

GINGERS LIKE IT HOT!

By Ceil Dow

MERCER HORTICULTURIST \ HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER



Among the outstanding gingers that will be available at Mercer Botanic Gardens' Autumn Plant Sale & Market, Sept. 28, will be (top l to r) Curcuma Laddawan,' Curcuma 'Fireflies' (with butterfly),and Hedychium 'Kong' (up close and showing off its height!) Below, Kaempferia 'Alva' and Zingiber 'Twice as Nice.'



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Bring on the heat! Gingers wait out the drab, cold winter days and rainy spring just to bloom when our weather gets nice and hot! Try a variety of rare and exclusive ginger plants:

HIDDEN GINGERS:

* Curcuma 'Sulee Princess', a new introduction all the way from Thailand and its Curcuma hybridizer, Annop Ongsakul. This stunning petite ginger has never been offered for sale in the United States prior to its availability at the Mercer Botanic Garden sale. The new Hidden Ginger, Curcuma 'Sulee Princess' stands only 18" tall and blooms with a stout, pretty, pink and white inflorescence throughout the summer months.

* Curcuma 'Cherry Pink,' another brand new Curcuma, is also perfect for in front of the border, This prolific bloomer stands 12" tall with soft pink blooms all summer

HEDYCHIUM HYBRIDS

* Hedychium 'Kong' is a landscape giant at 12' tall but the 2' tall inflorescence is worth giving it a little space. Not that it needs much; it seems to grow like a giant vase. The pseudo stems grow close together so it is tight at the bottom and opens wide at the top.

* If you are short on space and love a butterfly magnet, try Hedychium 'Fireflies'. It stays at 4' and waits until August to bloom with creamy white blossoms and pink stamens. It will continue to bloom until frosts nips its buds.

PEACOCK GINGERS

"Peacock Gingers" diminutive height make them the perfect "front of the border" plant or ground cover for shady areas. Kaempferia 'Flat Leaf' is a giant favorite. Its name describes its growth habit of hugging the ground. There are three forms of K. 'Flat Leaf': maroon-red colored leaves, green leaves with a maroon outline or a patterned leaf with bands of soft silver brush strokes.

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