

FlameThrower Coleus

Jeb S. Fields, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, LSU AgCenter, Hammond Research Station
Heather Kirk-Ballard, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, LSU AgCenter
Ashley Edwards, Research Associate, LSU AgCenter, Hammond Research Station

Solenostemon scutellarioides

- **Recommended Use:** Warm-season bedding plant
- **Exposure:** Full sun
- **Size:** Height: 14 to 20 inches; width: 16 to 18 inches
- **Habit:** Upright and mounding
- **Bloom Time:** Late summer spires of pale blue flowers
- **Maintenance Category:** Easy
- **Water Use:** Moderate
- **Highlights:** Vivid foliage color, which lasts from spring through first frost. Very reliable performer in all areas of Louisiana; tolerates heat; provides long-lasting color and texture; late blooming; compact; great for the landscape and containers.



A series of Flamethrower grows at Hammond Research Station. Notice the compact nature and reduced flowering of most varieties.

Summary

The FlameThrower coleus series can be identified by its uniquely shaped thin and ruffled foliage that stands out in any landscape, providing wonderful texture. Combine that with bold, long-lasting colors, and you have one of the hottest bedding plants for the summer. These compact coleus are great for any Louisiana landscape. FlameThrower coleus joins Henna coleus as a Louisiana Super Plant selection. FlameThrower coleus thrives in full sun but can handle some light shade and does best in well-drained soils. Like most coleus, FlameThrower is a low-maintenance landscape plant, and this series is extra special because it is one of the last to flower in the landscape. In fact, in trials at the Hammond Research Station, some cultivars had not yet started flowering by the time they were removed from the landscape at the end of the season. This is important because coleus is often sought after solely for its vividly colored and highly textured foliage, but its flowers are traditionally unwanted. However, when they do flower there will be an influx of pollinators in the garden. You can leave them or remove them at your discretion. Pinch off spires of flowers down one full leaf set below the flower spike to keep plants compact.

Requirements

- Plant in full sun to ensure continuous high-quality color. However, they can take part sun.
- Well-drained soil with pH of 5.5 to 6.5.
- Thrives in raised beds with adequate moisture.

Growth Habit

- Will grow to 12 to 18 inches tall and 16 to 18 inches wide.
- Upright mounding habit. Can be grown as a border planting or used in containers.
- Space plants about 18 inches apart.



Salsa Verde

Care and Maintenance

- A slow-release fertilizer incorporated into the soil at planting time will ensure uniform growth. Supplement the granular fertilizer with liquid feed as needed to keep plants looking their best.
- FlameThrower coleus can be purchased in the spring from local nurseries and garden centers.
- To highlight foliage, remove flower stalks; however, flowers will attract pollinators if left intact.
- Mulch 1 inch around bedding plants for best performance.
- You can pinch coleus back in the landscape to promote additional branching.

Varieties for Louisiana Landscapes

Currently, there are nine spicy cultivars of FlameThrower coleus, including Cajun Spice, Sriracha, Salsa Roja, Serrano, Salsa Verde, Habanero, Chili Pepper, Chipotle and Spiced Curry.



Chipotle



Spiced Curry



Habanero



A series of Flamethrower grows at Hammond Research Station.

For more information on FlameThrower coleus and other Louisiana Super Plants, contact your local LSU AgCenter extension office or visit www.LSUAgCenter.com/SuperPlants.



William B. Richardson, LSU Vice President for Agriculture
Louisiana State University Agricultural Center
Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service
LSU College of Agriculture

PUB. 3707-J (ONLINE) 6/20

The LSU AgCenter and LSU provide equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Visit our website: www.lsuagcenter.com