

New Annuals for 2009

George Papadelis



Verbena 'Velox'

Breeders have developed a trailing verbenas whose petals are very flat with smooth curves. The result is a beautiful flower that strongly resembles the flowers of creeping phlox. The first two new colors are 'Pink' and 'Soft Pink.' They both have tremendous flower power and excellent resistance to powdery mildew. Like other verbenas, flowers are produced continuously all summer long and plants benefit from the removal of spent blooms. 'Velox' grows 6 inches tall and about 11 inches wide. Some sources have claimed that this is a "vegetative hybrid" of verbenas and phlox (this made me very curious before I saw this plant). However, upon careful examination of the foliage, one can see that the leaves are 100 percent verbenas. Grow this verbenas in full sun.



GGG International



Rudbeckia 'Tiger Eye'

There have been several award-winning annual rudbeckias the last few years but 'Tiger Eye' is in a class by itself. It is a very floriferous variety with exceptional powdery mildew tolerance. In field trials last summer, 'Tiger Eye' foliage was perfect, while the foliage of varieties like 'Indian Summer' and 'Prairie Sun' was covered with powdery mildew. The 3-inch flowers are a golden yellow with a brown "eye." Plants grow 16 to 22 inches tall and prefer full sun. Try this one in containers or beds.



Goldsmith Seeds

Ornamental Pepper 'Purple Flash'

There are a slew of new ornamental peppers this season and all are worth trying. 'Purple Flash' has interesting, black, grape-size peppers that sit atop plants in late summer and fall. The fruit is exceptionally hot and edible, but this plant was not bred for its culinary fruit. Its claim to fame is its beautiful black foliage with occasional "flashes" of purple and white. Plants have unusually strong branching, growing 20 inches wide and 14 inches tall. These make excellent container specimens or bedding plants in full sun.



Ball Horticultural



'Mandalay'

Proven Winners

Begonia 'Mandalay' and 'Bellagio'

These begonias make up two series of cascading begonias that were developed from breeding with the sun-loving, heat-tolerant begonia *boliviensis*. One of last season's big hits was *Begonia boliviensis* 'Bonfire,' whose electric orange flowers kept gardeners in awe all summer long. The 'Mandalay' series, like 'Bonfire,' has single flowers that are available in orange, pink, and a near white. 'Bellagio' has similar flowers but with multiple layers of petals. This double version comes in apricot, pink, and blush. These can be used to make eye-catching hanging baskets or patio containers.



Proven Winners

'Bellagio'

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Eric Hofley / Michigan Gardener

Perilla's leaf shape and growth habit resembles coleus.



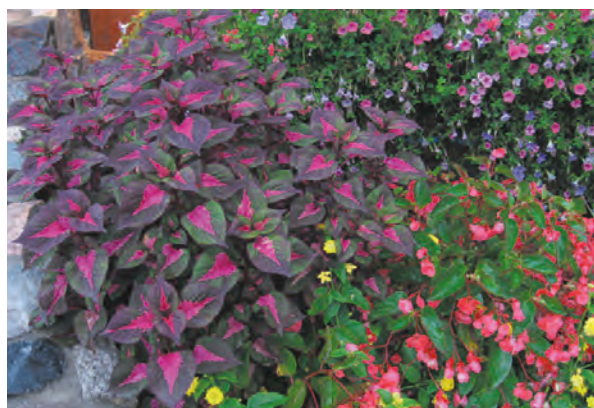
Proven Winners

'Gage's Shadow' is a new *Perilla* that is slightly taller and has interesting leaf colors.



Ball Horticultural

The leaf colors and patterns of *Perilla* 'Magilla' are remarkable.



Julia Hefley / Julia's Big Life

Perilla is a vigorous, reliable grower.



Eric Hofley / Michigan Gardener

With its sturdy, clumping habit, *Perilla* can be an annual edging plant.



Eric Hofley / Michigan Gardener

Use *Perilla* as the tall, central plant in a large container.

plant focus

Perilla

Perilla is a plant that has been in cultivation for centuries. It is still quite popular in Asian countries where it is primarily used as a food crop. In 2002, Japanese breeding gave us the first perilla that is truly ornamental. *Perilla* 'Magilla,' a coleus look-alike, was introduced in the United States and became an instant success. This member of the mint family is an annual with large velvety leaves marked with shades of purple, pink, green, and cream. 'Magilla' thrives in sun but will even prosper in shade where the vibrant colors are more muted. Plants grow to form a beautiful round clump up to 24 inches tall, making 'Magilla' a perfect specimen for that one-of-a-kind patio container. They can also be planted in masses (spaced about 15 inches apart) that will quickly form gorgeous mounds of foliage. Plants are vigorous, drought tolerant, low maintenance, and have few insect or disease issues.

George Papadelis



A new plant, *Perilla* 'Gage's Shadow,' was introduced in 2008. This "perilla" is actually a genetic cross that was made between coleus and perilla. It is named after the breeder's son, Gage, who has cerebral palsy. For every 'Gage's Shadow' sold, Proven Winners makes a donation to United Cerebral Palsy to promote research and provide services for those with the disease. This perilla can grow up to 4 feet tall and has large leaves of green accented by deep burgundy and a hint of cream. This perilla prefers sun or partial sun. It makes a stunning architectural plant, hedge, or background plant for other colorful annuals.

These perilla rarely flower until very late in the season and when they do, the seed is usually quite sterile. This puts some gardeners at ease if they have experienced the reseeding ability of perilla that have been grown from seed. Since the ornamental perilla are grown from cuttings (not seed), they will only be available in pots (not flats), usually 4-inch pots or larger. The good news is that enough gardeners are familiar with perilla so that both varieties should be available at your favorite garden center.

Like coleus, perilla is not a frost-tolerant plant; it should not be planted until the threat of frost has passed. If you haven't tried growing perilla, you won't be disappointed. Each is capable of providing season-long beauty with very little effort.

George Papadelis is the owner of Telly's Greenhouse in Troy, MI.



Eric Hofley / Michigan Gardener

The full, mounding habit of *Perilla* 'Magilla' makes it a good choice for annual beds.

Perilla

Botanical name: *Perilla* (per-ILL-uh)

Plant type: Annual (a tender perennial used as an annual)

Plant size: 24-48 inches tall, 18-24 inches wide

Habit: Clumping mound

Leaf color: A mix of purple, pink, magenta, green, and cream

Light: Sun or part shade

Uses: Large mixed containers, annual beds, mixed borders

Remarks: Leaves resemble coleus; perilla is a sturdier plant than coleus. Tolerates drought, heat and shade. Colorful foliage; low maintenance. Seeds are sterile, so plant will not reseed.



Eric Hofley / Michigan Gardener

Perilla is a key player in this container planting.