



Patio Plant Breeding Phenomenon Launch at Chelsea Flower Show

Breaking new boundaries

This year's prestigious Chelsea Flower Show will see the launch of not one but five patio novelties which break new boundaries in plant breeding.

Exhibiting on the Generation Gardens sponsored by The Sun Newspaper, will be a range of traditional garden plants: Petunia, Lobelia, Begonia and Fuchsia set new fashions for the patio with their 'wow' colours and performance.



Petunia x hybrida 'Black Velvet'.

The world's first ever black Petunia was first shown to the UK trade this past Summer. The interest of Nurseries and Garden Centres was encouragingly strong. But never did anyone realise the buzz this breeding break-through would create with the media and subsequent public excitement.

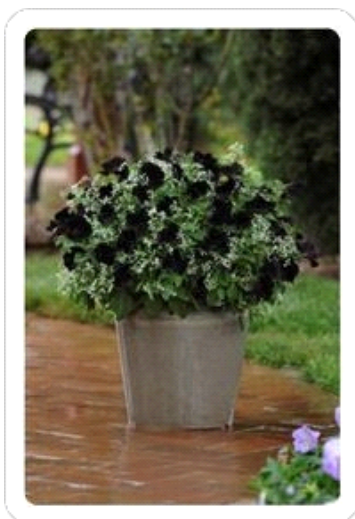
So what is the story? ...

The colour black is very rare in the plant world and most black plants are simply dark. True black would be rather difficult to place in the garden in any quantity, but they are immensely beautiful and therefore very appealing.

It took four years for Ball flower breeder Jianping Ren to develop the variety that she says was no easy task. "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 is difficult and very different from breeding true blue flowers because at least there are some blue flowers you can start with," she says. "It's unique and unusual, and opens the door for more new colours."

Dark flowers and foliage make great accents in combinations and gardens, allowing their surrounding companions to really stand out. Try Petunia 'Black Velvet' with White, Yellow, Orange, Red, Pink flowers.



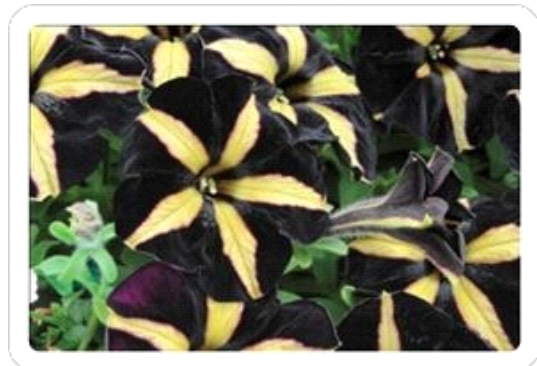
'Black Velvet' is a perfect fit for premium baskets and containers, this combo-friendly Petunia partners well with almost any other colour because as any fashion conscious shopper knowsblack goes with anything! These upright and mounded plants are early to flower, have a tightly branched habit and are filled with colour all season long. Height and spread: 8 - 12" (20 - 30 cm).

Look out for these plants this Spring in packs and pots in Garden Centres nationwide and ready planted patio tubs to simply pick up and drop onto your Patio this Summer. Plants are also available through most mail order companies.

Petunia x hybrida 'Phantom'

Petunia 'Phantom' is a unique black and yellow variety guaranteed to bring style to any setting!

Give gardens a stylish edge with pinwheel-stripe 'Phantom' Petunias. Sleek and sophisticated, this astonishing new Petunia has a black base colour with a distinctive yellow star, blushed around the edges with a dark purple pink. Many people don't consider mixing black into their garden colour palette, but it looks great in containers and window boxes. This new annual is easy to grow and has a long blooming season.



'Phantom' has the appearance of a chic lady, but requires much less maintenance! Far from being demanding, these beautiful Petunias continue to flower through the warmest Summers, and thrive in slightly dry conditions. With an upright, mounding habit and good weather resistance, this unique variety will add a touch of class and draw admiring (and envious) glances all round! Plants reach 30 cm in height and spread, and flower profusely from May to the first frosts.

Available from Thompson & Morgan as Jumbo Plugs. Also available in selected Garden Centres nationwide as plants in 10.5 cm, 11 cm and 13 cm pots and as hanging baskets.



Begonia boliviensis 'Million Kisses® Honeymoon'

This latest addition to the semi-trailing Million Kisses® series is a delightful lemon-yellow flowered variety with a soft apricot reverse to the petals. The dark green foliage and dark stems set this variety off exceptionally well. Million Kisses® has earned a strong reputation as a 'no fuss' plant with its outstanding heat and drought tolerance, continuous profusion of blooms all season long and easy maintenance. It simply needs no deadheading or trimming ... a perfect feature plant for a patio tub, basket or window box. A must for any garden!

Available in selected Garden Centres nationwide in pots and ready planted baskets.



Begonia x hybrida 'Gryphon'

The Gryphon is a mythical creature with the head and wings of an eagle, and the body of a lion. This superb foliage Begonia combines the same majestic beauty with strength and durability. This unique plant delivers plenty of "WOW" as it makes a dramatic garden statement in mixed or solo containers. The large hand-sized deeply cut, silver spotted leaves of Begonia Gryphon bring a tropical feel to any garden. It also makes for a great houseplant.

This easy-care, low-water plant tolerates dry conditions better than Rex Begonia. They are perfect for a partially shaded location in the garden and will make even the less 'green-fingered' of gardeners look an expert and the envy of their neighbours.

Grows 35 – 40 cm tall with a spread of 40 – 45 cm.

Available in selected Garden Centres nationwide in pots and ready planted containers.



Fuchsia 'Kath Wilson'

A unique coloured upright Fuchsia with orange corolla and blush white sepals.

In 1925, the RNLI abandoned the Southport Lifeboat Station. However, in the 1980's, after a series of tragedies off its coast, bereaved relatives and local people campaigned to bring a rescue service back to their town. Amazingly, after only 14 months of the idea being first mooted, the dream was realized.

Kath Wilson, now President of the Southport Lifeboat Association lost her son, Geoff, 23 years ago whilst trying his hand at fishing with two friends when his boat overturned. Kath worked tirelessly to bring the Lifeboat to Southport. All the royalties from this unique new Fuchsia, dedicated to Kath Wilson's work, will be donated to the Southport Life Boat Association in the hope more lives can be saved.

After many years, Southport once again had an independent lifeboat, paid for with donations, crewed, and run by the people of Southport. The crew, all unpaid dedicated volunteers, are immensely proud of their lifeboat's history. The new service has helped rescue over 100 people and three crew members have received bravery awards from the Shipwreck and Humane Society.