

Honeysuckle is 2011 Color of Year

By Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp, on February 5th, 2011



Fragrant and in the latest color, 'Goldflame' honeysuckle. (C) Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp

Decorators, designers and manufacturers are painting the town honeysuckle, turning out home accessories, clothing, paint and other products in the pink color.

But what about the plant world? Will we see dozens of annuals and perennials in the 2011 color of the year, so named by Pantone, the arbiter of color standards?

Not likely, say the plant marketing pros.

"I don't think colors of the year have that much of an effect on perennials, as they are more long-term plantings," said Christine Kelleher, a marketing specialist with Blooms of Bressingham North America, a breeder of perennials.

It takes years, sometimes a decade or more, for new plant introductions to become commercially available, she said.

At Proven Winners, "we introduce the best performing plants, regardless of color," said Marshall Dirks, director of marketing for the brand. "White flowering plants such as Diamond Frost, Snowflake bacopa and Snow Princess would not have a chance if we followed color trends. They are all in our top five total sales."

Katie Rotella, a public relations manager at Ball Horticulture Co, said in the plant world, "there's a move toward the 'unexpected' or unconventional in mixes and in combination plantings," rather than introducing color specific plants. Among Ball's products are Simply Beautiful and Burpee brands.

"While we don't know what 2011 will bring, (but in 2010) the favorite flower color changed from purple the last two years, to pink" among 1,300 consumers surveyed, said Dirks of Proven Winners.

"I believe a shift to 'comfort' colors, such as pink and blue, was evidence that the economy does affect one's color choices. The increase of white (peaceful) and the decrease of wild, bold risky colors, such as red and orange, is reflected too," he said.

For the real thing, consider planting 'Goldflame' honeysuckle (*Lonicera x heckrottii*), a hardy, summer flowering vine that has trendy pink, fragrant flowers with gold centers.

Caution: Some honeysuckles are **invasive species** and should not be planted in the landscape. If you have any of those, vow to pull them out and enjoy the ones that won't take over the world.

Consumers' preferences for plant color

More color info from Marshall Dirks, marketing director at Proven Winners: "I believe a shift to 'comfort' colors, such as pink and blue, was evidence that the economy does affect one's color choices. The increase of white (peaceful) and the decrease of wild/bold risky colors such as red and orange is reflected, too." Here are consumer color preferences for the last two years.

In 2010, the results of 1,300 individuals were:

Pink 39.43 percent

Purple 19.53 percent

Blue 12.10 percent

Red 11.87 percent

Yellow 8.73 percent

White 5.74 percent

Orange 1.61 percent

Coral 1.00 percent

In 2009, the results of nearly 45,000 people were:

Purple 35.51 percent

Pink 18.04 percent

Red 13.90 percent

Blue 11.94 percent

Yellow 8.34 percent

Coral 4.87 percent

Orange 4.38 percent

White 3.03 percent

Source: Proven Winners