

# GARDEN NEWS

## SUN-LOVING COLEUS

Since at least the Victorian era, coleus has been grown as both a houseplant and a shady bedding plant in Europe and America. Until recently the wild colors they are known for had to be protected from sun or they would fade, but new sun-loving cultivars have been developed that keep their bizarre swirls and splotches in sun or shade. These new varieties, with their broad range of leaf size and shape, plant form, and mix of flamboyant colors, can brighten up any spot in a bed or container – without having to wait for a bloom. In fact, they are bred specifically to NOT bloom; coleus's skinny unimpressive flowers stalks are generally considered to detract from the spectacle of their foliage. You can read more about Sun-Loving Coleus in our [online article](#).



On our [variety list](#), we divide our coleus varieties by their use in the garden. DWARF coleus are ideal for edging or small containers; GIANT and LANDSCAPE types are taller and can be used for background color or large accents; TRAILING varieties cascade out of baskets or creep across the ground; and the NOVELTY section is devoted to the plants that are just plain peculiar, with many-fingered leaves, outlandish hues, or psychedelic patterns.

And if the vivid foliage colors – neon pink, lime green, swirled yellows and purples and reds – don't grab your attention, the names alone will! Who can resist a plant called 'Christmas Candy,' 'Religious Radish,' or 'Fishnet Stockings'?



## NICOTIANA

Ornamental flowering tobaccos, including *Nicotiana alata*, are relatives of the smoking tobacco (*N. tobacum*) introduced to Europe in the 1500s. *N. alata*, native to northeast Argentina and Southern Brazil, first became popular in European and American gardens late in the 19th century, when night-scented gardens were fashionable among the Victorians. *N. alatas* were appreciated for their intensely scented white trumpet flowers that opened at twilight, glowing in the moonlit gardens.

*Nicotiana's* form is often compared to a candelabra, for the sprays of small, tubular star-shaped blooms that dangle in clusters from long arching stems. Modern hybrids have been bred that open during the day, display a range of colors, and grow more compactly. Plant enthusiasts consider these new hybrids either improvements on or corruptions of the original species, depending on whether they

value the dwarf size and abundant daylight blooms of the new types or the graceful airy form and highly scented evening flowers of the oldtime varieties. We grow several of the more popular hybrid forms, as well as a selection of the more unusual, harder-to-find heirlooms.

Our [list](#) includes varieties with a range of bloom colors, including reds, pinks, and purples, as well as the classic 'White-Sweet Smelling' and the uncommon shades of 'Tall Lime Green' and 'Bingerdon Brown.' Low-growing hybrids like 'Perfume Deep Purple' or 'Tinkerbelle' are nice for edging or low borders. But for a really big impact, you can plant a group of 'White Sweet Smelling' or another tall billowy heirloom in masses near a walkway or patio that will be used at night. The sweet scent will drift on the night breeze and the pale star-shaped blooms shine in the summer moonlight. We have a small [Nicotiana poster](#) with photos available on our website.



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