

"Just Add Water"

Articles and Photos by Soni Forsman

N. 'Wanvisa,' an award-winning hardy waterlily

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 later group, 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.



The award-winning Nymphaea 'Wanvisa.'

The salmon-pink flower rises above deep bronze pads with bright green mottling



Bright yellow petals sparkle among the salmon-pink ones



A light pink *N.* 'Wanvisa' with half a petal light yellow.

Note the creamy-white flecks are still present.