

Coral Bells

Heuchera (Hew-Ker-A)

Zone: Varies by species

This is not your grandma's old Coral Bells: Heuchera has developed into a wide range of colorful plants. I, in particular, favor "Key Lime Pie"; its chartreuse foliage lights up any spot you put it in. In San Andreas, I find they over-winter easily and are easy keepers. In fact, they look delightful in moss covered hanging baskets or in any container. However, there are several wonderful new brilliantly colored varieties with even more colorful names; such as Crème Brulee, Georgia Peach, and Pinot Noir. There are even a few California native specimens that tolerate heavier soils. The bottom line is, once you get one, you will want to collect them all. Heuchera are compact and evergreen, with beautiful scalloped leaves. They send out 1-3 foot slender flower spikes which bear clusters of nodding bell-shaped little flowers. They flower from late spring into fall. Depending on the variety, they grow from 10" to 2' clumps. They prefer some light shade in our hotter areas and are easily propagated by division.

Heuchera prefer a well drained soil, so amend your soil if you live in heavy soil areas. They grow splendidly in containers with regular potting mix. They prefer regular watering, but I have found they are tough and can survive with less water. I feed them regularly with an all purpose liquid fertilizer along with my other potted plants. Heuchera can be found at your local nursery, or at the Calaveras Master Gardeners' Spring Plant sale.

Novella Springer, Calaveras Master Gardener