

plant this

Tiarella species have been crossed with coral bells (*Heuchera*) to produce showy hybrids such as this one, *x Heucherella* 'Dayglow Pink'.

foamflowers

WITH THEIR SPIKES OF DAINTY BLOOMS IN SPRING AND HANDSOME FOLIAGE, TIARELLA AND HEUCHERELLA WILL LIGHT UP ANY WOODLAND GARDEN **BY MARJORIE HARRIS**

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I found a magic plant for the garden: a simple *Tiarella*. What a joy! With frothy white flowers in early spring, this is a woodland plant whose common name, foamflower, is for once completely appropriate. Native to North America and east Asia, foamflowers have a delicacy that belies their toughness (most are hardy to Zone 4). Seeking to expand the palette of white flowers and green leaves, hybridizers have crossed *Tiarella* with coral bells (*Heuchera*), which are known for

their dramatic foliage colours, to produce *Heucherella* (often called foamy bells).

why they're special

Foamflowers form a low carpet that is picture perfect in every season: spring bloom in shades of white or pink, summer foliage cover, autumn blaze and winter evergreen. They thrive in the shade, tolerate a range of soil conditions and never seem to require any special care. They aren't prone to disease, and the scented ones attract

butterflies. *Heucherella* varieties offer leaves of gold, bronze or purple as well as green, often with a silver overlay or contrasting heart. They are incredibly long-blooming, though a bit fussier to grow than *Tiarella* and not quite as hardy (Zone 5).

how to use them

Bringing subtle texture to the shade garden, foamflowers look fabulous with hostas, pulmonarias, hellebores, grasses and sedges. I soon found that you can become a

plant this



8 varieties to grow

1 x *Heucherella* 'Dayglow Pink' This relatively new hybrid has brilliant pink flower stalks and finely cut leaves with a chocolate streak. It grows 14 inches (35 cm) wide and about seven inches (18 cm) high, with flowers rising to 16 inches (40 cm).

2 *Tiarella* 'Spring Symphony' A wonderful groundcover with palmate leaves and pink-budded blooms opening to white, it grows fairly quickly in a clump form, spreading to 16 inches (40 cm). This plant does need shade; very bright light will bleach it out.

collector if you aren't careful. The foliage colours alone of *Heucherella* varieties are magnificent, but if these plants are too fussy in your garden, they will shine in containers.

Both plants spread slowly to make lovely groundcovers (six to nine inches/15 to 22 cm in height, though the flowers are double that). They are quite shallow-rooted, so keep this in mind if you want to plant close by. Like all woodlanders, they need lots of humus with moist but well-drained soil.

2



plant this



3



4



5



6



7



7



8

3 *T. wherryi* The classic form and the first *Tiarella* I had in my garden, this beauty holds up against all the hybridized forms competing with it. Native to the Appalachians, it loves the woodland conditions of the forests where it originated. The white or sometimes pink blooms appear early in spring, and the maple-like palmate leaves turn a vivid burgundy in autumn. It's a clumper, growing to eight inches (20 cm) and spreading to about two feet (60 cm).

4 *T. 'Sugar and Spice'* This promising new introduction for 2005 has shiny, lacy leaves with very marked dark centres, and lightly scented pink flowers with a white interior. It grows eight inches (20 cm) tall and about a foot (30 cm) wide; the flowers rise to about 13 inches (33 cm).

5 *x H. 'Sunspot'* My first and still favourite *Heucherella*, it seemed a bit puny at the outset, so I divided it into two clumps when it died out in the middle. A colourful plant, it has wonderful gold foliage set off by red veins down the centre of the leaves, and bright pink flower spikes. Growing eight inches (20 cm) tall and spreading to 18 inches (45 cm), it likes light shade and needs regular watering.

6 *x H. 'Burnished Bronze'* As its name implies, this plant's large cut-leaves have a burnished bronze finish. Enchanting pink flowers repeat bloom. It grows 14 inches (35 cm) wide and eight inches (20 cm) high, with flowers rising to 18 inches (45 cm).

7 *x H. 'Kimono'* Also known as foamy bells (a good description), this one is a beauty, forming a clump up to three feet (90 cm) wide. The long, pointy leaves have a wide black stripe down the centre; early white blooms grow up to 18 inches (45 cm) high.

8 *T. w. 'Heronwood Mist'* This small but exquisite plant has layers of pale green foliage speckled with creamy white marbling, and pink buds that open into white flowers. A slow grower, it forms a nine-inch (23-cm) clump with leaves six inches (15 cm) long and flowers of equal length on pink stems. □