

Chicago Botanic Garden Launches Web Site Featuring Illinois' Best Plants

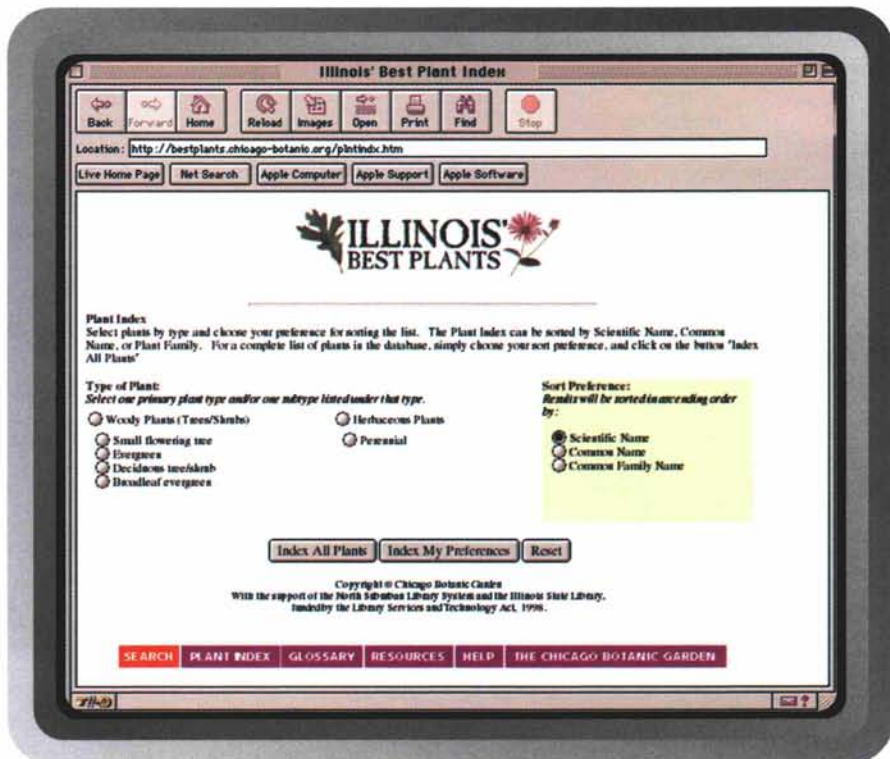
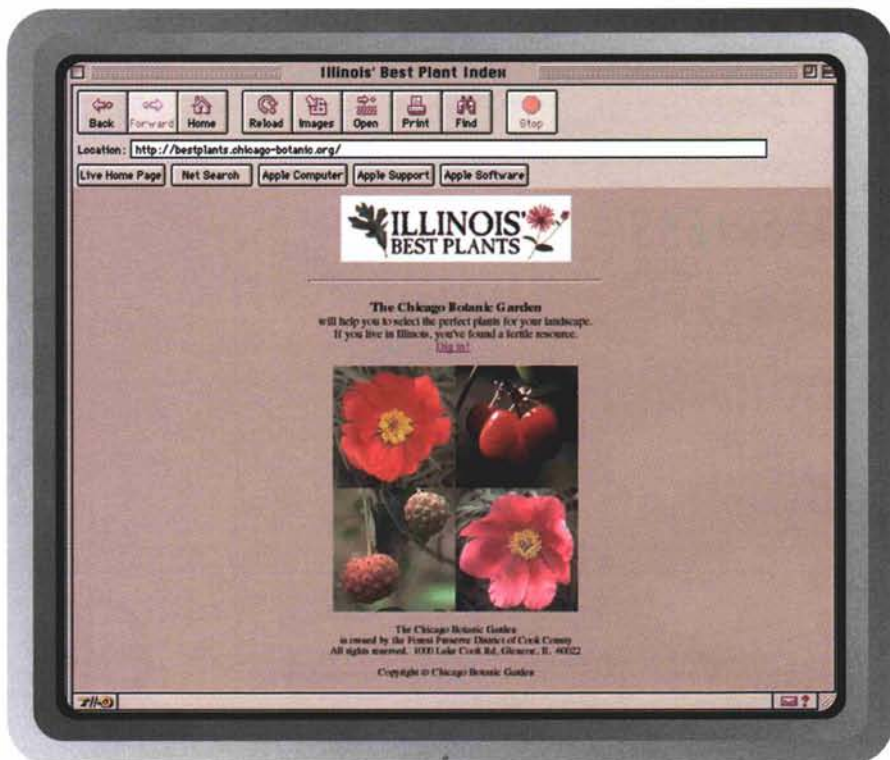
C H I C A G O
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*Sheryl Hislop Cash
Chicago Botanic Garden
Glencoe, Illinois*

Illinois residents can now choose the best plants and trees based on their tastes and gardening needs through a unique web site unveiled today by The Chicago Botanic Garden

"The new Illinois' Best Plants web site allows gardeners to easily choose and learn more about trees, evergreens, shrubs and perennials based on proven performance based on location, size, color and other characteristics," said Sue Brogdon, vice president of programs at the Garden. "You can even choose plants based on whether or not they attract butterflies, their resistance to deer, and fall color.

The new web site — accessed through <http://bestplants.chicago-botanic.org> or <http://chicago-botanic.org>—was developed by horticulturalists at the Chicago Botanic Garden and faculty from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and Western Illinois University. The



Illinois State Library provided funding for the educational web site through the Library Services and Technology Act of 1998; the North Suburban Library System provided technical support.

The new interactive database also provides vivid photos and summarized information on each plant, including plant care and recommended varieties. There is an alphabetical list of woody and herbaceous plants in Illinois arranged by scientific names; definitions of plant terms; and a list of books, videotapes and CD-ROM that provide additional gardening information.

A voice feature allows users to hear the correct pronunciation of each scientific plant name.

The web site is easy to use. Simply enter the plant's common or scientific name, or choose from a list of basic characteristics: plant site, hardiness zones, size, shape, exposure, soil and flower bloom color. The database will then provide a list of plants matching the given criteria.

Users can also choose an advanced search option featuring more detailed characteristics including flower bloom time, fall color, fruit, winter interest (bark, fruit, growth habit and/or leaf retention), landscape use, and wildlife interest (attracts birds or butterflies, resistance to deer, and/or native to the Midwest).

Residents living in the Midwest or other parts of the country with similar climate and soil conditions as Illinois can also benefit from a web site.

In the future, the database will grow to include annuals, vines, roses and ground covers, as well as additional photographs.



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