

DIG THIS by Peg Tillery (for 4-14-04) Terra Nova Picks, ©2005

Remember last year in a column I told you about twelve shade loving plants I had the opportunity of testing for Terra Nova Nurseries in Oregon? I potted them up into groupings in containers and this year will plant them out into some shady areas of our garden. Each of the plants is thriving and I'll give you a recap in a future column. This year I'll be trying out twelve sun-loving plants. They arrived today in small plugs which I've promptly potted up into four-inch pots so they can grow healthy roots before going out into the garden.

Terra Nova is renowned for their perennial selections. Two local Kitsap nurseries carry Terra Nova selections. Heronswood in Kingston at 7530 288th Street; www.heronwood.com, 360-297-4172 and Dragonfly Farm on Day Road, Bainbridge Island, email jscott@earthlink.net or call 206-842-7970. For wonderful photos, growing conditions and details on the Terra Nova collections visit www.terranovanurseries.com.

Campanula 'Sarastro' has deepest dark purple pendant bells held aloft 18-inch spikes. Flowers last several months and this campanula is a slow spreader. Echinacea 'Fragrant Angel' and Echinacea 'Sparkler' are outstanding for summer gardens. 'Fragrant Angel' is white with overlapping petals surrounding a large, rounded yellow cone and it's reported to smell heavenly. 'Sparkler' has pink flowers and tri color leaves – bright green covered with white and dark green spangles.

If you love Euphorbia then Euphorbia 'Blue Lagoon' will astound you. The foliage is blue with red kissed new growth. Inflorescences are yellow lasting for months. It's a sun lover but will also tolerate shade easily. How can that be? 'Blue Lagoon' loves dry areas and seeds freely.

Heucherella 'Party Time' is one of Terra Nova's favorites for this year with profusions of long-blooming pink flowers festooning a "low clump of green and bronze foliage with a silver overlay." This plant promises to bloom nearly forever in our gardens.

Heuchera 'City Lights' is described by Terra Nova as, "The warm twinkling from city skyscrapers inspired this new plant. Bronze-leaved vigorous hybrid with luminous cream-colored flowers over city-slicker chocolate leaves." The flowers are "symmetrically layered."

Our daughter lives in San Francisco and her small back garden is overrun with oxalis a very small creeping, multiplying weed that's thankfully easily removed. However here in the Northwest Oxalis is well-behaved and a favorite of many gardeners. Terra Nova's offering is Oxalis crassipes 'Rosea.' The small plant I received is delightful and looked like it was eager to get growing and pleasing. The description promised pink flowers with deep pink star-centers. The leaves are green and this plant can withstand cold and drought easily from spring through hard frost. It doesn't spread by seeds but forms well-behaved tubers.

Polemium 'Snow and Sapphires' (commonly known as Jacob's Ladder) has white and green leaves surrounding stems of intense blue flowers. It was developed by nurseryman Floyd McDonald and is an incredible plant. I can hardly wait to get it into my garden.

Silene 'Rockin Robin' has dark green foliage with coral flowers. Some websites refer to it as a "campion." Terra Nova recommends it for container plantings. Silenes seem to disappear in my garden so I'm planning to have it in a pot on the deck. This plant loves good drainage so growing in a pot will work.

Solidago 'Leraft' has lemon yellow blooms and is a well-behaved short clumping Goldenrod. It will not seed around and the butterflies will love it. Solidago 'Leraft' will gift the gardener with wonderful textural plants for bouquets provided one is not allergic.

One of my all time favorite plants is Verbascum. The Terra Nova selection I have is Verbascum 'Sugar Plum' with ruffled foliage and masses of spikes festooned with multitudes of plum colored flowers. This is a dwarf variety growing only one foot high. Keeping it cut back rewards with many bloomings.

The twelfth plant sent was Hedera helix 'Fluffy Ruffles.' I was surprised that a nursery in Oregon was sending out this noxious weed. English Ivy is a noxious weed in Oregon and Washington states so this beauty is going to live inside my house in a container. It is quite striking with incredibly ruffled leaves. But, no way is this plant going to ever see the light of day outside in my garden where it can become a very bad horticulture problem. I'm going to email Terra Nova to find out more about this plant and I'll report back in a future column.

If you have access to the Internet from home or at your local library you'll want to visit Terra Nova's website www.terravanurseries.com and see these plants in living color. They'll tempt you too.

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