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***Shopping by Mail***

- Many catalog and internet suppliers offer excellent selection — varieties that are seldom available in local garden centers.
- Shop at reputable firms; gather the names of favorite companies from fellow gardeners.
- Try to do business with firms that list a phone number that will enable you to reach someone in person.
- Make sure you understand the return policy. A money-back guarantee should be clearly stated.
- Study the order form carefully for hidden charges.
- Don't buy only on the strength of a photograph on the supplier's website or catalog. Research the descriptions of your chosen variety — including the color and size of plant and flower — on other reputable sites before buying.
- Be alert for descriptors such as “vigorous” or “self-seeds readily.” These plants could be invasive in your area.
- Save a copy of your order, and if you're ordering online, bookmark the pages that describe plant behavior and culture.
- Inspect the shipment to see if the plants are in good shape. Many companies will let you choose an approximate delivery day.
- If you're not ready to plant when the shipment arrives, open the box and unstack any layers but leave the packing support in place. Then store in a cool, shady area like a garage. Most of the time, holding over a few days is no problem at all.
- Soak bare-root plants in water for a few hours or overnight to rehydrate before planting.