

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 07-13-05) Terra Nova Picks for 05 © 2005

Each year I receive plants from Terra Nova Nurseries, Inc. to try out and report back to Terra Nova. This year's selection includes: *Heuchera* 'Chinook,' *Heuchera* 'Starry Night,' *Tiarella* 'Sugar and Spice,' *Verbascum* 'Blushing Bride,' *Tricyrtis lasiocarpa*, *Campanula persicifolia* 'Powder Puff,' *Persicaria* 'Chocolate Dragon,' *Corydalis curviflora* var. *rosthornii* 'Blue Heron,' and *Echinacea purpurea* 'Sparkler.' All are perennials promising to grow well in our area.

Heuchera are commonly called Coral Bells. 'Chinook' has pink flower buds opening to salmon-colored flowers. Humming birds are attracted to this particular variety. It is nine inches high and 18 inches wide making it good for cut flowers. It will do best in rich, moist soil. 'Starry Nights' has "dark-as-night" round leaves, pure white flowers, and dark brown-black year round foliage, growing low to the ground. It will live happily in a container and is recommended for bedding and borders. It reaches only five-inches in height and ten-inches wide. It can tolerate more shade than "Chinook.'

Tiarellas are one of my favorite plants for shade and partial shade. Their leaves are like deeply indented Japanese maple leaves, usually tri or bi-color. 'Sugar and Spice' has shiny leaves appearing to be laquered, with dark red-magenta centers and bright green edges. *Tiarella* are most commonly known as foam flowers. 'Sugar and Spice' is nicknamed "Foamy Bells." The spring flowers are soft pink and lightly scented. Some gardeners like to grow *Tiarellas* in containers. I have some in containers and some in the garden and all do equally well.

Verbascum 'Blushing Bride' is commonly known as Mullein. 'Blushing Bride' has large flowers in shades of lavender and pink. The plants are more compact than the common yellow Mullein. Terra Nova has "extensively bred this *Verbascum* to produce sterile, reblooming plants with well-branched spikes of profuse flowers." Terra Nova stresses to provide good drainage for this plant to succeed and resprout each year.

Tricyrtis lasiocarpa is commonly called "Toad Lily." Terra Nova describes it as having "showy, star-shaped flowers of iridescent purple and blue. Stalks reach up from the ground with purplish spotted foliage. Wonderful spilling down from woodland banks or arching in the shade garden. Late summer to fall bloom. Prefers moist, humus rich soil." I planted *Tricyrtis lasiocarpa* from bulbs purchased at Valley Nursery several years ago. It returns to astound and delight me every year. My toad lilies are growing happily in a huge container along with hostas and ferns.

Campanula persicifolia 'Powder Puff' is a "peach-leaved bellflower." I can hardly wait to see this plant blooming. The plant tag shows flowers resembling Cecil Brunner rosebuds. Terra Nova describes the flowers as "huge, fluffy, double white flowers (like a powder-puff) arising from deep green rosettes." The stems are promised to be shorter and stronger than other *campanula* making it great to use in cut bouquets.

Persicaria “Chocolate Dragon” (ornamental knotweed) promises not to creep or reseed. I’m going to plant it in a container on my deck and monitor it carefully for at least three years. Any plant with the name “knotweed” makes me wary since there are many knotweeds listed on our noxious list for Kitsap County. This Persicaria reminds me of ‘Painter’s Palette’ the “must have” plant of many Kitsap gardeners. The plant tag description says “wonderful low mound of striking leaves that are purple brown when young; maturing to a tasty chocolate brown with a silvery olive chevron.” Leaves become bright green with a dark blotch in early fall.

Corydalis curviflora var. rosthornii ‘Blue Heron’ has huge deep blue flowers on grey green foliage. It prefers cool temperatures and moist, humus rich soil. It will go dormant if kept too hot or dry in the summer. It is very fragrant.

Last but not least, Echnacea purpurea ‘Sparkler’ (variegated coneflower) will grow thirty inches tall and one foot wide. It is excellent as a cut flower and is fragrant. The leaves on this coneflower are variegated. Flowers are rose pink and four inches across.

For more information on Terra Nova plants visit the website at www.terravanurseries.com. Terra Nova plants are available at our local nurseries.

Contact Peg in care of this Newspaper or email ptillery@co.kitsap.wa.us or gardenmentor@yahoo.com