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Rodgersia

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Eric Holmes / Michigan Gardener

Rodgersias thrive in moist soil. This one is particularly happy in a partially shaded, damp spot in the garden.



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'Bronze Peacock'



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R. podophylla 'Braunlaub'

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In looking at the flowers of rogersia, it is easy to see their similarity to those of astilbe and goatsbeard (*Aranthus*), two other members of the saxifrage family. The flowers of *R. aesculifolia*, *R. podophylla*, and *R. sambucifolia*—all white flowering—resemble those of their popular relatives due to their light, airy, triangular-shaped panicles. *R. aesculifolia* var. *henrici* exhibits thicker, sturdier flower stems, with multiple flower clusters arranged in tiers. The flowers of the *henrici* form are often pink, as are those of *R. pinnata*. The color comes from the sepals and stamens; the flowers don't have actual petals. The seed pods may also develop pink, coral or red coloration.

Cultivars

While all rogersia species are ornamental in their own right, hybrids can offer even more ornamental qualities. All of the species cross readily with one another, making this genus a plant breeder's delight. Many cultivars are hybrids or variants of *R. pinnata*, which breeders utilize to impart deeper pink color to the flowers and bronze tints to the foliage. While some varieties emerge bronze in spring, they may fade to green during mid-summer. Breeders are working to achieve longer-lasting bronze foliage color, along with showy pink flowers. 'Bronze Peacock,' 'Candy Clouds,' and 'Chocolate Wings' are excellent examples of this color combination.

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the rodgersias, reaching about two feet, making it a good candidate for smaller gardens. *R. aesculifolia* and its variety *henrici* make imposing specimens that may reach six feet tall under ideal conditions. They can be used in more formal settings, in the way one would use statuary, or can provide interest as punctuation marks among the many other, perhaps less dramatic, plants.

Companions should be selected based on similar moisture and light preferences, and could include cardinal flower (*Lobelia*), globe flower (*Trollius*), meadowsweet (*Filipendula*), meadow rue (*Thalictrum*), ligularia, camassia, Japanese primroses, royal and cinnamon ferns, large hostas and, of course, its relatives astilbe and goatsbeard (*Aruncus*).

Rodgersias are not prone to any insects or diseases. Most disfigurements are due to improper siting; soil too dry, or conditions too windy or sunny, which will mar the foliage. Like all members of the saxifrage family, they appreciate fertilizer and will look stupendous if provided frequent applications of mild liquid fertilizer, or monthly applications of dry, organic, low-analysis fertilizer. Make sure



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Rodgersia aesculifolia



Terra Nova Nurseries

'Bronze Peacock'



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'Fireworks'