

Podophyllum 'Kaleidoscope'

Eight years ago, Dan Heims of Terra Nova Nurseries was tooling around Aomori Prefecture in Japan when he stumbled upon what he calls "a wee nursery called Wildflowers of Wonder." There, he found two plants that would become the parents of an amazing offspring. *Podophyllum* 'Kaleidoscope' comes of his breeding efforts between the two Asian mayapples he brought home to Canby.



PRONUNCIATION:
Poh-duh-fill-um

COMMON NAME: Asian mayapple

FAMILY: Berberidaceae

NATIVE OF: A hybrid resulting from crosses made between the Asian species *P. difforme* and *P. delavayi* by Terra Nova Nurseries. Also look for *P.* 'Spotty Dotty,' another of Terra Nova's introductions, a vigorous and hardy hybrid with chartreuse leaves spotted chocolate brown.

RELATED SPECIES: The genus *Podophyllum* includes between two and nine species, depending on whom you ask. One, *P. peltatum*, is native to North America.

TYPE: Herbaceous perennial

SIZE: Strong, finger-thick stems rise to 18 inches. Clumps will spread to 16 inches and eventually send up pups. Unlike some species, this hybrid grows pretty slowly, sending up a few more leaves each year.

FOLIAGE: Unlike any you've seen. Big, hexagonal leaves (to 18 inches across), are held parallel to the ground — only a foot and a half above it. The shoots pierce the soil as early as February and unfurl like umbrellas. The leaves are blasted with a pattern of green, bronze and silver.

FLOWERS: Beginning in years three to five, big, round buds open to umbels of urn-shaped, burgundy-red blooms that hang under the leaves like chandeliers. Long-lasting.

FRUIT: Does not self-pollinate, but if you have more than one plant, even of another species, it can produce plum-size fruit that turns from green to yellowish when ripe. Poisonous unless ripe, so be careful.

BASIC NEEDS: Loves deep shade (can you say "Yay!"), but will take part shade. No full sun. Well-drained but moist soil that has lots of compost added. Heims says Marietta and Ernie O'Byrne of Northwest Garden Nursery in Eugene use compost tea on theirs with superb results. Goes dormant in winter and can go dormant in summer without sufficient water. Works well in containers.

ENEMIES: Slugs can be a problem as new shoots come up in spring. Bait, trap or hand-pick, but do it early.

HARDINESS: Zone 6-9. Any new growth pushed up before the March 9 snowstorm probably died back. By now it should be going strong.

REASON TO GROW: For the whirligig-patterned leaves that catch you by surprise and the burgundy-red flowers that dangle below. Oh, and because this truly exciting plant grows in the shade. So far, Terra Nova is the only lab producing 'Kaleidoscope,' which is time-consuming, so don't be surprised to see it at \$40 for a gallon-size container.

WHERE TO FIND THEM: AI's Garden Center (Woodburn, Sherwood, Gresham), Marbott's Greenhouse & Nursery (Portland), Cornell Farm (Portland), Farmington Gardens (Beaverton), Joy Creek Nursery (Scappoose), Loen Nursery (Sherwood), Northwest Garden Nursery (Eugene). For locations in other areas go to www.terranovanurseries.com.

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SOURCES: Dan Heims, Terra Nova Nurseries; Flora: A Gardener's Encyclopedia; The American Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants; Hardy Herbaceous Perennials, Volume II; Sunset Western Garden Book