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Sales of native azaleas and many other quality plants appropriate for the local climate will benefit both Lumpkin County 4-H programs and students and the Georgia Mountains Master Gardeners.

ANNUAL PLANT SALE BEGINS NEXT WEEK

This year's varieties include true natives and native hybrid plants

By: Brita Borden - Georgia Mountains Master Gardeners

With the constantly changing weather conditions in north Georgia, first snow and ice and then temperatures in the seventies, it is difficult to know how to plan for our spring gardens.

However, now is your opportunity to make those important selections and purchase beautiful, quality plants offered by the Lumpkin County 4-H and the Georgia Mountains Master Gardeners.

These worthy organizations are now taking orders for many selections of perennials, shrubs, fruit, ground covers and fern varieties.

This is your opportunity to fulfill your gardening goals by ordering superior plants, among them many unusual items, along with several cultivars being born and bred in Lumpkin County.

Thirty-five different plants will be available for purchase from Jan. 27 to Feb. 24, with delivery in mid-March.

This year's varieties include a number of true natives and native hybrid plants. The "real" native Beautyberry and Ninebark would be a wonderful addition to any garden, especially those wanting to attract birds.

You will also find many deer resistant/tolerant varieties. Two "Proven Winner" plants this year include the 'Fire Light' hydrangea and the "Scarlet Storm" flowering quince.

The two varieties of blueberries being offered are special in that one has some of the largest berries on the market, and it was bred at UGA. The other is a pink selection, truly unusual, as is the yellow-gold raspberry 'Fall Gold.'

In the past we have been asked for muscadine vines and we have two this year, both of which are self-fertile so they do not require another plant in order for it to fruit.

The dwarf pomegranate is also new this year. It is an old-fashioned colonial plant, like those from Williamsburg, Va., and it can also be grown in a pot.

Descriptions and color photos of all these attractive plants are available online at www.gammg.org or www.caes.uga.edu/extension/lumpkin/4H. The plant sale order forms will be available on-line or at the Extension Office, located at 26 Johnson Street, Ste. A, Dahlonega. The deadline for orders is Feb. 24, with the plant pick-up dates on Friday, March 17, 2-6 p.m. and Saturday, March 18, 9-11 a.m. at the Lumpkin County Road Department, 1646 Red Oak Flats Road.

Master Gardeners will be in attendance at the pickup site to help with any questions you may have about soil preparation and basic care for the plants you have ordered.