

Eco-Friendly Native Plant of the Month

AUGUST 2017

NC NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

REEDY CREEK NATURE PRESERVE



Photos by Will Stuart, Lisa Tompkins

Lonicera sempervirens Coral Honeysuckle

Reliable Hummingbird Feeder

Are you looking for a reliable, self-filling, self-cleaning hummingbird feeder? Native Coral Honeysuckle fits the bill and offers many additional eco-benefits, often continuing to produce new flowers after the initial spring bloom. The cluster of red trumpet shaped flowers form red berries in the fall that attract cardinals, pine siskins, goldfinches and sparrows.

Plant Coral Honeysuckle in full sun to part sun (morning), where it can be easily seen. Site the vine on the east side, as the vine tends to grow toward the setting sun. Vines can grow to 20 feet in moist to medium soil and are surprisingly drought resistant.

Go Vertical

The trick to showing off Coral Honeysuckle is to provide vertical structure where you can enjoy the

hummingbirds feeding on the colorful flowers. While it can lightly twine on trees (unlike the more aggressive and choking Japanese

Native vs Exotic Honeysuckle

- Native leaves white on underside vs green underside, always hairy stem
- Uppermost leaves fused vs all leaves separate, some deeply lobed
- Odorless red flowers terminating stem vs fragrant white/yellowish flowers along stem
- Red fruit vs black fruit

Honeysuckle), you will enjoy it more if you provide an arbor, pergola, mailbox, fence or lattice on which it can climb. To get it started, a lightweight chain helps to guide the vine in climbing to the top of your structure.

Or consider a Coral Honeysuckle vertical screen, which might be more

compact than a shrubby hedge. Vines take very little ground space and can fit in tight spaces when trained vertically on a freestanding lattice. If space is even more limited, try it in a pot on decks and patios with support.

Suggested cultivars include the long-blooming 'Major Wheeler' that fruits well, and 'Alabama Crimson' with dark red flowers and blue-green leaves, and 'John Clayton' with orange-yellow flowers..

Not the Invasive One

Don't confuse Coral Honeysuckle with the exotic, dreaded and invasive Japanese Honeysuckle. Coral Honeysuckle has the distinctive top two fused leaves on the stem right beneath the flower cluster. The stem appears to pass right through the leaves.

For more Eco and Bird Friendly pages visit:

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