

Just Add Water

Nymphaea 'Wanvisa'

To date, only one hardy waterlily has earned the title Best New Waterlily of the Year. Nymphaea 'Wanvisa' was given that award in 2010, winning the annual competition sponsored by the International Waterlily and Water Garden Society (IWGS). It competed against new hybrids, both hardy and tropical varieties, from around the world.

The winner was recognized for the colorations of its flowers and pads. The flower is a salmon-pink color with white/cream flecks. The pads are deep bronze with bright green mottling, coloration typically seen in the foliage of tropical waterlilies.

About six months after N. 'Wanvisa' was announced the winner and weeks before mine would be shipped to cold Minnesota, reports and pictures were circulating that the flower color was not stable. Flowers were blooming with bright yellow petals amongst the salmon-pink ones. Others were a light or a faded-out shade of the award-winning color.

This information did not dampen my enthusiasm for a brand new hardy waterlily. Instead, my interest was heightened by all the possibilities.

N. 'Wanvisa' was discovered growing in a pristine pond of N. 'Joey Tomocik' (hardy yellow) waterlilies in Thailand. It was saved by Thai hybridizer Dr. N. Nopchai Chansilpa and several years later he entered it in the competition.

Because the color is not stable, some consider this waterlily undesirable. Most water gardeners embrace its unpredictability. I'm in the latter group,



Image 1 The Award-Winning Nymphaea 'Wanvisa' The salmon-pink flower rises above deep bronze pads with bright green mottling.



Image 2 Bright yellow petals sparkle among the salmon-pink ones.

enjoying the unexpected. Each bloom is a potential photo op!

Pictures with this story show the true color of N. 'Wanvisa,' the others illustrate just two of the many variations I've photographed – 2011 through this summer.

Articles and Photos by Soni Forsman



Image 3 A light pink N. 'Wanvisa' with half a petal light yellow. Note the creamy-white flecks are still present.

Specimen Spotlight

Petasites japonicus

Easily grown in consistently moist to wet soils in part shade to full shade. If grown in full sun, leaves will typically wilt during hot days in somewhat the same manner as with the ligularias. Best grown at the shoreline of large natural ponds, on the banks of streams or in bogs. Tolerates a wide range of soils as long as consistent moisture is present. Large containers sunk in the mud may be used if control of rhizomatous spread is desired. Grow in containers for water gardens or smaller ponds.

Garden Uses

Banks of ponds, streams or water gardens. Bogs. Shady corner of the border or woodland garden as long as the soil moisture requirements can be met.

Noteworthy Characteristics

Petasites japonicus, commonly known as butterbur, fuki or sweet coltsfoot, is a rhizomatous perennial that is noted for its huge basal leaves that form dense spreading clumps of foliage to 3' tall and 5' wide. It is native to Korea, China and Japan where



Image 4 Petasites japonicus or, Butterbur

Common Name: Butterbur

Type: Herbaceous Perennial

Family: Asteraceae

Native Range: Korea, China, Japan

Zone: 5 to 9

Height: 2.00 to 3.00 feet

Spread: 2.00 to 5.00 feet

Bloom Time: April

Flower: Showy, Fragrant

Bloom Description: Yellowish-white

Sun: Part shade to full shade

it is typically found growing on wet streambanks in woodland areas. Long-stalked, lightly toothed, kidney-shaped, green leaves (to 16-32" wide) are tomentose beneath. Fragrant, yellowish-white, daisy-like flowers in dense corymbs appear in spring before the leaves emerge on rigid scapes to 6" tall. Scapes elongate after bloom. Leaf stalks (petioles) are eaten as a vegetable (fuki) in Japan. Genus name comes from the Greek petasos meaning a hat with a broad brim with reference to the large leaves.

Specific epithet means of Japan

The leaves were reportedly once used to wrap butter in hot weather, hence the common name. No serious insect or disease problems. Watch for slugs. Spreads aggressively by rhizomes if not grown in containers or otherwise restrained by barriers.

Water: Medium to wet

Maintenance: Medium

Tolerate: Heavy Shade, Erosion, Wet Soil



