

Chocolate Plants

Do you love chocolate – the smell, the taste, even the color of it? Then plant some chocolate in your garden! There are many plants available that smell like chocolate, taste like chocolate, or are the color of chocolate. Here are a few suggestions to get you started on your own “chocolate” garden.

Chocolate-scented Plants

Chocolate Cosmos (*Cosmos atrosanguineus*), AKA Cosmos ‘Hot Chocolate,’ Black Cosmos

Perennial

Zones 8A to 10A

Size: 18” to 30” tall

Exposure: full sun to partial shade Water: consistently moist soil, do not let it dry out between waterings but do not overwater

Bloom colors: brown, dark red

Bloom time: May to October

Foliage color: green

Comments: scent is strongest at the end of a hot summer day; excellent cut flower; not edible



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Clarence A. Rechenthin @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

Chocolate Flower (*Berlandiera lyrata*), AKA Green-eyes, Chocolate Daisy

Perennial

Zones 4 to 11

Size: 5” to 24” tall, 6” to 8” wide

Exposure: full sun to light shade

Water: well-drained soil, very drought tolerant, do not overwater

Bloom color: yellow

Bloom time: mid-spring to mid-summer

Foliage color: green

Comments: native wildflower; adapts to most soil types; attracts butterflies, bees, and birds; scent is strongest in the morning and in sunny weather; self-sows freely

Chocolate-flavored Plants

Chocolate Mint (*Mentha piperata*)

Perennial

Zones 3 to 9

Size: 12" to 24" tall, up to 36" wide

Exposure: full sun to partial shade

Water: moist soil, moderate water

Bloom color: pink/lavender

Bloom time: late spring to mid-summer

Foliage color: greenish-bronze

Comments: plant in a container to prevent it from becoming invasive; flavor will be best if planted in full sun and given plenty of water and fertilizer; for maximum flavor, cut when plant is in full bloom; cut plant back in summer and fall to keep it neat; can be used fresh or dried; attracts bees, butterflies and/or birds



Photo: Robert H. Mohlenbrock @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / USDA NRCS. 1995. Northeast wetland flora: Field office guide to plant species. Northeast National Technical Center, Chester, PA.



Chocolate Tree (*Theobroma cacao*)

Tropical/tender perennial

Zone 11

Size: 4' to 25' tall

Exposure: light shade

Water: water regularly, do not overwater

Bloom color: white/cream/tan

Bloom time: all year

Foliage color: green

Comments: pods grow from limbs and trunk of the tree; seeds have a white outer coating that tastes sweet when sucked on; chocolate is made from the roasted seeds

Himalayan Honeysuckle (*Leycesteria formosa*), AKA Chocolate Berry, Burnt-caramel Berry

Perennial

Zones 7 to 11

Size: 3' to 8' tall, up to 6' wide

Exposure: sun to partial shade

Water: average water, water regularly; do not overwater

Bloom colors: maroon/purple/brown, white

Bloom time: mid-summer

Foliage color: green



Photo courtesy Fran Luxford

Comments: can be invasive; berries have a chocolate-caramel flavor

Chocolate-colored Plants

Ajuga reptans 'Valfredda' ('Chocolate Chip')

Perennial

Zones 4 to 9

Size: 3" tall, space 6" to 9" apart

Exposure: sun to partial shade

Water: needs good drainage, water regularly but do not overwater, drought tolerant once established

Bloom color: light blue

Bloom time: mid- to late spring through early summer

Foliage color: new foliage is milk chocolate, tinged purplish-bronze, then turns green

Comments: tiny leaves, good for crevices, dwarf plant; all parts of the plant are poisonous if ingested



Photo courtesy Missouri
Botanical Garden

Chocolate Soldier' Columbine (Aquilegia viridiflora)

Photo courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden

Perennial

Zones 3 to 9

Size: 6" to 12" tall, 8" to 12" wide

Exposure: full sun to partial shade

Water: average moisture, well-drained soil

Bloom color: chocolate-purple petals and green sepals

Bloom time: late spring/early summer

Foliage color: bluish-green

Comments: remove flowering stems after bloom to encourage rebloom;
cut back foliage to the ground in mid-summer when it starts to decline;
fragrant flowers

Geranium 'Chocolate Candy', AKA Cranesbill

Perennial

Zones 4 to 7

Size: 3" to 6" tall, 6" to 12" wide

Exposure: full sun to partial shade

Water: average water, well-drained but moist soil

Bloom color: pink

Bloom time: late spring to early summer, may rebloom throughout the summer

Foliage color: dark chocolate brown

Comments: easy to grow; cut back after flowering to encourage rebloom and retain shape; remove side stems to control spread; good groundcover

Heuchera 'Chocolate Ruffles' (Heuchera micrantha)

Perennial

Zones 4 to 9

Size: 12" to 24" tall, 12" to 18" wide

Exposure: sun to partial shade

Water: average water needs, water regularly but do not overwater

Bloom color: purplish to pale pink

Bloom time: late spring to early summer

Foliage color: chocolate brown on the top, burgundy on the bottom

x Heucherella 'Chocolate Lace'

Perennial

Zones 4 to 9

Size: 12" to 18" tall, 12" wide

Exposure: sun to full shade

Water: average water needs, water regularly but do not overwater, needs consistently moist soil, do not let dry out between waterings

Bloom color: pink

Bloom time: late spring to mid-summer

Foliage color: bronze-green to chocolate

Comments: attracts bees, butterflies and/or birds; resistant to deer



Photo courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden



Photo courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden

Heuchera 'Chocolate Veil' (Heuchera americana)

Perennial

Zones 4 to 9

Size: 6" to 24" tall, 12" to 18" wide

Exposure: sun to partial shade Water: average water needs, water regularly but do not overwater

Bloom color: white

Bloom time: late spring to early summer

Foliage color: chocolate-black with purple highlights

Comments: remove faded flowers to encourage rebloom

Aeonium 'Schwartzkopf' (Aeonium manriqueorum)

Perennial

Zones 9 to 10

Size: 2' to 6' tall, 1' to 2' wide

Exposure: full sun

Water: drought tolerant, water during dry periods

Bloom color: pale yellow

Bloom time: late spring/early summer

Foliage color: chocolate brown/purplish

Comments: ideal container plant; succulent

**Chocolate Lily (Fritillaria lanceolata or Fritillaria biflora)
AKA Checker Lily, Missionbells**

Perennial

Zones 5 to 10

Size: 1' to 4' tall

Exposure: full sun

Water: average water needs

Bloom color: brownish-purple

Bloom time: February to June

Foliage color: green

Comments: native west of the Cascades



Brother Alfred Brousseau
@ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

Chocolate Vine (Akebia quinata)

Perennial

Zones 4 to 8

Size: 4' to 40' tall, 6' to 9' wide

Exposure: full sun to partial shade, shade tolerant

Water: average moisture, somewhat drought tolerant

Bloom color: chocolate-purple

Bloom time: late March to early April

Foliage color: emerges purplish-green, then becomes blue-green

Comments: odd-looking purple pods; fragrant flowers; can be invasive in warm climates; can grow to 40 feet in one growing season and suffocate other vegetation if not kept in check



'Chocolate' Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium rugosum*) AKA White Snakeroot

Perennial

Zones 4 to 8

Size: 2' to 6' tall, 3' to 4' wide

Exposure: sun to partial shade, prefers light shade

Water: average water needs, well-drained soil

Bloom color: white

Bloom time: mid-summer to early fall

Foliage color: chocolate tinted

Comments: easy to grow; excellent cut flower; all parts of plant are poisonous if ingested; attracts bees, butterflies and/or birds; deadhead to avoid unwanted self-seeding (will not come true from seed); often sold as *Ageratina altissima* 'Chocolate'

'Chocolate' New Zealand Flax (*Phormium tenax*)

Perennial

Zones 9 to 11, may survive in zones 7 and 8 if protected

Size: 1' to 6' tall, to 4' wide

Exposure: full sun to partial shade

Water: needs consistently moist soil, do not let dry out between waterings

Bloom color: red

Bloom time: late spring/early summer, rarely flowers

Foliage color: warm chocolate brown with red undertones

Comments: will tolerate a wide range of soils

If these varieties don't satisfy your chocolate craving, try growing some of the many other plants that are chocolate scented, flavored, or colored, such as daylilies, iris, coleus, hibiscus, and morning glory. And if you like peanut butter with your chocolate, plant peanut butter shrub (*Clerodendrum trichotomum*). Its leaves smell just like peanut butter!

References

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