

HEUCHERELLAS FOR HANGING BASKETS

Dorothy Harriman

Following a talk on heucheras and heucherellas given to the South Pennine Group by 'Plantagogo' some time ago, I decided to change the planting of my hanging hay-basket on our north-east facing back wall. Over the years I have tried various options – fuchsias, petunias, etc. – none of them did particularly well and, of course, all of them had to be removed before winter, a messy job that I hated doing.

I relined the basket and added fresh compost, with a bit of grit for drainage, and then just planted two trailing heucherellas: x *Heucherella* 'Yellowstone Falls' (large, chartreuse, lobed leaves with a deep red centre, trails to 60 cms) and x *Heucherella* 'Redstone Falls' (broad copper-coloured leaves, trails to 30 cms), which I purchased on-line from Plantagogo. All that was needed then was to top-dress with grit to stop the rain splashing the soil onto the leaves. During this first year, they have bushed out on top and then trailed down magnificently, and now, one year on, they are still producing new flower spikes, with white foaming flowers.



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x *H.* 'Redstone Falls' and x *H.* 'Yellowstone'

For me, the bonus is that I don't have to remove these plants now winter is approaching, because they will give colour and interest right through the year. If, in spring, the trailing leaves look a bit messy, I will trim them back a little, top dress with more compost and fresh grit and feed them a liquid tomato feed 3 or 4 times during spring and summer.

Because the hay-basket was so successful, I did a similar thing with a normal-sized hanging basket this spring. This time, I planted it with x *Heucherella* 'Sunrise Falls'; large, yellow, deeply-cut, maple-shaped leaves with red veins, the leaves developing dramatic red tints in the autumn. Since this is also north-east facing it has proved a good solution to what used to be an annual grind!



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x *H.* 'Sunrise Falls'

If you want a new idea for a basket on a shady wall, do give trailing heucherellas a try - I think you will be very pleasantly surprised. If you have what I call a 'normal-sized' hanging basket you will probably only need the one plant. In this case I would recommend x *Heucherella* 'Redstone Falls', as it gives the most colour.