

Heuchera

Back in the 60's I saw my first coral bells in an elderly neighbors Whidbey Island, Washington garden. It was a tidy, compact rounded little evergreen plant waving long stalks of dainty bell-like pink flowers. I wanted some for my garden.

Today, our grandmothers coral bells or alum root has morphed into the exciting *Heuchera* that graces nurseries each spring. The flowers, white pink or red remain the same. But the leaves! The leaves come in a plethora of colors. They can be marbled or patterned. Each spring brings new and more exciting variations of this plain old plant.

Let's back up and talk about some basics. *Heuchera* are typically planted in the spring. Dig a hole in well-drained loamy or sandy soil with a neutral pH twice the size of your pot in a sunny or lightly shaded spot. Mix in a layer of compost. Remove your new treasure from the pot and place the top of the root ball level with the soil surface. While they will tolerate drought, they appreciate water during the summer months.

When the plant falls open at the center or the stems become woody, lift the plant from the ground, divide the root ball into clumps and replant.

Blooming begins in early June and continues through August. Dead-heading prolongs their blooming season.

Some of the new and fancy coral bells have lost their ability to bloom. All attention is on the foliage. If they bloom, they begin in early June and continuing through August. Dead-heading prolongs their bloom season. They prefer full sun to light shade, will tolerate drought and prefer a well-drained loamy or sandy soil with a neutral pH. In the spring, tidy the plant by removing dead foliage. They benefit from a regular regime of fertilizer during the growing season. An added bonus of planting *Heuchera* is their attraction to hummingbirds.



The following website lists cultivars of *Heuchera* plus the name and Web site of a retail source. Be sure to check your local nursery first for immediate gratification.

[Where to get Coral Bells](#), Garden Gate magazine.

References

[Coral Bells](#) retrieved 2/10/08.

[Coral Bell Planting Guide](#) retrieved 2/10/08.