



Color your Garden

Heuchera plants come in purples, brown, black, silver, amber-peach, orange, gold, red, green, lime-yellow and variegated—a color for any garden scheme.

As Cut Flowers or Cut Foliage

Surprisingly, Heuchera leaves also offer extremely long-lasting foliage for fresh-cut arrangements. Add them to your floral bouquets by cutting the leaves so each one has a fairly long stem, and then stick them immediately in water with the flowers of your choosing. Change the water weekly and Heuchera leaves can live up to 2 years in a vase. (They'll even start rooting eventually!)



For More Information

Please consider our NGB member companies as authoritative sources for information. At www.ngb.org click on direct links to their websites by selecting Member Info from the upper left menu for the Complete Member List. Gardeners looking for seed sources should select companies listed as Retail.

The National Garden Bureau recognizes Dan Heims of Terra Nova Nurseries as the author of this fact sheet. Dan speaks worldwide on his plants and his craft. More information on Dan can be found at Great Garden Speakers: <http://www.greatgardenspeakers.com/listing/dan-heims-4c2d59e4091a9.html>

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Heucheras are all-American. Literally. Different species hail from the islands off the California coast to the highest mountains in the Rockies to the Gulf of Mexico. With this diverse range of habitat, these plants are able to find a niche in everyone's garden. Breeders in America and Europe have taken a well aimed swipe of a paintbrush between these species, and have assembled a plethora of plants with amazing flower and foliage forms that didn't exist a scant ten years ago. Not only are these plants aesthetically pleasing, but they have become stronger, fuller, and more disease resistant. With few pests, great adaptability to containers and a seemingly unending number of forms, Heuchera should be in everyone's garden!

History and Nomenclature

Johann Heinrich von Heucher, an Austrian professor of medicine and botany was a friend of Linnaeus, the father of taxonomy. Linnaeus often named plants in honor of his friends and in 1738 he did so with von Heucher. Being Austrian, his name was pronounced "Hoyker" and, you guessed it, the plant should be pronounced "Hoy-ker-uh."



It wasn't until 1980 when Brian Halliwell released *H. villosa* 'Palace Purple' that these plants were accepted as foliage plants. At about the same time, Dale Hendricks released a strain of *H. americana* called 'Dale's Strain'.

These two plants were hybridized to form the first foliage varieties, and the rest is history.

Classification and Varieties

Nearly 50 species of Heuchera inhabit woodlands, prairies and mountainous regions. Further south, *H. sanguinea*, can be seen growing in Chihuahua, Mexico. The culture of these indigenous species must meet some of the same cultural requirements of their growing areas. By hybridizing, the ensuing plants carry the combination of traits and the end user gets the best of both worlds.

These plants are in the Saxifrage family (Saxifragaceae) which includes *Bergenia*, *Tiarella*, *Saxifraga* (of rock gardens), *Mukdenia* and the giant-leaved *Rodgersia*.

Before the new wave of hybrid Heuchera, many coral bells included only one species, *H. sanguinea*, the coral bells of your grandmother's garden. Today, in order to give gardeners stronger, prettier plants, breeders are combining species so the newest coral bells provide a mix of outstanding characteristics. The common species used in today's hybrids are *H. americana*, *H. villosa*, *H. micrantha*, *H. cylindrica* and *H. sanguinea*.



Heuchera americana likes woodland situations best, survives extreme hot and cold temperatures, offers an exceptionally tidy mounding habit and shows off the most exciting leaf patterns. 'Green Spice' is an example.

H. villosa varieties, with hairy, large leaves, are best for the deep South and any other hot, humid climate. *H. villosa* hybrids are especially popular. 'Caramel' has gorgeous apricot leaves in spring that turn amber in summer and reddish in fall. 'Citronelle' and 'Electric Lime' display foliage that's stunning chartreuse. 'Southern Comfort' and 'Georgia Peach' have strong *H. villosa* heritage as well.

H. micrantha, a native to the West Coast, tolerates wet roots better than other coral bell variety. These lend their wavy leaves to any hybrid, ruffled form on the market today.

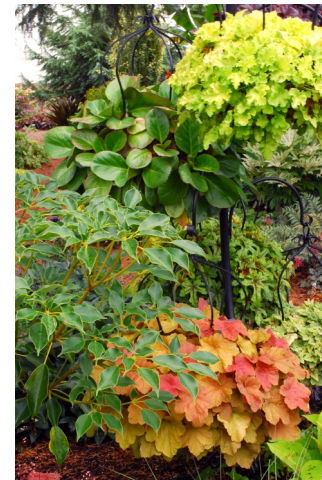
H. cylindrica presents a more compact form with strong, rigid flower stems that stand up to windy conditions. These are very attractive to bees and butterflies. *H. cylindrica* is not as eye catching as its more showy sister species due to its green or white blooms. Try 'Greenfinch' for its fresh green flowers on short panicles.

H. sanguinea, a Southwestern native, maintains its often bright blooms through extreme drought and heat. Most do well in shady rock gardens or along woodland paths. Look to bold varieties such as 'Snow Angel' with mottled green and cream leaves or 'Firefly' with profuse scarlet blossoms.

Culture and Garden Preferences

Heuchera require well-drained soil. Avoid soil that's too wet or full of clay. Plant your Heucheras in raised beds, on a berm, or in containers. Even mounding the soil slightly where you plant them will help. A premium organic planting compost will provide excellent drainage with enough moisture.

Other than keeping the soil well-drained and mulched, coral bells have very few other maintenance needs. Let them dry between watering, refrain from using excess fertilizer, and give them neutral or slightly acidic soil (the perfect ph is 5.8 to 6.3, but most aren't too fussy).



Many coral bells do well in part sun, but avoid hot afternoon rays—foliage will often fade, wilt, or scorch under intense sunlight. Plant in consistent full or filtered shade.

Note that as coral bells grow, their crowns rise up and out of the soil slightly. Either use mulch to protect the crown, or lift, divide, and replant. It's best to divide heucheras every 2 to 3 years, with the spring being the best time to do this work.

If necessary, cut back winter-damaged foliage in early spring to make way for new growth. And if you live in a cold climate (Zone 4), mulch your coral bells in winter, leaving the crowns unburied. Oak leaves are ideal.