

Coleus and Caladium Add Color to Summer Gardens

Coleus and caladium are tropical plants prized for their colorful foliage. Hundreds of varieties in each plant family offer a range of shapes, patterns and colors. And any given plant will produce a different intensity of color and pattern depending upon the amount of light exposure. Most do best in partial to full shade; a few varieties can tolerate several hours of sun a day. While heat and humidity will not daunt these hearty growers, lack of water will. If they are in hanging baskets, or in a covered area of the terrace, water every other day. They are highly resistant to disease and pests and are easy to grow and maintain.

Coleus

Coleus (*Solenostemon scutellaroides*) originates in Africa and Asia and brings splashes of exotic color to hanging baskets, patio pots or window boxes. The plants grow upright in a rounded or pyramid shape and range from eight to 36 inches in height. To keep them low and full, just prune the ends at the desired length. Cuttings root easily in water.

- Red Trailing Queen – Dark purple leaves outlined with red and green; good choice for hanging basket.
- Flirtin' Skirts – Leaves look like ruffles of green and white, lined with raspberry bands, creating a delicate, frilly look. Tolerates full sun.
- Rosa – Small, light green, ruffle-edged leaves, white centers flecked with rose, violet or pink; a compact plant suitable for hanging basket or patio pot.
- Charlie McCarthy – Compact plant with masses of small, mint-green leaves with deep purple centers in a duck's foot pattern.

Caladium

Caladium (*Caladium x hortulanum*) is native to South America; its multi-colored foliage makes a dramatic statement wherever planted.

Fancy-leaf Caladiums

Fancy-leaf Caladiums have large, eight-to-12-inch, heart shaped leaves and range in height from one-to-two feet. This is the most common variety of Caladium. Its huge leaves produce a profusion of brilliant color throughout the season.

- Red Flash – Dark red with fuchsia spots and green margins. Good sun tolerance.
- Fire Chief – Dark pink, slightly sun tolerant.

- Frieda Hemple – Deep red with green margins; good in hanging basket in shade.
- Carolyn Whorton – Pink with red veins, green margins, slightly sun tolerant.

Strap-leaf or Lance-leaf Caladiums

Strap-leaf Caladiums and Lance-leaf Caladiums produce pointed, elongated, arrow-shaped leaves on plants that reach 12-to-14 inches high, with a dense growing pattern that makes them a good choice for patio pots and hanging baskets.

- Red Frill – Red leaf specimen ideal for hanging basket in shade and sun.
- Pink Gem – Pink to white color, excellent for hanging basket; shade/partial sun.
- White Wing – White with curled edges mottled with green.
- Pink Symphony – Pink with green veins.

Dwarf Caladiums

Dwarf Caladiums can also grow 15-to-17 inches tall but their leaves are smaller than the heart-shaped, fancy-leaf varieties they resemble.

- Candidum Jr. – White patterned with green veins.
- Miss Muffett – Chartreuse speckled with maroon; use in hanging basket.
- Gingerland – White with red blotches and green margins along leaf edge.