests and diseases, tolerance of drought and repeat bloom. Steve likes the Pink Knock Out (shown) because it is a fairly strong color yet it still combines well in a mixed bed. Zones 5–11. ☞

MARIA ZAMPINI brings new plants to market through her own company, UpShoot LLC.

