

# Coleus Plant Winners at a New Trial Garden

## Solenostemon Hybrids Perform Well at Franklin Park Conservatory



Oct 21, 2009 [Christine Eirschele](#)

A new trial garden at Franklin Park Conservatory chose coleus plants among the top best performers in 2009. Four *Solenostemon* hybrids won in this Midwest botanical garden.

Anticipating new and better coleus hybrids is an annual occasion for seasoned coleus collectors as well as gardeners who want easy to grow plants. For this reason, results from trials gardens can be a useful tool in deciding what to grow in next year's garden.

Four coleus hybrid plants were tested in the Midwest climate of the new trial garden at Franklin Park Conservatory during 2009's growing season. These *Solenostemon* were among the top 10 winning plants with the highest scores.

### New Easy to Grow Coleus Ideas

These new easy to grow coleus hybrids have, in the past, displayed characteristics such as flowering late, forming an upright habit and adaptability to sun or shade conditions. At Franklin Park Conservatory, the trial garden's rating system used was 1 – 5, 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. Here are descriptions and results for the four *Solenostemon* hybrid entries:

- S. 'Redhead' lives up to its name with bright red leaves. The plant grew to 28" tall and 30" wide. It scored 5 in color, health and overall presentation categories. Observers commented that the leaves looked velvety.
- S. 'Trusty Rusty' has large coppery colored leaves with a band of yellow edging the margins. The plant reached a 30" height and 27" width. It scored 5 in color, health and overall presentation categories.

### Related Articles

- S. 'Henna' has, on each leaf, chartreuse and copper coloring above and dark burgundy beneath. The edges are serrated. The plant attained a height of 28" and width of 30". In the categories of vigor, color, health and overall presentation, the plant scored a 5 on August 4, 2009 and September 15, 2009. [New Sweet Alyssum Flower Odded Snow Princess™](#)
- S. 'Mini Mocha' is a duck-foot type, but with an exaggerated appearance. The ruffled cream and green with mottled yellow and red leaves needs nearly full sun to achieve the best color patterns. The plant grew the largest, 32" tall and 30" wide. The plant scored 5 in the vigor, color and overall presentation. [Coleus by Ray Rogers \(Book Review\)](#)
- [How to Grow Coleus Plants](#)
- [Cultivating Gardens at Franklin Park Conservatory](#)
- [Coleus Angel Wing Begonia and Sweet Potato Vine](#)

Redhead, Henna and Mini Mocha coleus cultivars were among the top 5 plant picks from the trial garden's consumer survey results, as well. Garden editors of [Shady Garden](#) *Southern Living* magazine have also included [Palm House at Franklin Park Conservatory](#) Solenostemon Henna in their top 8 great plants list.

## Trial Garden Midwest Garden Conditions

The [Franklin Park Conservatory trial garden](#) program replicated plant care and maintenance conditions expected from the average homeowner, rather than the average gardener. 2009 was the first year for this new trial garden in Columbus, Ohio. Ball Horticultural Company provided seed grown for the four coleus plants; [local greenhouse vendors](#) grew the seeds into plant plugs and prepared the seedlings for transplanting.

The plant entries were installed on May 18, following the first frost-free-date guideline for planting annuals in the Columbus, Ohio, area. The garden was fertilized once with a slow release fertilizer of 13-24-6 on June 17 and received a minimum of 1" of water per week after the plants were established. The average monthly temperatures were 73.7° F in June, 72.1° F in July, 73.7° F in August and 69.5° F in September.

Learning local trial garden results is helpful when deciding which new plants will tolerate a home garden's weather and soil condition. For new coleus hybrids have proved to be good annual plant ideas for future gardens. Garden readers interested in more coleus ideas will find [Coleus: Rainbow Foliage for Containers and Gardens](#) useful.

- [Public Gardens](#)
- [Heritage Flower Gardens](#)
- [Rose Gardens](#)
- [Scented Flower Gardens](#)

The copyright of the article **Coleus Plant Winners at a New Trial Garden** in [Flower Gardens](#) is owned by [Christine Eirschele](#). Permission to republish **Coleus Plant Winners at a New Trial**

**Garden** in print or online must be granted by the author in writing.

- [Theme Flower Gardens](#)
- [Wildflower Gardens](#)

## Reference