

HIT:

HOUSE, INTERIOR, AND TROPICAL PLANTS SUBVOLUME COLEUS

by
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of Cultivar.org



hit_cole89.pdf - February 13, 2011, derived from the earlier NOS Coleus Gallery and much expanded.

hit_cole89.pdf - October 9, 2013. Updated with new photos, new history.

COLEUS

including cultivars of

C. blumei (C. scutellarioides in part)

C. rehneltianus (C. pumilis)

C. x hybridus

Sometimes lumped broadly into

SOLENOSTEMON SCUTELLARIOIDES

I will not fault some authors and growers from going with the newest, trendy name of Solenostemon for Garden Coleus; but I wonder one thing? Why don't they accept the rest of new taxonomy associated with the mints that makes about as effective a case? Why go with one rename and not the forty others which affect our garden plants? I think it stems (at least in part) from the "one up" game that so many horticultural pseudo-gurus play among themselves and the general design and gardening public. "Haven't you heard? That's the old name...the correct name (which makes me better than you)...is XYZ." How silly and petty for all these early adopters of the preliminary and oft shallow work of overly ambitious taxonomists; who try to "one up" their colleagues for similar reasons. Ask one of these early adopters of radical nomenclatural systems the scientific basis for these changes and they'll fumble about for five minutes or quickly find a reason to change the subject. Don't try to "one up" us folks unless you know why and can be very, very convincing.

Now that I have said these persons need to learn the pivotal facts and be convincing, I am now obliged to say "why not" and give you a convincing case:

- Solenostemon scutellarioides is not even a synonym of Coleus blumei on which our garden taxa are based. Solenostemon blumei is still a valid name if one wants to change genera.
- Solenostemon scutellarioides as a name dates from only 1975 - did all those hundreds of earlier botanists really get this widely grown and studied species so wrong? Very doubtful. Very seldom does one modern botanist come to a truth so convincing and dramatic he trumps all the great scholars in decades before him. In this case...case not closed or even close.
- Kew Botanists in their World Checklist say the species belong to Plectranthus with this as the accepted name: Plectranthus scutellarioides (L.) R.Br., Prodr.: 506 (1810). There is just as much as case for this group of plants being part of Plectranthus as much as Solenostemon. In fact a number of leading mint taxonomists reject Solenostemon as not being useful for anything. Some want modern Plectranthus and Coleus merged while others split the traditional groups in other ways. I suspect in a few decades all of these gardens items (Coleus to Swedish Ivy) will be mere subgenera under Plectranthus.
- Our garden Coleus have long been considered Coleus x hybridus, acknowledging and celebrating their parentage from several species. Even if one accepts Solenostemon as the correct genus, the garden coleus would come from several of the species and not simply from S. scutellarioides or S. blumei. We know that the trailing species Coleus rehneltianus is a parent of the low, trailing, smaller-leaved cultivars. That species remains with Coleus (or Plectranthus) and has no Solenostemon transfer! This means our modern Coleus are perhaps in theory crosses of S. scutellarioides, S. blumei, and Coleus rehneltianus - thus a possible bigeneric product! All this diversity under one species name? I think not! There is no way to keep all this material under ones species in any genus. Only fools will try to stuff all this genetics into one easy, 1975 name.

We also recommend heavy use of the www.coleusfinder.org with it's 1433 named cultivars and over 1100 photos (accessed most recently January 5, 2011, no updates listed since 2008). Photos links are sadly gone but there is much to learn as we browse that portal in October 2013. Source links are abundant there, some good, others long gone. This is a perfect example of web technology added to a very devoted fan, giving us something unique and valuable in the world of ornamental plants. High praise and kudos a plenty go to it's author Wouter Addink.

For those of you who love odd yet pretty plants, the recent work of Dr. Bors at the University of Saskatchewan will surely interest:

- <http://www.coleusfinder.org/saskatchewan.php>
- <http://www.usask.ca/agriculture/plantsci/coleus/>

There are several good printed references too and these are:

- Boye, Charles L. 1937. A genetic study of C. blumei Bentham. The Ohio State Univ. 60 pages. (I have not seen it or found a copy, but sounds interesting)
- Graf, A.B. 1979. Exotica III. Roehrs Co. (The ultimate guide to tropical and interior plants, only barely updated by our current work and mine much in the vast shadow of this horticultural masterpiece. His Coleus plates are B&W but diagnostic for shape

and pattern, the descriptions very detailed and useful. Generally only libraries and professors manage to pony up the \$120-300 asked for this in the various editions. I was happy to find a nearly perfect used copy of III for \$22.00 plus shipping so do some online shopping)

- Rogers, Ray and R. Hartlage. 2008. *Coleus: rainbow foliage for containers and gardens*. Timber Press.
- Pedley, R. and K. Pedley. 1974. *Coleus: a guide to cultivation and identification*.
- Stout, A.B. 1915. *The establishment of varieties in Coleus by the selection of somatic variations*. Carnegie Institution Pub. No. 218. 80 pages. (this document is available free for full view at Google Books)

Three plates of leaves from Stout's pioneering work were sampled and are provided below.



THE EARLY CULTIVARS (1826-1930)

The early *Coleus* mostly derive from *C. blumei* although other species names were used for things that amounted to clones or strains. As with genera like *Codiaeum*, *Chamaecyparis*, *Prunus*, and *Cordyline*, a good many colorful and pretty clones were introduced from the gardens of far off lands and immediately considered "species" of distinct character. Noted nurseryman applied their names, Veitch I think holding the record for their own prized material in scores of genera. Botanists eventually figured out there were decades if not centuries of horticultural selection at work and proceeded to lump all the nursery names from Europe into broad species. When a species is first introduced from gardens in myriad showy forms and not from the wild, a great deal of chaos and botanical frustration will appear.

Coleus blumei came to Europe from Java about 1830. *Coleus rehneltianus* (*C. pumilis* in part) are clearly evident in some foliage patterns, habits, and leaf shapes. In the original form of *C. blumei* it was basically reddish-purple in the center, a chartreuse to green margin, and some purple spots to various degrees. The incised or fimbriate types appears soon with 'Pectinatus' and 'Laciniatus' being very early selections. The early selection from Java called 'Verschaffeltii' was once considered a species but it quickly become evidence it was only a more incised, red-centered version of *C. blumei*. *Coleus rehneltianus* added a trailing and sometimes dwarf, rounded habit, some of it's selections have very small, wide, almost rounded leaves. *C. scutelerioides* is generally lumped with *C. blumei* (since Siebert and Voss of 1896) and experts argue on the best name as well as the name of the genus. Together the two specie's crossed offspring are called *Coleus x hybridus* in the modern form. Many of the old forms can be assigned directly to species.

Those of you with some botanical knowledge of the genus will quickly ask this: didn't Bentham name both *C. blumei* and *C. scutelerioides*? And how could such a scholar of mints make a mistake or was a very narrow splitter? Firstly, *C. scutelerioides* of Blume is *C. blumei*. Bentham was unclear on the correct use of *C. blumei* noting "it is probably a new species allied to *C. secundiflorus*" and quoting Blume in describing the foliage as boldly spotted in purple. Since he also placed *C. laciniatus* Blume (our *C. blumei* 'Laciniatus') with *C. secundiflorus*, that species bears scrutiny from his work. Unfortunately I do not have a full set of flowers before me so I cannot determine how our modern material relates to any key. I would challenge someone to key out a modern cultivar or two with Bentham's key and figure where they lie in his system. Some persons toss out *C. scutelerioides*

altogether as it is based on the rather vague, confused items *Ocimum scutellaroides* L. and *Plectranthus scutellarioides*. I am comfortable with *C. blumei*

There are many ads in garden magazine featuring new cultivars. One of the more interesting if from David Little of Plattsburg NY in *Gardener's Monthly* (Meehan) of 1876. This will tell you how popular the genus was then.

THE HORTICULTURAL ADVERTISER. 15

10,000 NEW FANCY COLEUS FOR SALE.

In STRONG PLANTS of the following sorts, from 2¼ to 3¼-in. pots.

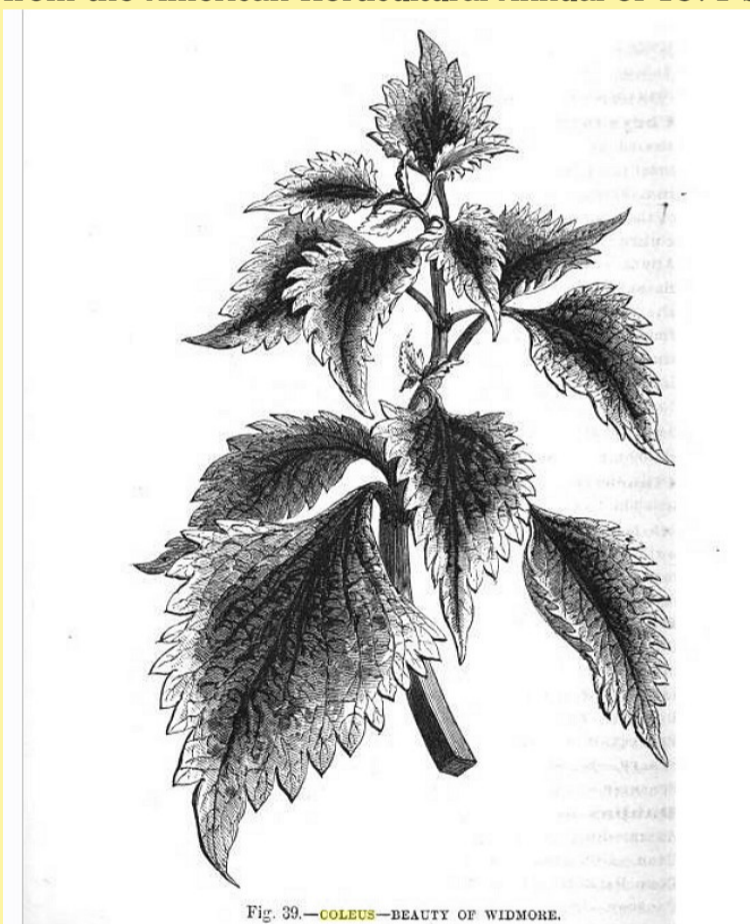
Eclipse, Hiawatha, Oriole, Princeps, Excelstor, Bijou, Fairy, Golden Pheasant, Illuminator, Charm, Idyl, Parroquet, Seraph, Asa Gray, Miss Ratta Kirkpatrick, Speciosa, Red Cloud, Tesselata, Thos. Meehan, Mrs. E. B. Cooper, Marvellous, Amabilis, Dr. Jos. Hooker, Pharo, Zephyra, Burning Bush, Cloth of Gold, Firefly, Glory of Autumn, Lord Oxford, Meteor, Mrs. Wm. Barr, Mrs. Shuster, Spotted Gem, Starlight, Sunbeam, Zebra, Golden Fleece, Burkell, Daisy, Judy, Gracellima, Puck, Fawn, Punch, Charter Oak, Ornatus.

47 varieties of the above New Coleus for \$2.00 or \$3.00 per hundred.

DAVID LITTLE & CO., Plattsburg, N. Y.

Prior to showing photos of the most interesting modern material, I want to review the historical context for them, covering the earliest material to show how far we have come - or not. Some of the early clones and strains (many crossed from Bause c. 1869) are the following:

- 'Acis' - crimson, tinged carmine, gold edge. Bef. 1874
- 'Acme' - dark chocolate with creamy white by one report, another says "pure gold-color veined with crimson". US bef. 1907
- 'Alarm' - bef. 1891
- 'Albert Victor' - center bronze-red to purplish-red, wide gold to yellow margin, extreme bit of margin thinly lined red. US c. 1869
- 'Asa Gray' - Oranish-red, violet veins and center, margins and some spots in green. Bef. 1891, obviously named for the famous American botanist.
- 'Atropurpureus' - nearly all purplish-red over entire blade. Europe bef. 1879.
- 'Attraction' - "pea green" mottled brown. 1874.
- 'Aurora' - bef. 1880
- 'Batemannii' ('Verschaffeltii' x 'Gibsonii') - frilled, dark purple above and above, slightly mottled green, much like a more incised 'Ruckeri'. Bause of the RHS Chiswick c. 1867 as hybrid.
- 'Baroness de Rothschild' - center bronze-red, gold margin, a bit darker in color and larger in blade than 'Albert Victor'
- 'Bausei' ('Verschaffeltii' x 'Veitchii') - frilled blade, center velvety chocolate-purple, green at the base and thin green margins
- 'Beauty of St. Johns Wood' - compact, rich crimson with golden-yellow edge. Bef. 1876.
- 'Beauty of Widmore' - olive green, tinged pink, center chocolate-brown by some reports, near white margins contrasting strongly, "silvery variegation" by one report, the colors compared to silver zonal Pelargonium for effect. Bef. 1874. This plate from the *American Horticultural Annual* of 1871 shows the color and margin patterns even if not in color.



- 'Beckwith's Gem' - dark maroon in center (about 30%), some red, green inner ring (20%), edged light creamy-yellow, very variable with culture, light, age, etc. It still survives today. Sold in US c. 1908 but likely known much before in Europe. I have found listings of it from 1897. It is sold in 2013.
- 'Beppo' - bright golden-yellow, reddish-purple in center
- 'Berkleyi' ('Verschaffeltii' x 'Veitchii') - rich velvety chocolate-purple, tips and teeth green, flat wide blade. Bause hybrid c. 1867
- 'Bijou' - crimson, tinged chocolate, margin in bright green.
- 'Bizarre' - crimson, edged gold and green tones. Bef. 1907.
- 'Black Prince' - near blackish-red from before 1886
- 'Blumei' (that is, *C. blumei* 'Blumei', typical original strain and later as clones of one specific group of traits) - 12-16 in. tall, oval, deeply incised to coarsely toothed, center rich reddish-purple, margin and inner ring yellowish-green, some purple maculations (spots) over the blade. Flowers white tinged purple. Not all strains and forms of the species are of these exact traits, so 'Blumei' is not typical of the species in gardens nor likely the wild either. Other early seedlings and strains were much more intense in the central coloration and apparently varied in the the margination patterns as well. 'Verschaffeltii' from 1860 proved that 'Blumei' or the original strain was not typical of all material grown in it's native country.
- 'Brilliant' - bronzy-crimson, wide golden margin. Bef. 1874
- 'Burkii' - c. 1881
- 'Buttercup' - an ad from Florist and Nursery Exchange of 1889 follows.

FOR SALE

New Coleus Buttercup.

THE best yellow bedding Coleus, more hardy than Golden Boder; flowers grow like Verschaffeltii, \$1.00 per doz.; \$6.00 per 100.

Can accept Orders to March 25, for 10 000.

BRACE WILDER GARDENS -

Boxed Cuttings, at \$12 per 100 for April delivery.

Can accept Orders to March 25, for 10 000.
GRACE WILDER GARNATIONS—
 Boston Cultivar, at \$12 per 100 for April delivery.
 2000 **Purita Scarlet**, same time and price, in
 lots of 500 or more in one order.
AZALEA—Fine bushy hedges, 8 to 10 inches
 diameter, well set with buds, 12 for \$4.25;
 25 for \$9.00; 50 for \$18.00. All colors,
 named varieties.
HYDRANGEA—Doubtless, Thomas Mogg, 4 inch
 pots, 12 for \$1.25; \$9.00 per 100. Fine plants,
 best strains of Seed for Florist and Market
 Gardeners. Large catalogue free.
G. E. ALLEN, Seedsman & Florist,
 Braintreeboro, Vermont.
 WHEN WRITING MENTION THE FLOWER EXCHANGER

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- 'Butterfly' - Old gold with green edges. before 1880, one clone at least from W. Bull.
- 'Candollei' - rich brownish-red in the full, flat and horizontal blade. 1874.
- 'Carnivale' ('Carnival' in part) - bef. 1891
- 'Chameleon' (c. 1875), 'Chameleon Improved' (c. 1880) - "velvety maroon flushed with bright rose, giving a kind of shot-crimson hue", green margins, some blades half red and half green down the midrib or sectored in various ways, streaked and flushed, very variable as the name implies. Original intro. by H. Cannell c. 1875
- 'Charm' - mix of yellow, scarlet, and bronze, base color being yellow with tints of bronzish-red and dark brown stains, margins green, deeply serrate.
- 'Chelsea Beauty' - bef. 1880
- 'Clarkei' ('Verschaffeltii' x 'Gibsonii') - frilled leaf, green above, teeth margined purple, dark purple veined below (showing through), giving a richly veined and marked surface, heavily reticulated look
- 'Charles Darwin' - "veined and mottled with pink, sulphur, and olive green" (Dreer ad)
- 'Climax' - dark maroon center, bright and wide green margin, crimson veins.
- 'Cloth of Gold' - US bef. 1881
- 'Distinction' - Habit compact, neat, "sturdy". Leaves mostly dark, velvety maroon, said to be darker than any other known variety of the time. RHS AM 1892. Or: J.A. Morris, Acton, England, 1892.
- 'Dixii' ('Verschaffeltii' x 'Veitchii') - dark chocolate-purple center, wide bright green margin up to an inch wide, teeth edged purple at times, flat wide leaf
- 'Dr. Gross' - see 'Nellie Grant'
- 'Dr. Joe Hooker' - dark crimson-red, dark brown tints, dark and very thin green margin.
- 'Duchess of Edinburgh' - an American creation despite the name, perhaps the USA's first named clone(?), flat blade, margins crenate, carmine-purple with yellow edges, improved over 'Queen Victoria'. Offered by Messrs. Carter 1875.
- 'Duchess of Teck' - purplish-crimson center, wide yellowish margin. Bef. 1879.
- 'Eclat' - bronzy-crimson, margined gold. Bef. 1874.
- 'Eclipse' - scarlet-red, brown shadings, yellow-green edges, serrate.
- 'Emperor Napoleon' - reportedly a cross of 'Berkleyi' x *Plectranthus fruticosus*, not a very likely of this parentage, offered in 1871 by Messrs. E.G. Henderson and likely a pure *Coleus*.
- 'Empress' - a hybrid of 'Verschaffeltii' x 'Veitchii' from Mr. Bull said to be superior to the much hyped, RHS Bause hybrids of the time. This clone was of frilled, large teeth, crimson-brown in the center, "toned down by the rich colour of *Coleus Veitchii*".
- 'Empress of India' - described as dwarf, dark "brick red", developing orange and purple hues, thin pale yellow margin. c. 1881, offered by Sanders and Co.
- 'Excellent' - dark maroon with fine green reticulations. 1874.
- 'Fairy' - yellow and green, marked scarlet-red
- 'Fascination' - c. 1881
- 'Firebrand' - maroon with red tones, more fiery-red indoors and with shade, tending to wash out in sub, never as dark as when shaded. Bef. 1907.
- 'Firecrest' - bright crimson, edge of golden-yellow. Bef. 1907
- 'Firefly' - before 1880
- Frilled-leaved Group ('Verschaffeltii' x 'Veitchii') - this name is based on "Frilled-leaved Series" of Rand in *Popular Flowers* (1874), "leaves of a rich velvety chocolate purple, greenish towards the base and at the extreme margin. A fine, distinct-looking plant, richly colored, the dark color nicely relieved by the slight green margin, which lightens up the entire plant".
- 'Garnet' ('Garnett') - c. 1881
- 'Gem' - rich dark brown, margined and reticulated with green. 1874.
- 'Gibsonii' - an old variety from New Caledonia imported by Veitch c. 1863-65, not fully known, generally light green with venation, blotches, and zones of light crimson and purple. Probably one of the first three strains known in the UK along with 'Veitchii' and 'Verschaffeltii'. It was considered "not very handsome" compared to the other two but Bause used it to breed some of his superior RHS hybrids.
- 'Gloire de Dijon' dates to before 1888, it was variably colored, quite colorful.
- 'Glory of Autumn' - striped mix of orange, yellow, red, and maroon shades. From Peter Henderson, NJ c. 1876.
- 'Glow' - before 1880
- 'Glow Worm' ('Glowworm') - claret-crimson, sharply defined green margin. 1874.'George Bunyard' - bright crimson red, wide bronze and green edge. From Veitch, shown 1878.
- 'Golden Beauty' - dark crimson, gold margin, edge undulate and fringed. Bef. 1874.
- 'Golden Bedder' - as grown today: narrowly ovate leaves in greenish-yellow, more lime if shaded. It is still offered under this name. A popular choice for bedding with 'Verschaffeltii', giving rich gold and maroon tones for contrast. Together with 'Telfordii', among the two earliest gold cultivars. Said to be a sport of 'The Shah' by Richard Johnston, gardener to Mr. Bowie Dash, NY.
- 'Golden Fleece' - bef. 1891
- 'Golden Gem' - compact, mostly gold overall with some red, handling sun very well.
- 'Golden Pheasant' - sulfur yellow, marked crimson, scarlet, and green.
- 'Golden Verschaffeltii' (old name mixing Latin and English, grandfathered in) - margins coarsely toothed as 'Verschaffeltii' but blade clear, bright yellow.
- 'Harlequin' - before 1880
- 'Harry Harold' - US in. 1888
- 'Her Majesty' - very wide ovate blade, bronze-red center, chartreuse edge. 1874.
- 'Hero' - mostly dark chocolate-maroon, could appear near black in the right dark conditions.
- 'Hespertus' - yellow, spotted green and bronzy-crimson, serrate.
- 'Hiawatha' - orange, yellow, and crimson blend, flamed with crimson, serrate.
- 'Illuminator' - yellow with slames and veins of crimson-red, margined in bright green.
- 'James Barnshaw' - marbled crimson, green, and yellow. Bef. 1907.
- 'John Goode' ('J. Goode', Mr. J. Goode', 'Goode', 'Chicago Bedder') - US trade 1887, or: Mr. John Goode, Hyde Park, IL USA. The following add appeared in *American Florist* 2": 394 (1887)

HILLEGOM, NEAR HARELEM, HOLLAND.



New Yellow Coleus, J. Goode.
READY FOR SHIPMENT APRIL 1.

This superb yellow coleus originated with that thorough and veteran plantsman, Mr. John Goode, of Hyde Park, Ill., who first sent out double sweet alyssum, Ralph and Fanny geraniums, and other plants of merit. The plant is really a yellow *Verschaffeltii* (though not a sport from that) being a strong grower, with large, deeply toothed and crimped bright yellow foliage. We deem it superior to any yellow in existence, holding its color throughout the season, and standing the sun well.

PRICE.
 2½ inch Plants, 4 to 5 inches high, well rooted,
PER DOZ., \$3.00; 25 FOR \$5.00; 50 FOR \$10.00.

We control the entire stock, which is limited.

Mr. F. Kanst, chief gardener at the South Parks, Chicago, says: "It is the best variety I ever handled in my 13 years' experience in the South Park. I have discarded all other yellows in preference to it, and cannot say too much in its praise for garden decorations."

J. C. VAUGHAN,
 42 La Salle St., CHICAGO.

'Kentish Flame' - centered bright red, margins greener, reticulated red on the edge, overlap area dark, brownish, margins boldly incised and fringed. From about 1878, B.S. Williams Plate from Weiner Illus. shown below.



- 'Kilpatrick' = 'Miss Retta Kilpatrick'
- 'Lady Burrell' - basal half deep crimson-maroon, upper half golden-yellow, the demarkation sharp as if painted. Mr. Cannell 1874.
- 'Laciniatus' (sometimes spelled 'Lascinatus') - "deeply cut or fringed", green and bronze. Hovey offered in US in 1866 but it was seen in Europe by at least the 1840's. It is likely the same as *Plectranthus laciniatus* Blume of 1826, making it one of the first named leaf shape varieties if not the very first. In the words of Charles Dickens in *Household Words* it "looks as if every one of its leaves had been bitten and torn by a savage dog". It came from Java and experts quickly decided it was a variant from *C. blumei* also found there.
- 'Lamontii' (*C. lamonti*) - said to be like *C. blumei*, roughly 'Blumei' are described here but "a little greener in the leaf" (Thomson and Dean, *The Gardener* 1870), meaning by other reports a wider green edge. An ad in *The Cultivator and Country Gentleman* 1866 says "New *Coleus Lamontii* - very beautiful..bright green, with a distinct crimson purple mark in the center of each leaf", offered there by R. Buist of Philadelphia. It sported to 'Beauty of Widmore'.
- 'Lemon Fleece' - lemon yellow above, pinkish-purple below. Europe bef. 1879.
- 'Lord Falmouth' - c. 1881
- 'M.J. Linden' - c. 1881
- 'Majesticus' ex King - leaf large, tapering to a sharp apex, bright crimson, yellow margins. Bef. 1879.
- 'Major' - a brightly red-marked clone similar to 'Verschaffeltii'
- 'Marmoratus' - very dark metallic purple, given the name it must be spotted in some manner. Offered by Hovey & Co. in the US in 1866, perhaps as old as 1864. Hovey's ad is shown below.

Advertising Sheet of the Mag. of Horticulture. 5

New Plants for 1866.
HOVEY & CO.

HAVE THE PLEASURE OF OFFERING THE FOLLOWING NEW

Bedding Plants for the Spring of 1866.

Iresine Herbstii, a new-foliaged plant, with deep crimson leaves, more beautiful than *Coleus Verschaffeltii*. \$1 each; \$8 per doz.

Coleus marmoratus, a very dark-foliaged variety, with leaves of a purple metallic lustre, very distinct and fine. 50 cents each; \$4 per dozen.

Coleus Lasciniatus, green and bronze color, the leaves deeply cut or fringed. 50 cts. each; \$4 per doz.

- 'Marshallii' ('Verschaffeltii' x 'Veitchii') - rich chocolate-purple, base at midrib green, teeth green and sometimes a thin margin of green, more of a green edge than 'Berkleyi', flat leaf Bause hybrid. RHS FCC 1868.
- 'Maude' - light yellow, irregular spots and stripes of crimson and green. Bef. 1879.
- 'Marvelous' - mix of crimson, brown, and gold.
- 'Miss Retta Kilpatrick' - large blade, green, center marked in pure ivory white, used to contrast with dark red cultivars. US bef. 1881
- 'Miss Wilson' - pink, creamy-white zone, veined light pink, margin finely serrulate.
- 'Model' - pinkish-bronze, thin golden edge. Bef. 1874.
- 'Mrs. Bauman' - before 1880
- 'Mrs. Bell' - before 1880
- 'Mrs. Garfield' - red center, narrower green margin than 'Climax' but otherwise similar to it, the center center also a shade or two paler.
- 'Mrs. Glass' - before 1880
- 'Mrs. Schiermann' - before 1880
- 'Mrs. Schultz' - base golden-yellow, scarlet and carmine zones on it.
- 'Mrs. Stuart' - before 1880
- 'Multicolor' - bold mix of orange, green, yellow, and other stripes and blotches.
- 'Mulitcolor Splendens' - bef. 1891

• 'Murrayi' ('Verschaffeltii' x 'Gibsonii') - green, pinnately veined and barred in dark purple, improved over original 'Gibsonii'. The plate from Shirley Hibberd's 1870 masterpiece on rare plant shows three varieties, adding 'Marshallii' and 'Telfordii'



• 'Nellie Grant' ('Dr. Gross')- Vigorous. Leaves rich crimson much as 'Queen Victoria' but a wider yellow margin. see release notice below from Meehan's Gardener's Monthly of 1874:

SCRAPS AND

COLEUS "NELLIE GRANT," OR DR. GROSS. G
 --In reference to a paragraph in the last issue of U
 the *Gardener's Monthly*, we have the following: U
 "In regard to the Coleus, called by us the H
 Nellie Grant, we never claimed to have origi- H
 nated it, as we never recollect to have grown A
 a seedling Coleus at our establishment. Several a:
 parties claim its origin; one a respectable s:
 gardener to a gentleman in this neighborhood, w
 grown by him from seed, and amongst other a:
 Coleus cuttings given to our Mr. Miller last w
 spring,—this was included. Another, a florist j:
 of character in our city, who, for several years, er
 grow a great variety of beautiful seedlings, tt
 claims it as identical with a seedling grown by
 him several years ago. Another, a firm of stand-
 ing in Pittsburgh, claims, by an advertisement n
 last month, to have sent it out some two years el
 ago, giving it the name of Dr. Gross. Still, fe
 another young man, in our employment, now et
 claims to have originated it when employed by a
 Pittsburgh house some two years ago, grown by tt
 him from a sport of Queen Victoria, and that he
 introduced two plants of it in our collection un- li
 named; and if so, certainly unauthorized and as
 unknown to us. It is improbable that all the in
 above named are the originators; and, therefore, a:
 one only of them, or some other person must ke
 have been. One thing is certain, it appeared in pe
 our collection last summer *unnamed*; and when
 growing, attracted our attention as an acqui- pe
 sition to this favorite bedding plant, being quite if
 distinct from any variety we had seen. Believ- w
 ing it to be entirely new, and never recollecting w
 to have seen or heard of one called Dr. Gross, or w
 any other named one answering its description, in
 we were led from its attractive appearance to th
 grow specimens, and show them at the Pennsylv- W
 ania and Germantown Horticultural Exhibi- m
 tions; and for want of a better, we applied the to
 popular name of Miss Nellie Grant. Had we fo
 known it by the name of Dr. Gross, (plants w
 of which to this day we have never seen) or any fo
 other, we should certainly have so called it. w
 "Yours very truly, fo
 "MILLER & HAYES, gr
 "Mount Airy Nurseries, Phila." th

• 'Nonesuch' - US in. 1888

• 'Oriole' - "yellow and green, maculated with various tints of carmine, crimson, and chocolate, yellow, or green, serrated margin" (Dreer ad)

• 'Parroquet' - yellow with green and red spots

• 'Pectinatus' - one of the first named cultivars, predating 'Verschaffeltii' even, mentioned in the early 1850's, as having richer colors, blades more deeply cut and lobed. Joseph Harrison (1856) in *The Floricultural Cabinet* described it as "streak and mottled with brown and jagged leaves". It is very likely a parent of the fimbriate types found today or at least having similar genes to produce this effect.

• 'Perfection' - mostly bronze-purple, spotted and reticulated in green. 1874.

• 'Pictus' - an old name, variously used it seems. Perhaps based on *V. pictus* of William Bull 1877, leaves striped various colors, base green, splashed and stripped brown, some yellow, orange, pink, scarlet, and purple markings too, said to be "bizarre and very strange" for the time.

○ 'Pictus' [incised variant] - this variant was also boldly marked in many colors but not crenate-serrate as typical 'Pictus', instead deeply incised and fringed.

• 'Pine Apple Beauty' - US bef. 1881. Unclear if related to 'Pineapple' of the modern trade.

• 'Princes' - US bef. 1876. The following Dreer add on Coleus is one of the most impressive and detailed of the entire 19th century. It is from the *Horticultural Advisor* in *Gardener's Monthly* of 1876. This is a very valuable document on the history of Coleus in America.

THE HORTICULTURAL ADVERTISER. 17

NEW COLEUS

DREER'S TRICOLOR AND QUEENSLAND SETS.

The subscribers take pleasure in offering this strain of New Hybrid Coleus, which in point of novelty, color and habit are destined to supersede the varieties now in cultivation as decorative and bedding plants. The Colored Plate shows this number of the *GARDENER'S MONTHLY* conveys in some measure the beauty of part of these varieties.

From the verdict of many of the leading florists, and the opinions of the Committees of the Cincinnati, Philadelphia and New York Horticultural Societies during the past Autumn and Winter, leave no doubt as to their value.

DREER'S SET OF TRI-COLORED COLEUS. FIFTEEN VARIETIES.

Ellipse.—Scarlet, shaded with brown, yellowish green, serrated margin.
Elanvath.—Orange, yellow and crimson, flamed with dark crimson, serrated margin.
Oriole.—Yellow and green, maculated with various tints of carmine, crimson and chocolate, yellow or green, serrated margin.
Prinocopa.—Large, serrated leaf, dark crimson stained, with rich velvety brown; greenish yellow, serrated margin.
Excoelior.—Yellow, slightly stained with green, and maculated with crimson.
Bljou.—Crimson, shaded with chocolate, bright green margin.
Quadricolor.—Variously maculated with bronzy red, yellow, dark chocolate and green, serrated edge.
Fairy.—Yellow and green, blotched with crimson scarlet.
Hesperus.—Yellow, maculated with green and bronzy crimson; serrated edge.
Gold Pheasant.—Solferino, yellow, green and crimson, mottled scarlet.
Illuminator.—Yellow flamed and veined with crimson, bright green margin.
Charm.—Yellow, tinged with bronzy scarlet, stained with dark brown; green, deeply serrated margin.
Idyl.—Veined and mottled with green and yellow, and stained with bronzy red.
Parroquet.—Yellow, maculated with crimson and green.
Seraph.—Fiery crimson, spotted with chocolate, bright green, serrated margin.

QUEENSLAND SET.—Fifteen Varieties.

Assa Gray.—Orange crimson, violet veins and centre, dark green maculation; bright green, serrated edge.
Miss Betta Kirkpatrick.—Large white centre, shaded with yellow, broad green lobed margin, large foliage.
Speciosa.—Green, with broad yellowish white central bar, resembling *Hydrangea Speciosa*.
Red Cloud.—Rich crimson, evenly maculated with blackish brown, narrow green margin.
Tenebrosa.—Evenly marbled with green and pale yellow.
Thos. Meehan.—Dark carmine shaded with brown, green margin; a new type with oak-leaf shaped foliage.
Mrs. E. B. Cooper.—Rich purplish crimson, maculated with purplish brown, olive green margin.
Marvellous.—Brilliant crimson, marbled with yellow and intense brown.
Dr. Jos. Hooker.—Dark crimson, stained with dark brown, very narrow dark green margin.
Onas. Daryin.—Veined and mottled with pink, sulphur and olive green.
Bencon.—Blackish purple with brown and bright crimson mid-rib and veins, large broad foliage.
Zephyr.—Rich bronzy crimson, slightly marbled with dark olive green; violet purple veins, broad foliage.
Amabilis.—Broad light green foliage, with pale sulphur mid-rib and veins, stained with pink.
Pharo.—Rich crimson scarlet mottled with yellow; blackish toothed margin.
Superbissima.—Blackish maroon, with a brilliant broad purple band through the centre of the leaf.

QUEENSLAND SET OF DWARF VARIETIES. TEN VARIETIES.

Daisy.—Orange red, brown and olive green, deeply lacinated foliage.
Judy.—Pale green and white mottled, green margin.
Gracillima.—Crimson centre, surrounded with chocolate spots; broad green margin.
Puck.—Pale buff, tipped with green, carmine stems and leaf stalks.
Fawn.—Buff marbled with green, leaves purplish underneath.
Funob.—Green marbled with yellow, purple stalk and mid-ribs.
Charter Oak.—Deeply serrated, oak-leaf foliage, mottled with various shades of green and white.
Buttercup.—Marbled with bright green, mottled and marked centrally with pure yellow spots.
Gem.—Carmine centre, broad green margin, maculated with yellow.
Ornatus.—Central part of the leaf pale yellow, changing to white, broad light green margin.

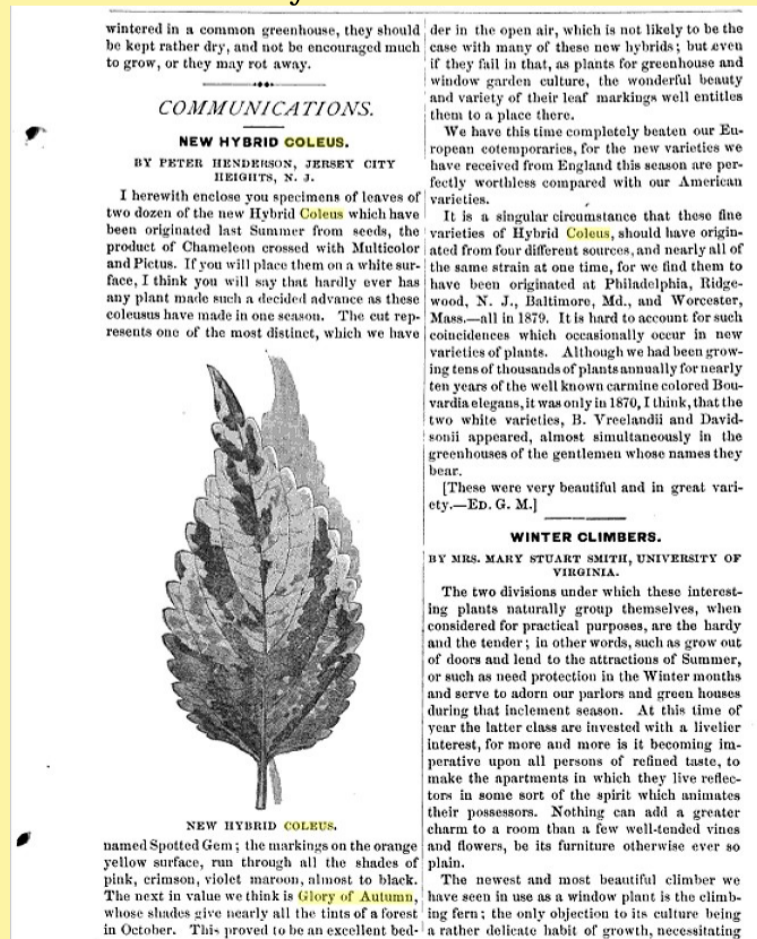
Plants are now ready for delivery, well established, at the following rates: Each \$1.00. 2 Sets of 15 var. \$12.00. *each*
 Dwarf sets of 10 var. \$6.00. Subject to the Trade Discount. Orders received and filled from the Horticultural Establishments of

WILLIAM C. WILSON, No. 45 West 14th Street, New York, N. Y.
 JOHN DICK, 53rd & Darby Road Philadelphia.
 HENRY A. DREER, No. 714 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

• 'Prince Albert Victor' - chartreuse with dark purple reticulations. The plate of it below is from The Floral Magazine of 1869. If this does not remind you of the modern 'Fishnet Stockings'...



- 'Princess Beatrice' - golden-green center, veined and marked red, edge also in crimson. US c. 1869
- 'Princess Louise' - reddish-bronze, light yellow margin. Bef. 1874.
- 'Princess Royal' - reddish-bronze center, light yellow margin. 1874.
- 'Princess of Wales' - shown at Maidstone c. 1869, similar to 'Princess Beatrice'
- 'Progress' - green base color, liberally splashed in yellow, red, purple, and maroon. Bef. 1891
- 'Purple Prince' - Rich dark purplish-maroon, veined red. US in. 1888
- 'Queen of the Lawn' - a bedding variety c. 1875
- 'Queen Victoria' - Vigorous form. Reddish-purple, thin edge chartreuse to yellow. Proven durable outdoors and handling British sun at least. One generally does not want to describe Victorian royalty as "a good bedder and quite easy" but this Coleus surely was. Nathan Cole in The Royal parks and gardens of London (1877) described this clone as "can be planted without fear of it's not growing well", an issue with some new cultivars that were only proven in greenhouses.
- 'Red Cloud' - bronzish-orange, sulphur yellow margin.
- 'Reevesii' ('Verschaffeltii' x 'Blumei') - frilled leaf, green mottled bronze and purple, lightly dotted these colors at the base, many "close reticulations and patches" at the margin, the center very dark colored, teeth green with thin purple margins to them. Another Bause/RHS Chiswick hybrid.
- 'Royal Princess' - reddish-bronze center, margins in light yellow. Bef. 1872.
- 'Rubra' ex King - rich reddish-purple, no flecking.
- 'Ruckeri' ('Verschaffeltii' x 'Gibsonii') - dark purple above and below, said to be more sturdy, and something like Perilla frutescens in it's purple form 'Nankinensis'. Bause cross
- 'Saundersii' ('Verschaffeltii' x 'Veitchii') - rich deep chocolate-purple in center, much of that area mottled, light bronze near margins, wide edge of green with purplish-bronze veins in that area. Bause hybrid.
- 'Salute' - bluish-green, big network of purple veins and marks. 1874
- 'Scottii' ('Verschaffeltii' x 'Gibsonii') - bright green with many dark purple veins, these fusing into some blotches, essentially purple with green windows or zones
- 'Seraph' - light crimson-red, some chocolate with green, various patterns.
- 'Serratus' ('Serrata', C. serratus?) - boldly serrate, maroon or dark red, narrow yellowish-green edge, deeply serrate.
- 'Setting Sun' - bronze-red center, bright gold margins. 1874
- 'Seventy-six' - orangish-yellow above, purplish below. About 1880.
- 'Shy Lock' - an old variety mentioned by the USDA Bureau of Entomology in 1901 as one treated for mealy bugs
- 'Spangle' - rich green, numerous crimson-red veins. 1874.
- 'Spotted Beauty' - bef. 1891
- 'Spotted Gem' - spots and flecks and stripes of green, yellow, red, near black, and maroon. US bef. 1876, base color orangish-yellow. apparently from Henderson of NJ as hybrid involving 'Chameleon', 'Pictus', and 'Multicolor'. This article from Meehan's Gardener's Monthly vol. 22 introduces this clone with a plate.



- 'Starlight' - leave bright rose pink, fine margins or tips of yellow, undulate. Bef. 1879.
- 'Sultana' - bef. 1891, cultivated in San Francisco Parks in 1893.
- 'Sunbeam' - The following introduction is from American Florist 4: 242 (1899).

NEW BEDDING COLEUS "SUNBEAM."

Bright dazzling pinkish scarlet, edged yellow; medium height; stout jointed, and close blanching. Selected from a large collection of seedlings of 1888. A clump of 25 plants the past season grown with all the old bedding varieties and most of the new, arrested the attention of all who saw it; and the universal verdict was the "brightest and most effective bedder of all." Somewhat dull in winter but all summer brighter than "Queen Victoria," and not stiff and coarse like that variety. Every florist should try it. One plant 25c., 3 for 50c., 8 for \$1. free by mail. Rooted Cuttings of Golden Bedder, Verschaffeltii, Firebrand, J. Goode and 25 other varieties—bedding and fancy—\$1.25 per 100 by mail, \$1.50 by express. Cilia Lilies, 20 for \$1.00; \$4.50 per 100 by mail, \$4.00 by express. Address with Registered letter, R. W. HARGADINE, Felton, Delaware.

- 'Surprise' - rich velvety bronze, sharply define green margin. 1874.
- 'Telfordii' ('Telfordii Aureus', 'Aurea') - blade ovate, apex acuminate, margins deeply serrate, light golden-yellow with small crimson markings in the center. RHS Second Class Certif. 1868. It came as a sport from Mr. McPhail, gardener to Mr. C. Telford of Bromley, England. The familiar, basic *C. blumei* was green marked red and this sport was one where "green is exchanged for a decided yellow tint like the so-called golden-leaved Pelargonium". Offered by J.W. Wimsett 1868. In their advertisements the name "Telfordii (Aurea)" is used so we have gone with the shorter version. It was heralded as "The New Golden Coleus", a sport of common *C. blumei*. By some reports it was rather difficult to grown, especially in cool climates or coldish greenhouses. The following ad from J.W. Wimsett introduces several of the important early clones in the Journal of Horticulture of 1868.

ROYAL EXOTIC NURSERY, CHELSEA, S.W.

SPLENDID NEW HYBRID COLEUS.

RAISED BY THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.

J. W. WIMSETT

Has much pleasure in announcing that he has secured

TWO OF THE MOST DISTINCT AND BEAUTIFUL VARIETIES,

RAISED BY M. BAUSE, OF THE CHISWICK HORTICULTURAL GARDENS.

THE two following Varieties will prove invaluable for Bedding purposes, and will produce a grand effect in all bedding arrangements with Will's splendid Bronze and Gold Pelargoniums. The beautiful shades of green and purple in *Coleus Murrayi* will produce a splendid combination of colour when surrounded by margins of the beautiful Bronze and Gold Pelargoniums, of which Her Majesty is the type, and the rich chocolate purple of *Coleus Marshallii* will also contrast beautifully with the rich bronze and gold shades of the Pelargoniums.

C. MARSHALLII (Verschaffeltii × Veitchii).

Leaves ovate acute, crenate, rich chocolate purple, the base of the midrib and the crenatures green, so as just to form a narrow green margin. Stem green, stained with purple at the nodes. This has a more apparent green edge than *C. Berkeleyi*, and is the plane-leaved counterpart as to colouring of *C. Bausei*. Each 10s. 6d., or six for 55s.

C. MURRAYI (Verschaffeltii × Gibsonii).

Leaves ovate acute, crenate, green, pinnately marked along the principal veins with bars of dark purple, which sometimes coalesce, the rest of the surface showing through from beneath the purple reticulations, which are evenly and strongly marked on the under surface; stems purple. This is a more evenly and more fully-coloured form of *C. Gibsonii*, and therefore a great improvement on it. Each 10s. 6d., or six for 55s.

In consequence of the plants being large, and the ease and rapidity with which they can be propagated, J. W. WIMSETT will be able to supply plants of each variety by the dozen, fifty, or hundred, on the 1st of June. N.B.—All orders booked and executed in strict rotation.

ASHBURNHAM PARK NURSERY, KING'S ROAD, CHELSEA, LONDON, S.W.

COLEUS TELFORDII (AUREA).

THE BEAUTIFUL NEW GOLDEN-LEAVED COLEUS.

Leaves ovate acuminate, and deeply serrated on the edge, bright golden yellow, with crimson blotch in the centre of each leaf. The Plant has a very neat habit and moderately vigorous style of growth.

This beautiful variety will prove invaluable for cross-breeding purposes and for conservatory decoration. No collection of stove plants will be complete without it.

J. W. WIMSETT

Has much pleasure in announcing that he has secured the whole of the stock of this the most distinct and beautiful of all the varieties of *Coleus* ever offered.

This fine variety has been perpetuated by Mr. Peter McPhail in the gardens of C. Telford, Esq., of Widmore Lodge, Bromley, Kent. It is a sport from *C. Blumei*. Plants will be ready for sending out the 1st of June, and all orders will be booked in strict rotation. Each 10s. 6d., or Six for 55s.

ASHBURNHAM PARK NURSERY, KING'S ROAD, CHELSEA, LONDON, S.W.

April 29th, 1868.

- 'Tesselata' - yellow based color, apparently tessellated, having contrasting dark venation(?). US bef. 1888.
- 'The Mikado' - US in. 1888
- 'The Shah' - wide ovate leaf, small crenate teeth, upper portion (often 50%) mostly gold, lower part rich cinnamon-red, more uniform on older blades. US trade c. 1874. Said to be difficult as it did not survive sun well in bedding situations, thus preferred in some shade or in greenhouses. The following plate is from The American Agriculturist 35: 141 (1876) and based on the "half yellow, half red" rep of this cultivar, we can assume the pale gray sections are yellow and the darker ones mostly red.



GOLDEN COLEUS, "THE SHAH."

- 'Tricolor' - dark velvety maroon, crimson bright midrib, green margin, serrate. Bef. 1879.
- 'Troubadour' - wide gold edge on red.
- 'Unique' - reddish-crimson, dark golden edge. Bef. 1874.
- 'VanHoutii' - dark green, splashed and speckled crimson-red. 1874.
- 'Veitchii' - an old variety, presumably from Veitch of the UK, red-maroon center, margins bronze and light green with bronze veins. Veitch introduced it from New Caledonia about 1883, sometime after 'Verschaffeltii' was imported. It proved a weak better compared to 'Verschaffeltii' and the Bause hybrids.
- 'Velvet Mantle' - dark red, velvety. US bef. 1888, similar to 'Verschaffeltii' in the true red-centered form and not as widely seen as it.
- 'Verschaffeltii' - in the true original strain: a strong plant, leaves larger than some *C. blumei*, shape ovate-cordate, margins incise-dentate (deep coarse teeth), teeth irregular but not frilled, lobed, or deeply incised, leaf base often more cordate, center rich dark brownish-red (maroon) with chartreuse margins or teeth. Some plants may have had very little of the green or chartreuse on the edge, though it does vary widely with exposure and culture. An "improved" version was also offered and it has been the parent of many hybrids. Pretty much anything with a dark velvety red center and either green edges or teeth owes something to these genes. It could be centered blackish-purple where light permitted but was a glowing burgundy at other times. It dates from at least 1861 in England where it was shown by Mr. W. Bull at Chelsea. Others think it was first shown at the 1854 World's Fair having come there from Holland. Reports say that Verschaffelt, the noted florist firm, got it from Java about 1860 but it was at the 1st World's Fair that date should be earlier than 1854. It set seed unlike some of the earlier *C. blumei* and so it became popular on grounds of both easy propagation and the quality of its colors. It did vary a bit apparently in part on 1) the intensity and depth of the red color and 2) width of green margins or teeth. L.H. Bailey used the var. *verschaffeltii* Lem. more generally and while he noted the true leaf shape and margins of 'Verschaffeltii' he did not limit it to the distinctly red-centered variant - as clearly shown by his dark-veined illustration. Bailey even stated that it was lacinate in some forms, which is not true except for the frilled Bause hybrids of it. Indeed, this epithet has come to denote the garden taxa in general and this is unfortunate. The plate below from the Floral Magazine of 1862 is the first quality plate of it I know, a

very fine standard for it's traits.



COLEUS VERSCHAFFELTII

- Above is 'Verschaffeltii' from Breck's New Book of Flowers 1866, no color but a very detailed illustration of the pigment pattern.
- 'Wilsonii' ('Verschaffeltii' x 'Veitchii') - frilled, rich velvety chocolate tinged purple, base and teeth also purplish, nice mottled overall
- 'Yeddo' - mostly golden-yellow. Bef. 1907.
- 'Yellow Jacket' - US in. 1888

NOS CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Our classification system tested over several years and based on more than four decades of observation is as follows. The shorthand is composed of two parts:

[leaf shape/margins][leaf color pattern]

F-AP (Fimbriate-All Purple)

E/L-CC (Elongate-Lacinatus-Cream Center)

S-TC (Suborbicular-Tricolor Classic)

The **leaf shape values** are as follows (combinations possible)

- E (Elongate) - linear, elliptic, lanceolate, oblanceolate, narrowly obovate, or very narrow in outline, usually 4-8x long as wide.
- F (Fimbriate) - frilled, sharp-incised, sometimes doubly-serrate (two teeth size) or smaller teeth proliferating on larger lobes or teeth. Teeth are sharp, not generally rounded.
- L (Laciniatus) - deeply incised or lobed, cut at least 1/2 deep into the blade
- M (Macrophyllus) - extra-large blade, 7 inches or more long
- O (Oak-shaped) - shallowly lobed, the lobes rounded, not fimbriate or sharp, longer than wide.
- R (Ferny) - oak-shaped, rounded lobes but cut at least 2/3 deep into the blade, tips not sharp as Fimbriate or ragged as Laciniatus.
- S (Suborbicular)- shorted, very rounder, wide-ovate and under 1.5 in. long or otherwise much reduced and coin-like, often coarsely dentate or lobed
- T (Twisted/Fasciate) - wide, rounded fan-shaped blades, often very round and sometimes fringed or frimbriate. 'Tilit-a-whirl' is the modern standard for this group.
- V (ovate) - based oval or ovate leaf, 1-6.9 in. long
- [add your own name in text]

The **leaf color/pattern values** are as follows (combinations possible)

- AC (All Chartreuse/Lime) - 98-100% yellowish-green, chartreuse, lime, etc.
- AG (All Green) - blades 98-100% green, not distinctly flecked, veined or marked in any other color.
- AO (All Orange) - blades 98-100% orange, rose-orange, amber, brick-red or burnt-red shades
- AP (All Purple) - blades 98-100% dark purple, reddish-purple, or blackish-purple. Some of the modern ones have rich rugose textures.
- AR (All Red) - blades 98-100% red, maroon, scarlet, or crimson, not distinct or contrasting teeth as YT
- AY (All Yellow) - 98-100% gold, light lime, or yellow, not with markings of any bold or distinct color.
- CC (Cream Centered) - pale yellow to cream center or wide midrib, green margin, little or not red or orange markings.
- CPL (Chartreuse Purple Line) - chartreuse to yellowish-green, midrib usually a single thin purple to brownish-red line, sometimes the secondary veins also lined this way
- GRB (Gold/Red Backed) - yellow to golden above, mostly so, reverse distinctly red to purple in hue
- GSR (Green Striped/Spotted Red) - green to chartreuse with red to maroon stripes and spots.
- GRR (Green Reticulated/Veined Red) - green to lime with detailed (down to secondary or tertiary level) red, maroon, purple, or blackish veins. 'Fishnet Stockings' is our best modern form of this type.
- HGHR (Half Green/Half Red) - leaf towards apex red, often a dark or velvety sheen, the base with heart-shaped zone of green to chartreuse pigments or mottlings, thus red at the tip and green or yellowish in the lower half. 'The Shah' was the original of