

Black Velvet petunia is another show stopper

By Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp, on September 18th, 2010

The Simply Beautiful brand will introduce three new petunias in 2011, each with show-stopping traits.

These plants, developed by Ball Horticulture, stopped people in their tracks at this year's OFA, the country's largest horticultural trade show, held each July in Columbus, Ohio.

There were other interesting plants, too, including many tropical foliage plants, which continue to remain popular with high-end gardeners and plant geeks. I'll write about some of the tropicals a little later. Meantime, it was the petunias that got cameras clicking.



Phantom petunia from Simply Beautiful. (C) Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp



Black Velvet petunia from Simply Beautiful. Photo courtesy Simply Beautiful

- 'Black Velvet,' the horticultural industry's first and only black petunia, has a slightly ruffled flower that looks like its name.
- 'Pinstripe' petunia has a deep purple, almost black background with a creamy white stripe.
- 'Phantom' petunia has a black background splashed with a yellow star.

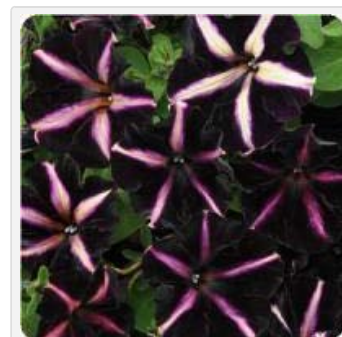
Each of these sun-loving annuals gets 8- to 10 inches tall and wide, making them well suited for hanging baskets, containers or window boxes. The flowers are about 2 inches wide.

Even though they are quite dramatic, black plants can be a bit challenging in the landscape. The color recedes and the plants form a black hole in the landscape, making them hard to appreciate from a distance.

Make them showier by planting them in large masses or set them off with colorful companion plants.

As a focal point in the garden or on the deck or porch, pot up these black beauties in a tall, colorful container or large hanging basket, draped with gray or chartreuse trailing plants. This combo frames the black plants and elevates them closer to eye level, making them hard to miss in your landscape.

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Pinstripe petunia from Simply Beautiful

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