

## ***Coleus x hybridus* Coleus<sup>1</sup>**

Edward F. Gilman, Teresa Howe<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

Although Coleus does flower, it is grown for its brightly colored leaves (Fig. 1). The plant grows in sun to partial shade and requires a lot of water. Coleus reaches 20 to 24 inches tall but trailing types can be used in hanging pots. Pinch young plants or older, leggy plants to encourage branching for a fuller plant. Coleus may be used as a potted plant indoors in a sunny window or outdoors in part sun. They are sometimes planted in mass on 12 to 18 inch centers to add a splash of bright color to any landscape. A mass planting looks nice with a backdrop of green shrubs. Remove flower spikes as they appear to encourage more foliage growth. Cold wet soils and poor cultural practices can result in leaf drop.

### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Coleus x hybridus*

**Pronunciation:** KOE-lee-us x HYE-brid-us

**Common name(s):** Coleus

**Family:** *Labiatae*



**Figure 1.** Coleus.

**Plant type:** annual

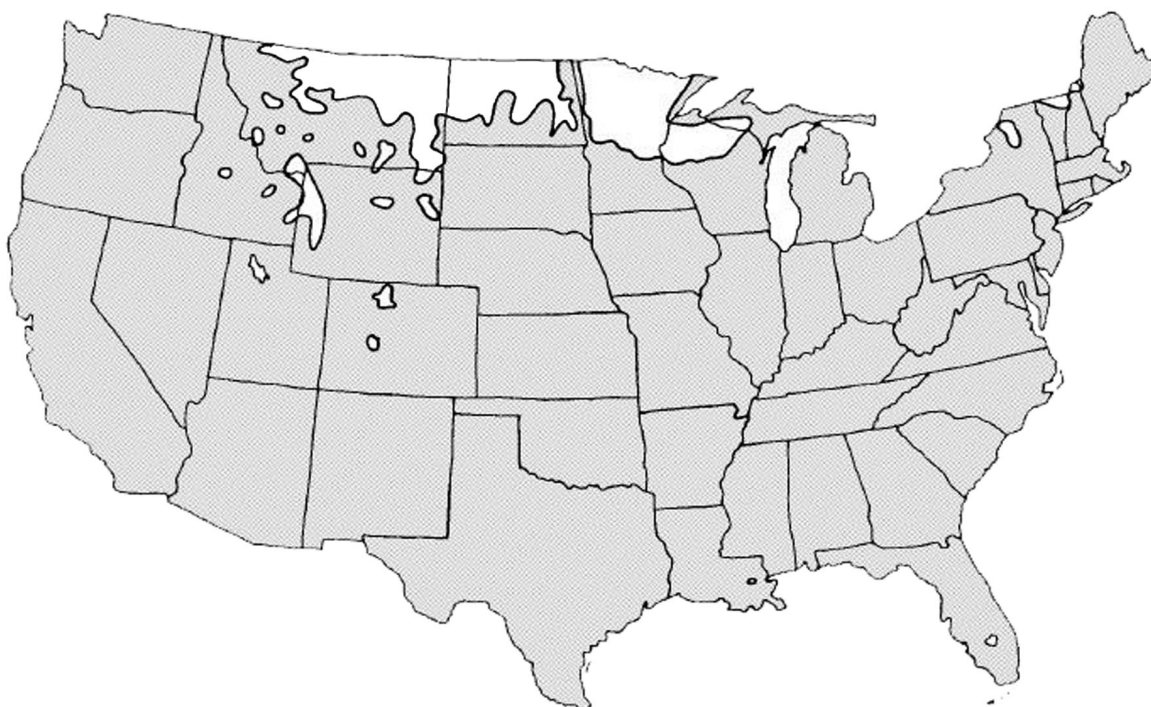
**USDA hardiness zones:** all zones (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 7:** Jun; Jul; Aug

**Planting month for zone 8:** May; Jun; Jul; Aug

1. This document is FPS136, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date October, 1999. Reviewed June, 2007. Visit the EDIS Web Site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Teresa Howe, coordinator - Research Programs/Services, Gulf Coast REC, Bradenton, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.



**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Planting month for zone 9:** Mar; Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep; Oct

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** Mar; Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep; Oct

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** mass planting; container or above-ground planter; edging; accent

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

**Description**

**Height:** 1 to 3 feet

**Spread:** 1 to 3 feet

**Plant habit:** round

**Plant density:** dense

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** medium

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** crenate; lobed; undulate

**Leaf shape:** ovate

**Leaf venation:** bowed

**Leaf type and persistence:** not applicable

**Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches

**Leaf color:** yellow; green; variegated

**Fall color:** not applicable

**Fall characteristic:** not applicable

**Flower**

**Flower color:** blue

**Flower characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** no fruit

**Fruit length:** no fruit

**Fruit cover:** no fruit

**Fruit color:** not applicable

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

can be set out spring through late summer. Winter plantings are successful in south Florida in the full sun provided adequate moisture is available.

Mites cause the leaves to be puckered and distorted.

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig color:** green

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** very thick

### Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; acidic; loam

**Drought tolerance:**

**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown

**Plant spacing:** 12 to 18 inches

### Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** not applicable

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

### Use and Management

Coleus is propagated by seed and cuttings. Cuttings as short as two inches can be taken from newly grown shoots and rooted in plain water. The seed germinates in 10 to 14 days at 70 to 75-degrees F. Light stimulates germination so seed should not be covered. Set plants outside after the weather has warmed. In USDA hardiness zones 8 to 11, coleus