

Contents

June 2008

Clippings6

To-Do List8

Ask MG10

Vegetable Patch12

Healthy Lawns14

Weed Watch: Garlic Mustard16

Feature: The Zen of Weeding18

Where to pick up MG19

Books for the Michigan Gardener20

Weather Wrap26

Garden TV26

New Perennials for 200827

Subscription Form30

Advertiser Index30

Calendar31

Places to Grow34

Profile: A four-season garden of natural beauty38



www.terravanurseries.com

Heuchera 'Green Spice'

Plant Focus: Coral Bells 22

Raising Roses 42

Janet's Journal Back cover

On the Cover: Coral bells (*Heuchera*) offer a wide variety of foliage colors that add sparkle to your shady garden.

Photo by Jonathon Hofley/Michigan Gardener

MICHIGAN GARDENER

Publisher/Editor: Eric Hofley
Design & Production: Jonathon Hofley
Advertising: Eric Hofley
Circulation: Jonathon Hofley
Editorial Assistant: Barbara Ash

Contributors:
Jeff Ball
Martha Ferguson
Marty Figley
Julia Hofley
Nancy Lindley
Janet Macunovich
Steve Martinko
Steven Nikkila
George Papadelis
Sandie Parrott
Jean & Roxanne Riggs
Jim Slezinski
Steve Turner
Iris Lee Underwood

16291 W. 14 Mile Rd., Suite 5, Beverly Hills, MI 48025-3327
Phone: 248-594-5563 **Fax:** 248-594-5564
E-mail: publisher@michigangardener.com
Website: www.michigangardener.com

Publishing schedule
April to November, monthly (first week of the month).
8 issues per year.

Subscriptions
8 issues/\$16 16 issues/\$29 24 issues/\$39
Please make check payable to *Michigan Gardener*.

Back issues
All past issues are available. Please send your request along with a check for \$3.00 per issue payable to *Michigan Gardener*.

Canadian subscriptions
8 issues/\$19 US. (\$38 CAN.) 16 issues/\$34 US. (\$62 CAN.)
Copyright © 2008 Michigan Gardener. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be copied, reproduced or used in any form without the expressed, written permission of the publisher. Neither the advertiser nor the publisher will be responsible for misinformation, typographical errors, omissions, etc. contained herein. *Michigan Gardener* is published by Motor City Publishing, Inc.

goldner walsh
GARDEN & HOME



pot
envy?

cool pots.
cool plants.
cool store.

● your spot
to get your green on.

plant focus

Coral Bells

About twenty years ago, gardeners began demanding a broader and better selection of perennials. This was back when daylilies, peonies, hostas, and iris made up the majority of the perennials available. In those days, there were about three kinds of coral bells (*Heuchera*) available: one with red flowers, one with pink flowers, and one with white flowers. All had green leaves and produced flowers in June and July. Breeders realized that this was a genus with a great deal of potential since it could tolerate a broad range of exposures, had mostly evergreen foliage, and had leaves and flowers that could be drastically improved. In the 1980's, two new foliage forms were discovered. *Heuchera micrantha* 'Palace Purple,' with bold, lush purple leaves and *Heuchera americana* 'Dale's Strain' with its silver-blue marbled foliage. This was the beginning of the coral bells breeding revolution.

In the last 15 years or so, coral bells have been developed that have changed the way we perceive foliage in the perennial garden. Leaf colors span from bronze to red, gold, orange, purple, silver, black, and everything in between. Some varieties display color combinations so complex that their descriptions defy the normal limits of plant catalogues and publications (as you'll see below). I think it's fair to say that today's coral bells are to the perennial garden what coleus is to the annual garden. And like coleus, it is often difficult to have too many in the landscape since most can tolerate sun or shade and their leaves often echo the many earthy hues already found in nature. Besides their beautiful foliage, they also vary in leaf size, leaf texture, flower size, and flower color.

'Palace Purple' was selected by the Perennial Plant Association as the Perennial Plant of the Year back in 1991. Being an easy-to-propagate, seed-grown variety, it was used everywhere from mass plantings to container combinations. Its bold, purple-black foliage was the miss-



'Palace Purple'



'Amber Waves'



'Ginger Ale'

ing link between hostas and ferns in the shade garden. Like many other coral bells to come along, it produced insignificant creamy white flowers in June and July.

Several other varieties developed in the nineties but *Heuchera* 'Amber Waves' was the next milestone. 'Amber Waves' has amber leaves with rosy-purple undersides. This color combination made it a hit in container combinations and perennial beds. The problem is, this coral bell tends to get weaker and weaker each season until finally, one winter, it disappears. Most of the coral bells available today lack this trait.



'Purple Petticoats'

Explosion of color categories

Let's open our color discussion with coral bells that have been developed with beautiful silver marbling. 'Cinnabar Silver,' 'Geisha's Fan,' 'Green Spice,' 'Fantasia,' 'Pewter Veil,' and all of the 'Angel' series exhibit fantastic metallic silver markings along with several other colors that range from purple to red, mint green, and bronze.

There are several coral bells in various shades of purple-brown like 'Amethyst Mist,' 'Purple Petticoats,' 'Frosted Violet,' and 'Plum Pudding.' Some of these are pro-

fuse bloomers that provide additional beauty from flowers produced in June and July.

Rosy- or red-leaved varieties include 'Chocolate Ruffles,' 'Encore,' and 'Sparkling Burgundy.' 'Mahogany' is new for 2008 and produces glossy, mahogany-red foliage that usually persists well through the winter.

The darkest-leaved coral bells are nearly black. 'Black Beauty' and 'Starry Night' are the deepest purple, but 'Obsidian' and 'Black Out' are very dark, nearly black-leaved plants. The shiny leaves of 'Obsidian' contrast beautifully with gold-leaved hos-

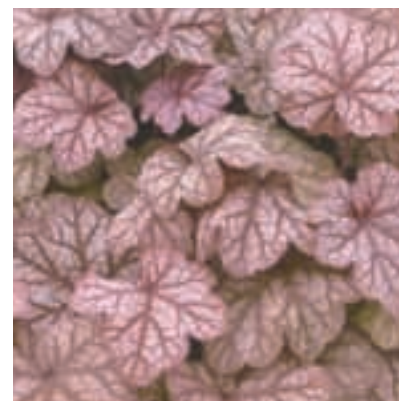


George
Papadelis



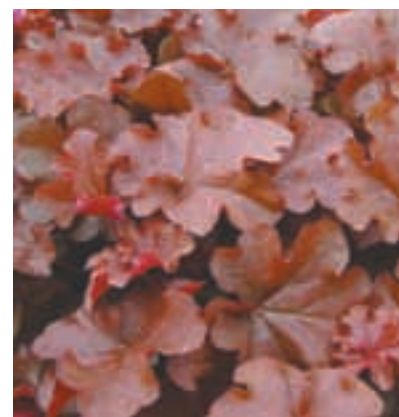
www.terravanurseries.com

'Green Spice'



www.perennialresource.com

'Encore'



www.terravanurseries.com

'Mahogany'



www.terravanurseries.com

'Black Beauty'



www.perennialresource.com

'Christa'

tas or the shade-tolerant golden Japanese forest grass (*Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola').

Many of the newer standouts of the last few years fall into the yellow/orange color range. All of these have grown very popular in both the perennial garden and container combinations. 'Lime Rickey' was the first all yellow-leaved variety. Its chartreuse spring foliage transitions to lime-green in summer when it produces near white, tiny flowers. 'Ginger Ale' is literally the color of ginger ale accented by silvery white. The underside of every leaf is mahogany-red. 'Peach Flambe' and 'Mar-

malade' offer leaves in the amber tones. 'Peach Flambe' has larger leaves infused with red and 'Marmalade' has shiny, undulating foliage with deep rose undersides.

Enter *Heuchera villosa*

About 15 years ago, a well-respected plantsman, Charles Cresson, showed me a heuchera in his garden near Philadelphia. He boasted about how robust and hardy this species called *Heuchera villosa* grew in his garden. At the time, I wasn't impressed because of its unappealing, big, hairy, green leaves. Well, it turns out that this heuchera

has been a valuable parent in the development of new varieties with great features. Heuchera from *villosa* breeding have larger, furry leaves on plants that tolerate heat and humidity far better than many coral bell predecessors. All produce creamy flowers mid-summer and also overwinter with exceptional vigor.

Two yellow coral bells are currently available from *villosa* breeding: 'Citronelle' and 'Citron.' Each has large chartreuse leaves on relatively compact plants. Both

continued on page 24

Coral Bells

Botanical name: *Heuchera*
(HEW-ker-ah)

Plant type: Perennial

Plant size: Up to 16 inches tall,
20 inches wide

Habit: Clump-forming

Hardiness: Zone 4

Flower color: White, cream, pink,
rose, cherry red

Flower size: Up to 3/8" wide

Bloom period: Early to mid
summer

Leaf color: Wide variety of earth
tones: purple, brown, near black,
burgundy, orange, bronze,
peach, yellow, gold, silver, and
combinations.

Light: Sun to shade

Soil: Fertile, well-drained

Uses: Shade garden, mixed
borders, perennial garden,
groundcover.

Companion plants: Hostas, ferns,
shorter ornamental grasses, carex.

Remarks: Prefers regular water-
ing but drought-tolerant once
established. Base of plant eventu-
ally tends to get woody and grow
upward; lift and replant as required.



'Cinnabar Silver'

www.terravanurseries.com

Plant Focus continued from page 23

prefer shade or part shade, as full sun will burn the leaves. There are also two gold varieties, 'Caramel' and 'Christa.' 'Caramel' has fuzzy, bright yellow-orange leaves and purple-red undersides. 'Christa' produces rosy-purple young leaves that mature to a peachy-gold that eventually develops a silver overlay. 'Christa' also produces light pink flowers. 'Southern Comfort' is new for 2008 and features foliage that changes from gold to copper to amber.

Villosa breeding has also produced some brown-leaved varieties. 'Brownies' has enormous chocolate-brown leaves with purple-red undersides. This is one of the larger varieties yielding 16-inch tall mounds that spread to 20 inches. 'Mocha' produces large bronze-purple leaves with royal purple undersides. This is said to be the darkest-leaved *villosa*-type heuchera. 'Beaujolais' has large burgundy leaves with a subtle silvering and deep purple veins.

For 2008, there are several new *Heuchera villosa* with leaves featuring multiple

colors. 'Georgia Peach' has deep peach-colored, evergreen leaves with a heavy snow-white overlay. I have seen mature clumps of this new variety and there is nothing else quite like it. 'Tiramisu' is also new and has chartreuse leaves with a brick red coloration that radiates from the leaf's veins. 'Miracle' originated from a 'Tiramisu' seedling that displayed even more intense red to burgundy coloration.

As you can see, the world of coral bells is an enormous plant playground for any gardener who appreciates beautiful foliage. However, the fact that coral bells' foliage persists through the winter is enough to warrant its extensive use in the perennial garden—sunny or shady. New varieties will be released every season for years to come and the new *villosa* breeding will ensure superior performance. If you haven't explored this ever-changing genus in the last few years, you and your garden don't know what you're missing.

George Papadelis is the owner of Telly's Greenhouse in Troy, MI.



'Obsidian'

www.terravanurseries.com



'Southern Comfort'

www.terravanurseries.com



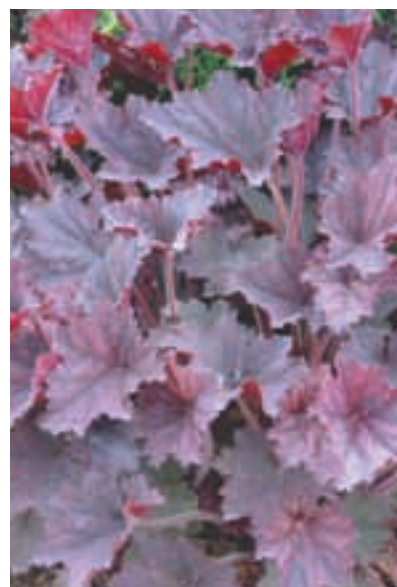
'Mocha'

www.perennialresource.com



'Marmalade'

www.terravanurseries.com



'Frosted Violet'

www.perennialresource.com



'Caramel'

www.perennialresource.com

New Perennials for 2008

George Papadelis



www.perennialresource.com

Coral Bells (*Heuchera*) 'Tiramisu'

'Tiramisu' is one of the new coral bells from *Heuchera villosa* breeding. *Villosa* genetics give this variety exceptional tolerance to hot, humid weather and some additional overwintering vigor. The foliage of 'Tiramisu' is chartreuse with a brick red pattern that fades to amber in summer and changes back to deep red in the fall. The foliage is evergreen and spreads to form a beautiful groundcover up to 24 inches wide. Position 'Tiramisu' in the garden with plants that offer contrasting textures such as blue-leaved hostas or maidenhair ferns. Grow this one in shade to part shade.



Coneflower (*Echinacea*) 'Coconut Lime'

Last year, the coneflower 'Pink Double Delight' was one of the most popular new perennials. It was the pink version of this new coneflower, 'Coconut Lime,' which was developed by the same breeder. 'Coconut Lime' has creamy white petals and a pale lemon-green, rounded cone. It will begin blooming in July and continue until September. Like 'Pink Double Delight,' it will grow 24 to 30 inches tall and should spread about the same. *Echinacea* are usually very hardy and will tolerate a wide range of soils in full or part sun.



www.plantsnouveau.com



www.terravanurseries.com

Pig Squeak (*Bergenia*) 'Solar Flare'

I have never been a bergenia fan until now. Gardeners have found bergenias to be valuable for a number of reasons. First, they have evergreen foliage that will usually change from shades of red and brown in the winter to a shiny, fresh green in summer. Second, they produce beautiful pink to white flowers in spring. And third, they will tolerate sun or shade. Last summer while traveling in Oregon, I visited the developer of this plant and fell in love with it. Besides all of the above qualities, 'Solar Flare' has unique gold and green variegated foliage. This is further enhanced by the pink-red undersides that develop in fall and intensify during the winter. This easy-to-grow plant prefers well-drained soil and produces 15-inch wide clumps that are about a foot tall.

Switch Grass (*Panicum*) 'Ruby Ribbons'

Panicum is the genus name for switch grass, which is a North American native. While the interest in ornamental grasses grows every year, only a few recent introductions can be considered worthy garden plants. 'Ruby Ribbons' is an exception. While other switch grasses develop beautiful red coloration in the fall, 'Ruby Ribbons' soft blue-green foliage takes on a wine-red color in early summer. This color intensifies as the season progresses and flower heads appear in late summer. The foliage and flowers turn tan in the winter and, if left uncut, provide the winter interest that ornamental grasses so beautifully create. 'Ruby Ribbons' grows about 4 feet tall and 2 to 3 feet wide. Switch grass will tolerate heavier soil than most ornamental grasses.



Ball Horticultural Co.

continued on next page



www.perennialresource.com

Tickseed (*Coreopsis*) 'Full Moon'

After eight years of intensive breeding, Darrell Probst has developed the first new hybrid in his Big Bang series of *Coreopsis*. 'Full Moon' produces enormous, canary yellow flowers up to three inches across, beginning in midsummer and continuing on into the fall. It grows 24 to 30 inches tall and therefore is best positioned in the middle of the perennial border in full to part sun. Try it in a companion planting with blue veronica or garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*).



www.perennialresource.com

Hibiscus 'Summer Storm'

Perennial hibiscus have been available for years, but this one is unique. 'Summer Storm' features showy purple-black foliage from late spring until fall on plants that grow 4 feet tall. Flowering begins in July and continues through September. Flowers of 'Summer Storm' are 8 inches across with overlapping petals of pink and a deep magenta eye. This makes a beautiful focal point in the perennial border where it will thrive in full to part sun. Hibiscus are tolerant of moist soil.



www.prideofplaceplants.com

Coneflower (*Echinacea*) 'Green Envy'

Yes, another coneflower—but they're all so beautiful. 'Green Envy' produces interesting green flowers whose petals turn magenta at their base as they mature. The overall effect is breathtaking and I can't wait to see this one in the garden. The developer of this plant, Mark Veeder, says this coneflower blooms early July through the fall months. Like other coneflowers, 'Green Envy' grows about 30 to 36 inches tall and about two feet wide. It will tolerate a broad range of soils in sun to part sun.



www.terravanurseries.com

Coneflower (*Echinacea*) 'Tiki Torch'

I had the pleasure of seeing this plant in full bloom last summer. I was shocked to see how well 'Tiki Torch' lived up to my expectations. The flowers were about 4 inches across and had wide, overlapping petals of the brightest orange coloration I have ever seen in a coneflower. It was beautiful! I contacted a few people who had the privilege of planting 'Tiki Torch' last summer. All reported good overwintering success. Like other coneflowers, 'Tiki Torch' will thrive in a broad range of soils and prefers to be planted in full or part sun. I hope everyone gets to see 'Tiki Torch' in bloom this season. This one is destined to be a winner.

continued on page 30

continued from page 28



www.perennialresource.com

Brunnera 'Emerald Mist'

This is a true forget-me-not that returns year after year in the shady perennial garden. Each spring, brunnera is covered with baby blue forget-me-not flowers that fade away to reveal gorgeous foliage. 'Emerald Mist' has heart-shaped leaves with silver spots that create a beautiful pattern with a metallic look. Brunnera thrives in moist soil and also boasts deer resistance. Every shade garden needs a few brunnera.

Bugleweed (Ajuga) 'Toffee Chip'

This bugleweed is the offspring of another great ajuga called 'Chocolate Chip.' Both develop dense mounds of shiny, relatively small foliage that yield tight clusters of 8-inch tall, blue flower spikes each spring. While 'Chocolate Chip' has chocolate-brown leaves, 'Toffee Chip' has leaves that are gold to white with olive green centers. This ajuga is ideal for the rock garden, edging, the hosta garden, or even in a hypertufa trough. And while regular ajuga will often sprawl sparsely and lose its ability to overwinter, 'Toffee Chip' will stay dense and vigorous—rarely growing far beyond 12 inches wide. Grow 'Toffee Chip' in full to part sun.



www.terravanurseries.com

George Papadelis is the owner of Telly's Greenhouse in Troy, MI.



Never miss an issue.

Subscribe now to receive convenient mail delivery!

8 issues (1 year) – \$16
16 issues (2 years) – \$29
24 issues (3 years) – \$39 **BEST VALUE**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Where did you pick up MG? _____

Please enclose your check (payable to Michigan Gardener) and mail to:
 Michigan Gardener, 16291 W. 14 Mile Rd., Suite 5
 Beverly Hills, MI 48025-3327

Michigan Gardener is published monthly April through November

Canadian subscriptions: 8 issues for \$19.00 US. (\$38.00 CAN.) 16 issues for \$34.00 US. (\$62.00 CAN.)

Advertiser Index

Abbott's Landscape Nursery.....	12	KR Concepts.....	12
Abele Greenhouse & Garden Center.....	7	Landscape Artisan.....	14
Aguafina Gardens International.....	26	Le Fleur Décor.....	12
Arrowhead Alpines.....	37	LifeThymeGardenMarkers.com.....	26
Association of Professional Gardeners.....	13	Light of the Moon.....	14
Auburn Oaks Nursery.....	25	Marcial's Home & Garden.....	8
Backyard Bouquet Farm.....	13	Mason Studio.....	33
Barson's Greenhouse.....	42	Meier Flowerland.....	17
Beaty's Florist & Greenhouse.....	14	Merrittscape.....	29
Bellwether Gardens.....	9	Milford Gardens.....	11
Billings Lawn Equipment.....	25	Milky Spore/St. Gabriel Labs.....	17
Blossoms.....	31	MSU Garden Day.....	7
Bogie Lake Greenhouses.....	15	Oakland Community College.....	25
Bordine Nursery.....	Page 3	Oldani Landscape Nurseries.....	35
Bumper Crop.....	29	Orion Stone Depot.....	19
Casual Modes Home & Garden.....	35	The Peacock.....	8
Clixby's Plants & Patios.....	11	Plantskydd.....	21
Community Arborist.....	14	Plymouth Nursery.....	37
Contender's Tree & Lawn Specialists.....	19	Rice's Garden Ornaments.....	13
Country Garden Club of Northville.....	33	Royal Oak Farmer's Market.....	32
Detroit Garden Works.....	29	Saxton's Garden Center.....	25
Drift Groundcover Roses.....	17	Schuman Landscape Lighting.....	32
Easy Growin' Water Gardens.....	14	Schwartz's Greenhouse.....	20
Eckert's Perennials.....	35	Specialty Growers.....	37
Edsel & Eleanor Ford House.....	6	Steinkopf Nursery.....	10
Elya's Village Gardens.....	11	Stone City.....	7
English Gardens.....	Inside back cover	Stone Cottage Gardens.....	26
Espoma.....	5	Superior Growers Supply.....	15
Evergreen Home & Garden Center.....	25	Telly's Greenhouse.....	Inside front cover
Everlastings in the Wildwood.....	13	The Pond Place.....	15
Fogler's Greenhouses.....	21	The Weed Lady.....	9
Garden Inspirations.....	9	Tropical Treasures.....	12
Garden Mill.....	32	Troy Garden Club.....	31
Garden Rhythms.....	11	Uncle Luke's Feed Store.....	20
A Garden Space.....	12	Watercolor Works.....	15
Goldner Walsh Nursery.....	4	Wayne County Dept of Environment.....	21
Gordon's Landscaping.....	13	Westborn Flower Market.....	5
Gourdology.....	21	Wiegand's Nursery.....	21
Great Lakes Roses.....	6	Wildtype Nursery.....	19
Haley Stone Supply.....	33	Willow Wood Tree Care.....	7
Hessell's Greenhouses.....	35	Woodward Gardens.....	9
Hidden Lake Gardens.....	31	Yahoo Golden Nuggets.....	32
Iron Barn Garden Center.....	19	Yule Love It Lavender Farm.....	26