

Fall Gardening Guide | Big, Bold Leaves | Green Flowers

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Robert “Buddy” Lee has been in the commercial nursery industry since he was 15, when he began working in production. He went on to own his own wholesale nursery. In 1997, with the help of Flowerwood Nursery and Plant Development Services, Inc., he debuted the first reblooming azalea brand, Encore Azalea. Buddy continues to breed plants while also serving as PDSI’s director of new plant innovations. Here are three shrubs about which he is especially excited.

1. Encore Azalea Autumn Sunburst (*Azalea* × ‘Roblet’)

As the breeder of the reblooming Encore Azaleas, Buddy has trouble singling out just one favorite! Autumn Sunburst grows just 4 feet high and 3 feet wide. Its single, coral-pink blooms have white ruffled edges and measure more than 2 inches across. These flowers create a stunning display in spring—and the plant reblooms in summer and fall. Full sun to light shade. USDA Zones 6–9.



2. Emerald Snow loropetalum (*Loropetalum chinense* ‘Shang-white’)

This tough, compact evergreen loropetalum from the Southern Living Plant Collection is easy to establish and maintain as a great accent plant or hedge. It has delicate white blooms in spring and sporadically from midsummer to late fall. Its new foliage is light green, which contrasts nicely against the mature emerald-green leaves. With a more lateral growth habit than other varieties, it maintains a manageable height and width of 3 to 4 feet. Full sun to part shade. Zones 7–10.



3. Little Bonnie dwarf spiraea (*Spiraea* × *bumalda* ‘BL0601’)

This spiraea grows to a height of 2 to 3 feet and a width of 3 feet. Extremely heat tolerant, its foliage does not burn, making it a great option for the South. It can be used as an individual plant or planted as a hedge or backdrop. Profuse lavender-pink blooms appear in spring, with sporadic flowers following through summer. Its metallic blue-green leaves turn yellow to red in late fall to early winter. Full sun to part shade. Zones 4–9. ☞



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