



CPS
CANADIAN PEONY
SOCIETY

SCP
SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE
DE LA PIVOINE

NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2025 | ISSUE 21

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Dear Members,

Happy New Year! What a joy to know that days will get warmer and longer from here on out. I'm hoping that 2025 has allowed you to cross some peonies off your wishlist and that it brings you the best peony season yet! With vendor [catalogues](#) rolling out over the winter months, the former certainly will continue to be a possibility; however, I can make no claims on the latter!

So what does 2025 have in store for the CPS? I'm thrilled to report that we have some very exciting content on the horizon, ranging from how-tos on popular peony topics to substantive technical pieces on hybridizing and new cultivars, and features on uniquely Canadian peony stories and collections. This content will be delivered in a variety of formats: the newsletter (where editor Karen Lee is doing a fantastic job of keeping a finger on the pulse of the hottest topics), the [CPS website](#), and our [Zoom Webinar Speaker Series](#). We are in the process of implementing structural changes to the website that will add new features and improve existing ones, and work is being done towards events at a national level in the near future, but it's a little too early to go into detail on this.

Back in the present, which truly is a gift, there is no shortage of entertainment. The Zoom Webinar Speaker Series, organized by Ontario Directors Donna Slater and Jennifer Prgesa, continues, and additional dates are now confirmed. The 2025 Annual General Meeting date has now been decided, the CPS 2025 Peony of the Year has been selected, and we are now asking for [nominations](#) for our annual CPS recognition awards. Furthermore, the CPS is welcoming

volunteers interested in critical roles on our board. Training and a description of these roles are available. For additional information, look for the post in this newsletter. May these winter activities get you on your way to a sensational gardening season!

Nick



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Coral Charm by Lois McLeod



IN THIS ISSUE

MEET OUR PEONY OF THE YEAR!

NICK MAYCHER

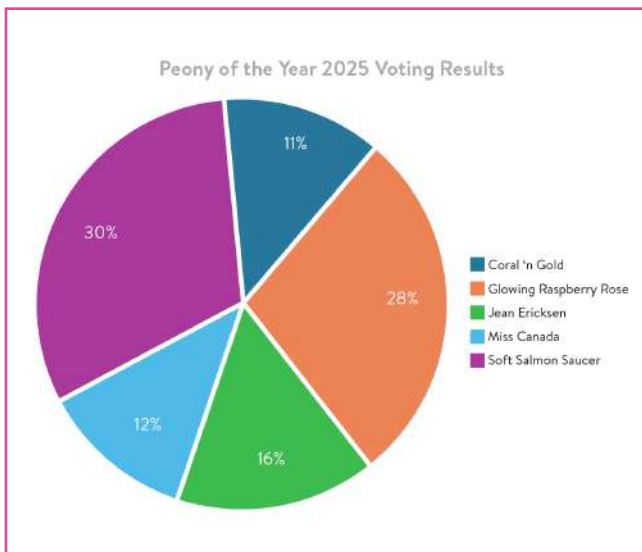
PEONY OF THE YEAR



An overhead view of the cupped-flower form found in 'Soft Salmon Saucer'. Photo by Leslaw Modelski (Poland).

While not of the flying variety, this Canadian-bred peony is totally out of this world. Read on to discover all the fantastic qualities that make 'Soft Salmon Saucer' a choice selection for Peony of the Year.

MEMBER NOMINATIONS AND VOTING RESULTS



'Soft Salmon Saucer' (Cousins / Klehm, R.G., 1981) was the most suggested cultivar when we asked for membership input, and as a result, it joined a slate of four other Canadian cultivars selected by CPS leadership as the Members' Choice candidate. These five cultivars were voted on by membership, which produced the following tallies:

VOTES BY THE NUMBERS	
'Coral 'n Gold'	11
'Glowing Raspberry Rose'	28
'Jean Ericksen'	16
'Miss Canada'	12
'Soft Salmon Saucer'	30

It was a close race with good support for all candidates that saw 'Soft Salmon Saucer' just barely edge out its closest competitor, 'Glowing Raspberry Rose', another cultivar bred by Mr. Cousins of London, Ontario.

THE SECRET SAUCE(R)

FLOWER AND LANDSCAPE QUALITIES

'Soft Salmon Saucer' produces captivating and distinct chalice-shaped, single-form flowers. The cupped flowers maintain this form for the majority of the flowering period, long after petals on other single-form cultivars have relaxed. The colour of the flowers is a warm-toned bubblegum pink and lacks the orange hues of the promised "salmon," a common issue with salmon-named cultivars. This pink colour is no less lovely and displays a graceful fade, coming to rest at a gentle blush in terminal stages of bloom with colour pooling at the depth of the flowers and embodying the "Inner Glow Hybrids" that Cousins was known for. Petals have excellent substance, perhaps explaining why this cultivar has a terrific vase life when many other single-form cultivars do not.



'Soft Salmon Saucer' in mixed bouquets, photo by Erin Linn, Maybelle Farm (Saskatchewan).

'Soft Salmon Saucer' is a stellar landscape plant with an upright, self-supporting habit and does not require staking. Flowers are borne one to a sturdy, rigid stem and presented tastefully above the foliage. Plants stand at a height of roughly 32 inches, an appropriate size for



Perfectly paired, photo by Nick Maycher.

the middle of the perennial border, and bloom during mid-season, which occurred on June 21 in Edmonton this past year. 'Soft Salmon Saucer' has good vigor, with a three-year-old plant producing 18 stems in my Edmonton garden, each of them bearing a flower. The

overall impression of a plant is one of a simple-yet-tasteful and refined elegance, making this Canadian-bred treasure a superb selection by members.



In perfect symmetry, photo by Leslaw Modelski (Poland).



A three-year-old plant with 18 stems and flowers, photo by Nick Maycher.



Hana-kisoi by Lois Maleod



Amy Jo by Shelley King

A LEGACY LIVES ON

'Soft Salmon Saucer' is the second cultivar by Mr. Lyman W. Cousins to be awarded the CPS Peony of the Year. Mr. Cousins was a lithographer and photographer from London, Ontario, who was born in 1889 and died in 1973 and is arguably Canada's most notable hybridizer of peonies.

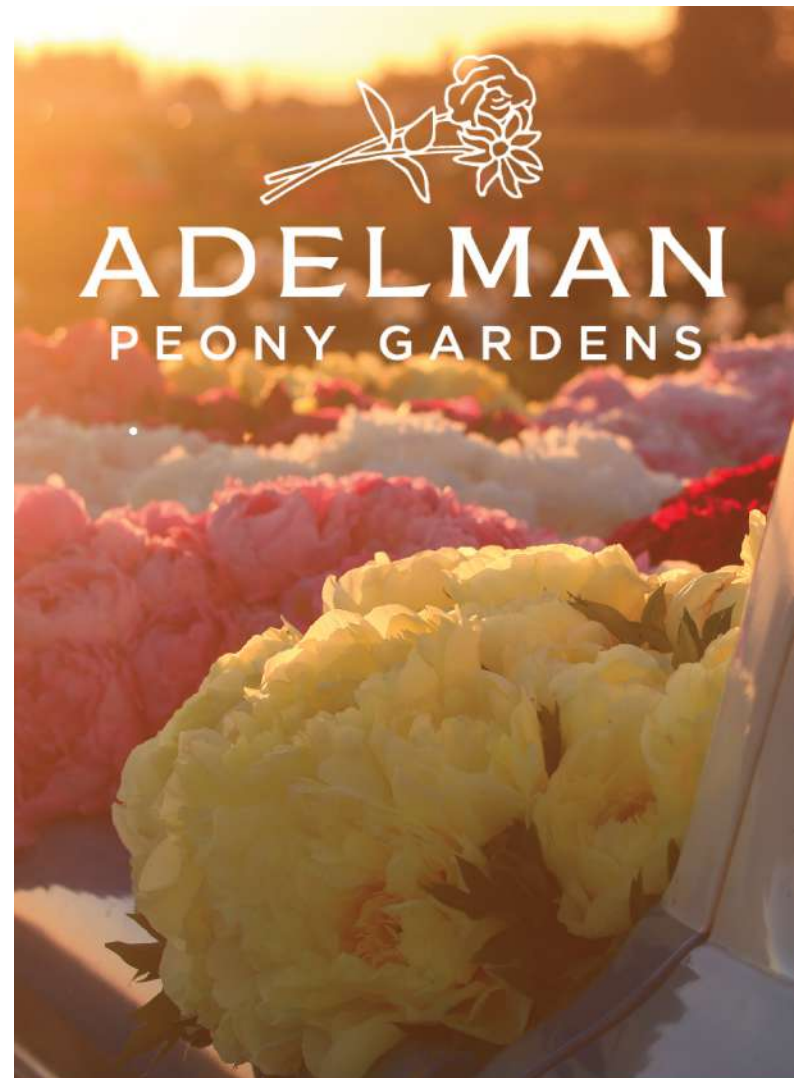
'Soft Salmon Saucer' is one of ten registrations of Cousins' plants by Roy G. Klehm of Klehm's Song Sparrow Nursery (Wisconsin), which were made after purchasing Mr. Cousins' creations from his widow. With this twist of fate, many of the Cousins peonies were actually more accessible outside of Canada than within, but recently they have been "brought back home" with importation and are now being propagated on Canadian soil again. It is not clear how much distribution of the Cousins plants occurred during his lifetime, though some materials indicate that at some point, at least early on in his endeavors, some varieties had "never been offered to the public and all the stock is in the originators garden."

Unbeknownst to many, Mr. Cousins was a peony hybridizer of nearly half a century and had a keen intuition and devoted passion for this activity. He had a detailed breeding program, outlined in his "Thirteen Little Notebooks," that had clear visions and goals, and Mr. Cousins seemed to have an acute awareness and understanding of how to acquire and use plant material to further himself towards his goals. He worked fervently, and every cross was purposefully made to propel him towards his vision.

This program saw Mr. Cousins create several breeding lines that were intercrossed amongst each other to produce advanced generation hybrids. The parentage of his plants was likely known to him during his time, but with the majority of his introductions being registered posthumously (only two cultivars were registered by Cousins himself), this information is now lost. His records, obtained and decoded by John L. Fiala in PS bulletin #196, showed extensive use of the [Saunders hybrids](#). It is clear that Cousins understood the significance of Saunders' work early on,

and harnessed this to further his breeding program. Of all the plants available to him, Cousins recognized a special potential in Saunders' 'Little Dorrit' and 'Good Cheer', and these cultivars saw heavy use in his breeding efforts. In Cousins' later years, he wrote that he had just scratched the surface of what was possible with the use of these two plants, and informed any would-be readers on what directions his visionary work could be taken.

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A SEASON FOR CORALS

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO CORAL PEONIES

Nick Maycher

All photos by the author unless stated otherwise.

History

For the better part of a century, coral-coloured peonies have existed and dazzled gardeners with their bold, punchy colours. They are now easily accessible and ubiquitous, but it was not always this way, and the novelty of their exotic and showy appearance cannot be overstated, even today. Consider that in the late 1800s and early 1900s (the classic era of peonies that was dominated by French introductions) the peony world was completely devoid of this hue, and peonies in the commercial world were limited to the lactiflora palette of pinks, whites, and reddish magentas. Not long ago at all, in the first half of the 20th century, species peony genetics entered the mix with the experimental works of Saunders (a Canadian-born hybridizer referred to as the “Father of the Modern Peony”) and his contemporaries, Lemoine, Glasscock, and Auten, to name a few. These exciting developments and the growing interest in the herbaceous hybrid group of peonies opened up new possibilities in peony colours, amongst other qualities.

It is hard to pinpoint the first coral hybrid that was introduced, but early appearances of coral tones in cultivars like ‘[Coralie](#)’ (Saunders, 1940) and ‘[Little Dorrit](#)’ (Saunders, 1952) were likely introduced to little fanfare, though it’s hard to determine how widespread their distribution was, as this well predates internet records. The aforementioned cultivars are not well known and to this day have limited distribution, but it is important to note their existence, as Samuel Wissing of Illinois is often credited as the first hybridizer to produce coral cultivars with his introductions of the extremely popular ‘[Coral Charm](#)’ (1964), ‘[Coral Sunset](#)’ (1965), and ‘[Coral Supreme](#)’ (1964). While Wissing’s credit as the first hybridizer of corals is debatable and requires one to define what one accepts as “coral,” it is certainly true that Wissing’s introductions had a profound effect on the peony world and popularized the novel colour and that Wissing had selected quality plants with desirable traits.



A coral firstcomer: ‘Little Dorrit’ (Saunders, 1952).

What was Wissing’s winning combination? A cross between ‘[Minnie Shaylor](#)’ (a lactiflora mother plant) and *P. officinalis* “Otto Froebel” (a father plant that is a species form of *P. officinalis* or perhaps a hybrid with *P. peregrina* and is known for its orange-red scarlet colour) produced ‘Coral Charm’, ‘Coral Sunset’, and ‘Coral Supreme’, three of the most popular and readily available coral cultivars; these results came after 26 years of hybridizing with the goal of producing a coral cultivar! Interestingly enough, Saunders extensively used a plant that he referred to as “lobata of Perry”, now thought of as a species selection of *P. officinalis* or



‘Coral Charm’, ‘Pink Hawaiian Coral’ and ‘Coral Sunset’: three popular and awarded cultivars

perhaps a hybrid with *P. peregrina*, to produce some of his best known hybrids in addition to the aforementioned 'Coralie' and 'Little Dorrit'. Wissing's coral plants were registered in 1964 and 1965 and would see a large increase in popularity towards the end of the 20th century and into the 21st and continue to be fan favourites today.

In 1986, 'Coral Charm' was awarded the [APS Gold Medal](#), and in 2006, 'Coral Sunset' was the gold medallist. The Award of [Landscape Merit](#) is a notable distinction, and it celebrated the superior landscape qualities of 'Coral 'n Gold', 'Coral Sunset', and 'Pink Hawaiian Coral' in 2009. 'Coral Charm', 'Coral Sunset', and 'Pink Hawaiian Coral' are now considered garden staples by many, and Charm and Sunset are prevalent in the cut-flower industry.

Colour

The colour coral in peonies is a complex one produced by the interaction of multiple pigments. It exists along a pink-orange spectrum, and the peonies with the most dramatic and "exotic" appearance in this colour family lean more orange. Orange does not exist as a stand-alone pigment in peonies, and the overall effect appears to be produced by a layering of warm reddish pink and yellow-cream tone pigments. The red pigments appear to "burn off" or bleach in the sun first, leaving behind a creamy yellow or off-white resting colour. While coral cultivars deliver a radiant punch of colour that pierces through the landscape upon the opening of a flower and through initial stages of bloom, this instability of the pigments explains the transformative colour progression or fade pattern that they are known for. While some peony growers I have conversed with have expressed a desire for this piercing colour to be everlasting and sun proof, I view the compelling transition that the corals exhibit as a marvelous quality that should be celebrated; flowers have a different appearance every day, if not every few hours (yes, this holds true in the vase), and when a mature plant has blooms in all stages of colour it produces a riot of visual interest. First-time growers are often astonished to watch this colour progress play out. The corals are captivating subjects from opening to the drop of the last petal.

The coral cultivars all have a unique combination of characteristics that can be used to distinguish them



The dazzling colour transformation of the corals.

from their contemporaries and that give them a certain landscape utility, and colour itself is a quality that is no exception. Along the pink-orange coral spectrum, I would place 'Coral Sunset' the furthest towards the orange side; it is also perhaps the most intense and vibrant colour when the flower opens and delivers a strong and unusual splash of colour. 'Pink Hawaiian Coral', as the name implies, and the Canadian introduction 'Le Cratère' reside on the other, pink side of the spectrum. Popular and readily accessible cultivars like 'Coral Charm', 'Coral Supreme', and Canadian-bred 'Coral 'n Gold' reside between these two extremes, and lesser known and grown 'Coral Magic' (which is highly reminiscent of 'Raspberry Charm' both in form and colour, albeit with

less petallage) has a red hue to it, adding another element of depth to the colour expression of coral cultivars. “King’s Day”, an unregistered mutation of ‘Coral Sunset’ discovered by Borst Flowers nursery in the Netherlands, has flowers that open in the pastel peaches that other corals phase through in mid-bloom stage. Thanks to Koen Hurtekant (of Belgium; henceforth referred to as Koen) of peonysociety.org for the information regarding the origins of “King’s Day”.



“King’s Day”, captured shortly after flower opening.

Form and Presentation

‘Coral Charm’ and ‘Coral Supreme’ display large, semi-double flowers that are generously furnished with cupped petals that produce a striking bowl shape. Flowers are borne one to a stem. In contrast, ‘Coral Sunset’ has more flattish, low profile, semi-double form flowers with ruffled petals and will often produce one to two side buds in my garden on a mature plant. ‘Pink Hawaiian Coral’ has a globular form but does not have as defined a bowl shape as Charm and Supreme do; when flowers are fully open the form is between that of Charm and Sunset. The petal placement is perhaps the most informal of the coral cultivars, with less organization and precision of petal positioning than seen in the aforementioned cultivars. Flowers are smaller than that of Charm, Supreme, and Sunset but have the most petallage of all the corals we will discuss here; on mature and/or well-grown specimens, flowers will often present themselves as loose doubles. ‘Pink Hawaiian Coral’ has been the most prolific side bud producer

for me, with two or three side buds per stem being commonplace. The Canadian cultivars ‘Coral ‘n Gold’ and ‘Le Cratère’ are the two single-form peonies that will be mentioned here. Both have two rows of petals, but ‘Coral ‘n Gold’ forms a cupped flower whereas ‘Le Cratère’ exhibits a wider, shallow bowl. ‘Coral ‘n Gold’ has the larger flowers of the two, and ‘Le Cratère’ has anthers that fall flat in mid-bloom stage, a trait that I’m not particularly fond of. Both of these single-form cultivars have produced one flower per stem in my experience; however, the registry entry for ‘Le Cratère’ states that side bud production is possible. All cultivars mentioned here present the flowers above the foliage and are not sunken down in the bush and obscured by leaves.



Artfully displayed coral peonies, photo by Céline Arseneault, Country Home and Blooms.

Landscape Qualities

In general, the corals have thick stems with good strength, and it is unlikely that you will find any stems on these plants drooping or sagging with a gooseneck. After all, three cultivars that we’ve discussed have been awarded the APS Award of Landscape merit, a designation that recognizes superior landscape quali-

ties in a cultivar, a requirement of which is a stalwart, upright posture. However, the problem at hand is that some coral cultivars like Charm and Supreme are quite tall (up to 36 plus inches). Large flowers on tall stems create a high centre of gravity and make for good wind sails, and the lanky stems of Charm and Supreme can often become displaced or lie at a low angle relative to the ground, struggling to recover and return to their original position. Therefore, Charm and Supreme are best grown in the viewed landscape with support and are not good candidates for the front of a garden bed.

In contrast, ‘Coral Sunset’ is shorter and more compact, attaining a height that is closer to the 30 to 32 inch mark. This lower centre of gravity, coupled with rigid, thick stems, results in a plant that is self supporting and does not require mechanical support. It also provides unique landscape value in that it allows for the placement of coral flowers closer to the front or middle of the perennial border. ‘Coral ‘n Gold’ is another candidate for stake-free growing. While the habit and self-supporting nature of these cultivars is

impressive, a recent favourite of mine for habit is ‘Le Cratère’. This magnificent plant stands near four feet tall with stems as straight as an arrow that are garbed in handsome foliage down to the ground. Unlike Charm and Supreme, which also have a substantial height, the stems of ‘Le Cratère’ do not move during wind, rain, and inclement weather in general, perhaps due to the less petal-laden, unburdened single-form flowers. It is a sight to behold, towering over nearly all other herbaceous peonies, with an unwavering and regal stance and flowers that are held like brilliant torches.

Depending on the seasonal conditions and climate in which the corals are grown, they may enter early dormancy, which can impact their appearance. This will be discussed under Disease Resistance.

Bloom Time

The corals bloom late-midseason, with an average bloom date of five to six days after ‘Red Charm’, according to the [Bloom Date Project](#). This places them in a position in the bloom sequence where nearly all peony groups are concurrently flowering. The earliest cultivar to bloom that we’ve discussed is ‘Pink Hawaiian Coral’, blooming on average three days after ‘Red Charm’, and the latest to flower is ‘Coral Charm’, blooming on average one week after ‘Red Charm’. ‘Pink Hawaiian Coral’ is the first coral cultivar to emerge in the spring and breaks ground very early in general, being one of the first peonies to poke through.

Disease Resistance

Unfortunately, the corals appear to be especially susceptible to the botrytis species that targets stems in the soil early in spring, causing infected stems to keel over at the soil line shortly after signs of damage are first observable. ‘Coral Sunset’ has been a victim that is the worst afflicted in my garden, and this experience is echoed on a much larger scale by a commercial cut flower producer in the Fraser Valley whom I keep in touch with. A fellow peony enthusiast in Quebec reports similar issues annually with ‘Coral Magic’. Site selection of a well-draining planting location with proper air circulation may be critical for the long-term health of the corals.



‘Le Cratère’ exhibits superior landscape qualities.

In warm climates, and during long, hot, dry summers, the corals may enter early dormancy, a trait that is perhaps imparted by their *P. officinalis*/*P. peregrina* species heritage. This can lead to unsightly foliage blemishes and discoloration in late summer.

Propagation and Adventitious Qualities

The herbaceous hybrids are a group of peonies where it is not uncommon to encounter challenging root configurations that make root division difficult and yield few divisions. I'm glad to say that this has not been the case with the coral cultivars I've worked with, which are most of the above, and that they produce divisions that number in the range of what is considered "average" or "good" versus the time they have been growing.

The corals have a unique property that allows them to be easily propagated, and done so quickly from small root fragments. They are said to be adventitious cultivars, meaning they can form eyes from blind roots. Adventitious eyes/buds are those that form where you would not normally expect to find them. In herbaceous peonies, eyes typically form at the crown, and the crown only. The coral cultivars are able to form eyes on root tissue that can be located at distances well away from the crown. It is common to find root fragments that break off during division of the corals with one or several eyes per piece. Root division scraps that do not have eyes at the time of viewing can also generate them at a later time, so all underground pieces of the plant can be replanted, or stored in cool peat moss until eyes form, with the hope of starting a new plant.



An adventitious eye forming on taproot (non-crown) tissue.

This makes the survivability of the plants quite high and explains why the corals are so readily available and at a relatively low price point. If you are looking to increase your root stock of the corals, are moving plants, and/or would like to share with your friends, take advantage of this unique feature that lends itself to rapid propagation.

This adventitious quality is likely passed on from the *P. officinalis*, a highly adventitious species.

Fertility and Hybridization Potential

The corals have highly reduced fertility as a seed parent. I have not done extensive testing with pollen fertility, but I suspect the same holds true. Primary hybrids, hybrids created by crossing two species, often exhibit reduced fertility, and the degree to which this fertility is reduced can widely vary. Because there is some uncertainty surrounding the genetic background of "Otto Froebel" and "lobata of Perry", it is hard to say whether most corals are primary hybrids, but they certainly behave in a similar fashion when it comes to breeding. When left to open pollination, Charm, Sunset, and Pink Hawaiian will very rarely produce small, oblong seeds. The frequency of seed production has been boosted by applying tetraploid pollens, making me believe that these cultivars are triploid (possessing three chromosome copies).

In the rare occasion that primary hybrids produce offspring, fertility is often restored in the F2 generation. Getting F1 primary hybrid plants over the hump often takes effort, but it makes for an exciting project, and history has shown it to be worth the effort with many triumphs in this respect being considered as breakthroughs. It's my hope and belief that fertile coral hybrids are on the horizon and will soon be available for hybridizers to work with. Unfortunately none of my coral-produced seeds have germinated...yet. Luckily we have the fine work of persistent hybridizers to continue the discussion in the next segment.

Offspring and Advanced Generation Corals

For the reasons discussed above, recorded instances of progeny coming from coral cultivars are few, but they certainly exist and are exciting to discuss. ['Coral Reef'](#)

is a hybrid by [Hans Maschke](#) (2015) of Germany, who is known for his success with many difficult crosses, that comes out of open pollinated ‘Coral Charm’. According to Koen and the registry entry, this has usable fertility. Now we’re getting somewhere! Also out of ‘Coral Charm’ x open pollination is ‘[Tropicana](#)’ (Nordic, 2012). I have grown this plant and seen it flower, and it is a superlative plant, being tall (which you’ll notice is a common theme here), imposing, and having very large flowers that resemble ‘Coral Sunset’ closely in form. To my eye, it is an unmistakable hot pink, with little orange in it.



“OFF-4”, image courtesy of Koen Hurtekant.

On the flip side of things with corals appearing as the pollen parent, we have ‘[Christina](#)’ (Krupke, 1999). This is the product of an interesting cross, as it’s a backcross to the Otto Froebel lineage. Koen put this plant on my radar as a cultivar that he is impressed with, citing its large reddish flowers, tall and upright posture, and, perhaps most interesting, foliage that remains green much later in summer than most coral hybrids. In a recent [Facebook post](#), Koen shared a Maschke seedling known as “OFF-4”, which came from the cross ‘Old Faithful’ x ‘Coral Charm’. Koen proceeded to discuss its many superior qualities that were a bit let down by a tendency for stems to slightly spread. A report of seed and pollen fertility had my full attention, but sadly it seems it produces unhealthy seedlings with poor qualities.

Perhaps the most astonishing result I encountered was when I came across the registry entry for Maschke’s ‘[Pastel Rose](#)’ (2020). This cultivar has corals on both sides of the parentage (‘Coral Charm’ x ‘Coral Reef’) and the flower in the registry image is an unmistakable blousy double. Not only does it have that gorgeous rose double form, it is also recorded that it has a rose fragrance. Given that the corals are predominantly singles or semi-doubles and have a rather unpleasant fragrance that is referred to as “fishy” by some peony enthusiasts, these are two completely unexpected results! There appears to be much yet to learn in these uncharted waters.

Finding Coral Cultivars

Coral tones are observable in the herbaceous hybrid, woody, and Itoh groups of peonies but not in the lactifloras. In the herbaceous group, ‘Coral Charm’, ‘Coral Sunset’, and ‘Pink Hawaiian Coral’ are readily accessible and commonly found in peony vendor catalogues annually at low price points. ‘Coral Supreme’ and ‘Coral ‘n Gold’ are often available, but less so than the aforementioned three. Any of these would make a fine addition to the garden and a good coral “starter” peony.

Many Itoh cultivars phase through the coral range with their signature colour shifts, but a certain Itoh cultivar comes to mind for a very distinct and unmistakable coral tone that has more staying power: ‘[New Millennium](#)’. This cultivar has seen little to no distribution from Canadian vendors but is available at specialty U.S. nurseries and comes with a higher price tag.



‘New Millennium’, a coral-toned Itoh cultivar.

Woody peonies that express coral hues are available in the lutea hybrid group, but due to my lack of growing experience with woody peonies (they are subject to winter die back in this cold Albertan climate), I would recommend visiting the [Solaris Farms website](#) and searching for “coral” or using the colour filter in the woody catalogue section under lavender-pink-coral or orange-peach. The expression of coral hues is said to be highly variable in the woody group. The cultivar ‘Coral Nebula’ is probably one of the best bets in the colour family, according to Nate Bremer, hybridizer/joint owner of Solaris Farms and past president of the American Peony Society.

Coral Colour Spectrum: Final Thoughts

Colour is multidimensional and a complex subject. It does not exist within a vacuum, it is perceived differently by everyone, its expression is impacted by climate and soil conditions, and at certain points arbitrary lines had to be drawn to determine a cultivar’s inclusion or exclusion in this article. When I polled others on whether certain cultivars should be mentioned here, some replied yes as if it was a

foregone conclusion, and others replied no, that the cultivar was too pink or not orange enough. There are certainly quite a few warm-tone pink peonies, sometimes described as “pink-coral” or “rosy coral,” that give one pause. One such peony for me was the fabulous ‘*Desiderata*’, which has a certain *je ne sais quoi* and a luminous quality to it that doesn’t quite come across through photos. Peonies have come a long way, and we are lucky to have reached a point where we can debate whether a number of cultivars can be counted amongst the corals, considering the absence of this colour about a century ago.

It’s my hope that this article has not only clearly communicated some of the nuanced differences in colour between coral cultivars, but has also made you consider other plant qualities to give you more agency over your growing experience by finding plants that are well suited to your setting and needs.



Ballarena de Saval by Shelley King

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2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Mark your calendar! The CPS 2025 Annual General Meeting will take place on April 27 at 2:00 p.m. EDT and will be followed by a presentation by a high-profile speaker. Details on this special guest will be announced at a later time.

SEEKING BOARD MEMBERS

Calling all peony lovers! Are you interested in unique peony learning opportunities and connecting with other like-minded enthusiasts? Are you looking to give back and build your volunteer experience? The CPS has openings for Board Directors. As a Director, you will be part of a community that shares your love for these stunning flowers and helps to promote and preserve them for future generations to enjoy. If you're interested in joining us on this mission, we encourage you to get in touch by emailing info@peony.ca to become part of our peony family! We welcome all interested volunteers and will train, educate, and share position descriptions.

We are currently seeking nominations to fill the following board positions at the Annual General Meeting:

Treasurer: In addition to attendance at board and Executive Committee meetings, the Treasurer is responsible for paying the bills, keeping the accounting records on QuickBooks, annual budget preparation, and monthly reporting and recommendations to the board on financial matters.

BC/Yukon and Prairies/North-West Territories Regional Directors: The role of regional directors is to facilitate communications among peony lovers in their regions and between those individuals and the Society, represent the Society at horticulture-related events, and find ways to educate the public about peonies.



Director at Large: We are looking for a marketing- and technology-savvy individual to assist in marketing the Society and Society-related events.

The board meets monthly except during the summer months.

If you are interested in filling a board position, please send an Expression of Interest to info@peony.ca before March 31, 2025.

ZOOM WEBINAR DATES CONFIRMED

Please be aware that the dates for the [following presentations](#) have now been set. In the previous issue these dates were listed as to be determined. For presentation outlines, please see the link above.

Sunday, February 23, 2025, 2 p.m. EST
 “Pretty Awesome – W.E. Upjohn Peony Garden a Science-Based Knowledge-Garden” presented by Dr. David C. Michener, Ph.D. & Dr. Nastassia Vlasava, Ph.D.

Sunday, March 23, 2025, 2 p.m. EDT
 “Peony Fever in China” presented by Michele Moore

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Once again, we will be calling on our members to submit nominations for both [The John Simkins Memorial Hybridizer Award](#) and the CPS Lifetime Achievement Award, the recipients to be awarded at the Annual Meeting. The criteria for these awards is described in the link above. Submissions must be emailed to darlene@kalawsky.com by March 31 at midnight Pacific Time.

Nick Shaylor by Karen Lee



Coral Sunset by Karen Lee

GET TO KNOW YOUR MEMBERS!

HELLO, RITA SHELLARD

Donna Slater



"Peony Symphony" watercolour by Rita Shellard.

Meet Rita Shellard, a CPS lifetime member since 1999, and an artist who began studying her craft in 1954 at L'École des Beaux-Arts de Montreal. She started creating oil and watercolour paintings of landscapes and seascapes, later branching into gardens, flowers, and of course, peonies. Rita is well known to peony hybridizer and fellow CPS member Lindsay D'Aoust and thus began her fascination with peonies. Rita then created a peony garden at her home, with woody peonies counting among her many favourites from which she took her inspiration. Lindsay says, "Though the pictures on the website can be very good, believe me...in real life, Rita's peony paintings are truly stunning!"

Rita later established the Inspiration Art Gallery in Ottawa, offering art rentals of her work until clients had enough time to be certain of their choice. A second gallery was opened in downtown Ottawa in 1984. She then moved to St. Lazare, Quebec, and opened Inspiration Art School in 1991. Rita has done numerous art shows, judged many exhibitions, and

created special commissions. About 20 years ago, Rita created a black-and-white peony design used for a CPS promotion. A painting entitled "And Then There Was Light" was thoughtfully gifted to U.S. President Barack Obama in 2009. You can view her artwork on her Art-Inspiration [website](#).

DIRECTOR'S PICK

This peony pick comes from Donna Slater, CPS Co-Director in Ontario. 'Do Tell' (Auten, 1946) is a Japanese-type lactiflora and this is how she describes it:

"Do Tell is a simple, delicate flower on a healthy plant! It makes my heart go pit-a-pat. Then, there are all the others that cause palpitations, such as 'Cytherea', 'Shirley Temple', 'Cora Stubbs', 'Coral Sunset', 'Kirinmaru', 'Julia Rose', 'LaDonna', 'Dancing Butterflies', 'First Arrival', my mother and mother-in-law's peonies, 'Smith Family Yellow', et cetera. Thinking about them in cold, snowy January should send me to a heart specialist appointment!"



'Do Tell', photo by Donna Slater.

IT'S SHOW TIME!



The American Peony Society's 2025 Annual Convention will be a unique celebration of peonies, art, music, and food, crowned with the national flower show and exhibition. The event—which will be held in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin—has been developed in collaboration with the Wisconsin Arts & Peony Festival, the Beaver Dam Chamber of Commerce, and the State of Wisconsin.

The city offers a unique and diverse experience for attending members, with a small hometown atmosphere and many arts and entertainment experiences. Beaver Dam has embraced the peony as a focal point for its annual Wisconsin Arts and Peony Festival. This is a wonderful platform to enjoy the festival and share our love and knowledge of peonies with the public.

Educational seminars and the Exhibition and Flower Show will be held within walking distance (less than a mile) at the beautiful and modern Beaver Dam High School (BDHS). For more information and to register online for the event, please visit the American Peony Society's [website](#).

LA SOCIÉTÉ QUÉBÉCOISE DE LA PIVOINE

A wonderful list of events are planned for members of the Société québécoise de la pivoine, including some very special garden tours!

GRAND BAL DES PIVOINES (ANNUAL PEONY SHOW)

June 14-15, 2025

<https://www.pivoinequebec.org/grand-bal-des-pivoines-2025>

GARDEN TOURS

June 7, 2025

On the agenda: tours of three gardens, including the garden of Lucie Pepin, our president, and her spouse Pierre Turenne in Acton Vale.

<https://www.pivoinequebec.org/visite-de-jardins-2025>

Peony Day, including the annual auction

September 21, 2025

<https://www.pivoinequebec.org/journee-de-la-pivoine-2025>

PRAIRIE PEONY SOCIETY

The PPS annual show will be held on June 21 on the Main Street of Lumsden in the heart of the Qu'Appelle Valley. More information to follow closer to the date.



OUR GRATITUDE

Thank you to the American Peony Society, Céline Arseneault, Nate Bremer, Joan Campbell, Myra Froc, Koen Hurtekant, Darlene Kalawsky, Shelley King, Erin Linn, Sara Lorenz, Nick Maycher, Lois Mcleod, Leslaw Modelski, Rita Shellard, and Donna Slater for contributing to this issue of the newsletter.

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