

Nursery

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From live plant sales to hard goods, Amazon.com and online commerce are changing how consumers shop and how brands and growers sell.



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PODOPHYLLUM SP.

Consider adding this valuable perennial while it's still uncommon in the trade.

Find the genus *Podophyllum*, (pronounced PODO-PHIL-UM) one of the most interesting and magnificent plants for the shadier garden. The common name mayapple is a bit of a misnomer since the apple-like fruit form in mid-summer from flowers that appear on the plants in May. It is the large, earth-toned or mottled leaves of *Podophyllum* that make this genus a truly remarkable specimen in the garden. There is one species, *P. peltatum* that is native to eastern forests North America and several species native to Asia, from northwestern China to northern India. Many of the Asian species grow at relatively high elevations, giving them and their cultivars considerable winter hardiness, usually USDA Zones 6-9. It's these species from Asia that plant breeders have focused on to create some outstanding cultivars of the past few decades.

The genus certainly deserves more attention by gardeners, garden centers and wholesale nurseries. There are some remarkable cultivars on the market today, though liner material is sometimes difficult to obtain for growers. Dan Hinkley released several hybrids of *P. pleianthum* and *P. versipelle* while at Heronswood. Terra Nova Nurseries in Canby, Ore., has a robust *Podophyllum* breeding program, and they have produced two outstanding cultivars named 'Kaleidoscope' and 'Spotty Dotty'. Dan Heims of Terra Nova invited me to his Portland area home and personal garden to see these beautiful plants in a garden setting.

"Podophyllums are remarkably carefree plants. Watch for spring frosts and protect plants if necessary. They require no pruning, and the first killing frost will knock them to the ground," says Heims. He also mentioned that slugs and snails generally leave the plant alone on the garden.

Our experience growing *Podophyllum* 'Spotty Dotty' at Little Prince of Oregon has been good. We are into our second year of production and have quadrupled volume from the previous year. In fact, last year all the plants were sold before they ever made it to our current availability. This is indeed a plant that more wholesale nurseries should consider growing. **NM**

SPECIFICS

Name: *Podophyllum* sp.

Description: Podophyllums are deciduous perennials with large serrate leaves which are often highly mottled and uniquely beautiful, growing to around 2 feet tall.

Hardiness: USDA Zones 6-9

In the landscape: Podophyllums thrive in moist shade in humus-rich soil. They are a beautiful companion for hostas, ferns, *Rodgersia*, *Tiarella*, and other shade perennials.

Why grow Podophyllum?

- It's a magnificent plant for the moist shade garden.
- Its large leaves are stunning in large containers for shade.
- It has a relatively high value at all levels of production and sales.
- It's not a delicacy to slugs and snails.