

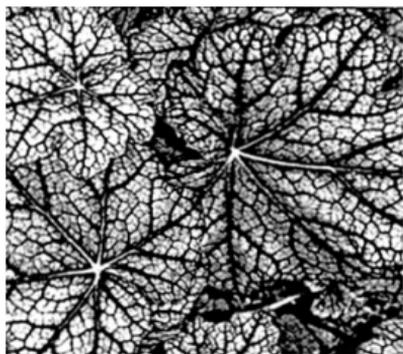


# PANSIES NOW!

## SEED POTATOES, ONION SETS, STRAWBERRY PLANTS, GLADIOLA AND DAHLIA BULBS

### 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.



#### **Coral Bells— *Heuchera 'Tiramisu'***

A few species of plants become candidates for the prolific breeding of new varieties that give us new plants with new flower colors, pretty leaves and better vigor. Lilies, roses and hostas obviously have long been favorites for breeders, but only recently have *Echinaceas* (coneflowers) and *Heucheras* (coral bells) re-

ceives so much attention.

Coral bells are well into their third wave of breed-o-mania by now with a class of villosa hybrids that show surprisingly beautiful leaf color and improved survivability.

Your grandmother probably grew a green-leaved variety that threw up airy candles of small red or pink flowers. They prospered in moist, fertile soil in part shade and attracted hungry hummingbirds as a bonus. These older varieties are still valuable, but are being outshone by the new villosas.

Perhaps you noticed the two voluptuous villosas 'Citronelle' and 'Caramel' in our display last year, their leaf color so intensely yellow and copper you wanted to put them in a pot on the patio or as a centerpiece indoors. 'Tiramisu' is so, well, this year. It is like most coral bells a perfect mound of layered, round to maple-shaped leaves so very useful at the front of a border or in a close up position. 'Tiramisu' changes leaf color with the season, first growth in spring is coppery gold with red veining, very bright and noticeable. That color matures to chartreuse with a silver overlay by mid-summer. One of the best features of coral bells is the very long season of interest. Leaves retain color and form until snowcover and emerge evergreen at spring thaw even before new growth starts. Leaves of 'Tiramisu' grow up to 9 in. and the somewhat incidental cream-colored flower sprays top that by 6 in.

We have about ten new *Heuchera* varieties this year with some names that self describe like 'Blackout', 'Mocha', 'Pino Noir', and 'Pino Gris'. Some like 'Midnight Rose' with white-flecked black leaves and 'Christa' with red-veined, peachy leaves are sure to grab your attention.

I find the new coral bells irresistible, they solve that age-old problem "what do I plant here?" Their long season of beauty keeps a garden sharp all year. To keep coral bells vigorous for many years we advise digging up clumps every few years and re-setting them a couple inches deeper in the ground. This allows them to re-root along their stubby stems and rejuvenate.

New plants and cutting edge varieties keeps the interest alive for gardeners and we are happy to oblige!

— Tom



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