

## **Horticulturists develop 'world's first black petunia plant'**

From ANI

London, Nov 25: Horticulturists have developed the world's first black petunia plant for next summer's gardens.

The dramatic new flowers, named Black Velvet, were created using natural breeding techniques to turn them a dark black colour and will be on sale at a premium price of 2pounds- 3 pounds per plant.

The rare plants, which have taken four years to perfect, are due to blossom in British gardens for the first time next spring.

Experts believe the new variety will be highly sought-after among gardeners as they will provide a "wonderful contrast" to colourful flowers.

They were developed by flower breeding company Ball Colegrave and will be going on sale for the first time in British garden centres.

The plants will be advertised under the catchline "black goes with everything."

"It's completely unique. It's the first black petunia anywhere in the world," the Daily Mail quoted Stuart Lowen, from Ball Colegrave in Banbury as saying.

"It was created by experimenting with existing colours already on the market and breeding them using traditional methods.

"We don't use any genetic modification at all, just pollination.

"They say black goes with anything, and it really looks exceptionally striking in the garden - it goes very well with whites, yellows and pinks.

"It's rare to get a flower as black as this - very seldom do you get anything this dark," Lowen added.

Flower breeder Jianping Ren developed the new plants at Ball Colegrave.

She said: "The black colour did not exist in petunias before, so it has to come from the right recombination of a novel colour mutant and multiple regular colour genetic backgrounds.

"It's unique and unusual, and opens the door for more new colours," Ren added.

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