



Garden Tip of the Week

March 3, 2010

What is This Plant I Got at the 6th Annual Seed Swap?

By Matt Ross, TBG Horticulturist

If you received plants from the 6th Annual Seed Swap that were passed out in the conference center following horticulturist, Matt Ross's Presentation on Container Gardening, they were one or more of the following:

Ophiopogon planiscapus 'Nigrescens' - Black Mondo Grass

A delightful grass-like plant from the lily family, the black mondo grass is known for its dark lustrous foliage and unique flowers. It will survive well in a pot without competitive plants and prefers a well-drained soil mix. It will also work well in a mixed border where you may have a little warmer micro-climate in your yard because this is a very tender perennial, zones 6-9, and requires a little bit of TLC in the winter months. It reaches to a height of about 8" and its under-ground root system will slowly spread over time. The black mondo grass is slightly resistant to herbivory from rabbits and deer and provides a color unique to a shade garden.

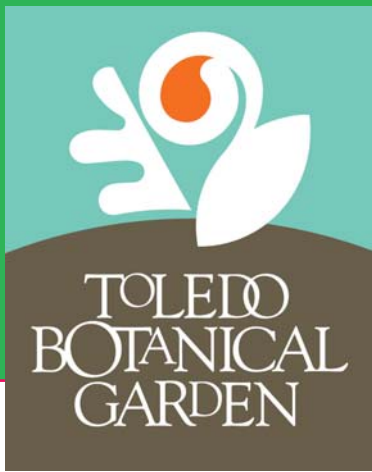
This is the only plant which was not provided by C. Raker and Sons and was a personal addition from an auction in 2009 from HortTech in Grand Haven, MI.

Lamiumstrum 'Herman's Pride' - Silver Archangel

Silver archangel is a deer resistant plant that works well in shade to part sun containers or as a perennial in a shady location. Be advised that it was grown in a setting outside of its normal circadian rhythm and may not come back next year; however, it most likely will survive the winter if planted in the ground before the first hard frost. It is a charming plant with silver netted foliage and bright yellow flowers. It reaches a height of about 10" and can spread 24" in a two-year period. It is hardy from zones 3 to 8.

Gloxinia 'Single Symphony Chimes' - Pink Gloxinia

The velvet flowers and soft foliage of this plant have made it increasingly popular as an indoor and outdoor potted plant. They absolutely love the sun and perform best when given as much as possible. Gloxinias have a unique bloom and are an instant burst of color to your potted arrangements; however,



Garden Tip of the Week

March 3, 2010

towards the later part of the season they can be replaced with mums for late season color. The cultivar we handed out is a single pink flower and the foliage has a darker hue than the more popular dark green of the florist gloxinia series.

Juncus inflexus 'Blue Arrows' – Blue Arrow Rush

This plant can provide a dominant centerpiece to a wide range of container displays. It is extremely tolerant of both sunlight and moisture requirements, but prefers a moist part sun environment. Its blue hued foliage and extremely narrow habit caught the attention of our horticulture staff last year at the 2009 Annual Trials held at C. Raker and Sons. Whether it is a formal planter in need of 20-24" of height or a living sculpture of plants in need of a cool hair-do this plant is extremely versatile and fun to design with.

Tuberous *Begonia* 'Non-Stop Mocha Deep Orange' – Non-Stop Orange Begonia

This tuberous begonia is a shade loving plant with all kinds of textural appeal. It is one of a series of non-stop bloomers which will provide a deep orange flower cluster that will continue throughout the season. To enhance the floral display I recommend de-flowering your little plug and preventing its flower production until it reaches about 4-5" in height with attractive foliage. Its red stems and dark colored leaves make it a great companion plant with lighter colored plants including the Blue Arrow rush and silver archangel previously discussed. It requires some humidity so if you are growing it indoors, make sure that the leaves are not starting to curl and brown on their edges.

Other than the black mondo grass, all of the plant material was generously donated from C. Raker and Sons in Litchfield, MI. They are one of the nation's premiere growers of small plants and a large supplier for our region. If you would like to send them a quick thank you note their address is:

C. Raker and Sons
10371 Rainey Rd
Litchfield, MI 49252-9125

And their website is on-line at: <http://raker.com/>

Thanks again for supporting Toledo GROWs and Toledo Botanical Garden and make sure to attend the 2010 Plant Sale at Toledo Botanical Garden where you can find a wide range of perennials and annuals to make your garden amazing this next year... For any questions about these plants or any others feel free to contact our professional horticulture staff through our website at:

www.toledogarden.org