

# PLANT CORNER

Welcome to another year of the Plant Corner, a series of profiles of STAR PERFORMERS among perennial garden plants from the folks at Chaska Farm & Garden.



## 'Georgia Peach' Coral Bells

*Heuchera* x 'Georgia Peach'

There are several species of plants that are bred almost beyond recognition to provide new ornamental plants. Hostas and lilies come to mind of course, and now for the last decade or so, the lowly, native coral bells.

Once we grew this plant for its colorful sprays or candles of small flowers and its usefulness in shade. Now their claim to fame has become their wild and crazy leaf colors and patterns. The shade thing still applies, of course. From the black-leaved variety 'Obsidian' to the bright-yellow leafed 'Citronelle' and the coppery 'Caramel' we continue to be pleasantly surprised.

One of this year's best new varieties is 'Georgia Peach' with leaves a striking peach-pink. Now, only the breeders get to name their breedlings and I'm fine with that, but I would have named this 'Medium Rare' because it reminded me immediately of such a steak, pink but not bloody. Even the marbled veining makes a steak analogy fit. In any case the leaf color is dazzling, the likes of all-summer fall color. We also liked the larger size of the leaves, up to 8 in. across on a plant that stands only 14 in. tall with creamy-white flower sprays reaching 30 in.

Now, the flowers become somewhat incidental here, not without some value because they do have the effect of baby's breath and even make good cuts. The all-season color value of the leaves eclipse any flowers. Some leaves overwinter as evergreen and new leaves appear early in spring. The color is continuous until snow cover, leaving very little down time.

Use coral bells close to the front of the border, especially the colored-leafed types. They prefer moist, well-drained soil out of full sun and not in full shade. To rejuvenate the clump, every few years pop the clump out and reset it an inch or two deeper in the same site. This brings fresh roots to their short, brittle stems. Spring or late summer would be the best time for this.

We have several other large-leafed coral bells I would mention: 'Pistasche' with yellow leaves, 'Mocha' with dusty-burgundy leaves, 'Autumn Bride' and 'Alabama Sunrise'. You just have to come look!

— Tom

# Chaska FARM & GARDEN



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