

"Just Add Water"

Articles and Photos by Soni Forsman

'Chiquita Punch' -- a tropical drink, a plant?

It's a plant - Canna 'Chiquita punch.' With brilliant orange flower lightly sprinkled with yellow against a backdrop of bright green foliage, it commands attention. This canna is a dwarf variety, attaining a height of two to three feet, making it perfect for a small or container water garden.

When my order of water hyacinth and water lettuce arrived in late-May, it was like Christmas. Opening the larger than normal box, there was my order plus eight different marginal plants to grow out. There were two plants of some of the varieties. Canna 'Chiquita punch' was one of those. I may write about the others for future newsletters.

I've grown cannas but probably not for 10 years. They were the taller varieties, cultivars from Longwood Gardens - 'Endeavor' (red) and 'Erubus' (salmon-pink). As I tired of over wintering tropical marginal plants, the cannas and lots more became casualties of a gradual downsizing. For many winters, my laundry room was cluttered with buckets and stock tanks filled with plants. Last winter there was only one. There will be two this year. 'Chiquita punch' is a keeper.

It began blooming in mid-August and continued until the frost slowed it down. This small canna needs sun and warm weather, 80 degrees or better. Its identification tag recommends growing it in water up to 5 inches. I grew mine with water barely over the top of the growing container. It also said it 'can be grown in wet ground.'

Even before I harvest the tuber, I'm thinking about next spring - mixing and matching this dwarf canna with what other water plants in a large container? I have all winter to think about the possible combinations.



Canna 'Chiquita punch'



Canna 'Chiquita punch' at about 30 inches