

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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New Tesselaar Variety Comes to U.S.

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Anthony Tesselaar is picky when it comes to new introductions, which is why they don't happen often. After all, if you're going to follow up on the success of Flower Carpet Rose, Canna Tropicanna and Volcano Phlox, you'd better get it right!

Which is why we're curious to try out Daphne Perfume Princess, the newest Tesselaar variety to come to the U.S. Australian garden guru Don Burke called it "the best new plant to come out in Australia in the last 50 years. It's that good."

Launched in Australia in 2015 at the Melbourne International Flower Show, Perfume Princess has won a few awards to back up the claims, including "Plant of the Year" by the Australian Nursery and Garden Industry Association, the 2018 "Best New Ornamental Plant Variety" by Horticulture Week magazine in the UK, and the 2018 Gold Medal in Belgium's Florall Award.

Perfume Princess was bred by New Zealand-based Mark Jury, who was determined to improve Daphne selections. His success came when he combined the tough growth habit of Daphne bholua types with the heady fragrance and flowering performance of Daphne odora. "It is just a brilliant plant to grow and a terrific nursery plant to produce," Mark says. "That is not true of most Daphnes, which can be very difficult to produce in containers." He goes on to explain "This is both the first and the last Daphne to bloom each year in our garden."

Perfume Princess has a long flowering period and flowers from the tip all the way down the stem. Extremely tough and durable, it can withstand high temperatures, drought, humidity and waterlogging. The plant does not suffer the yellowing of leaves that's so common in Daphne. It is also extremely vigorous, an excellent grower and responds very well to pruning. For instance, in three years of growing, Wyevale Nurseries in the UK says they haven't lost a single plant.

We asked Tesselaar's Global Operations Director Phillip Townshend about availability in the U.S.

"The plant has been trialed in multiple locations across the USA," he told me via email, including Washington State, Oregon, California, Alabama and Florida. However, he says it's still a relatively new program in the U.S. because his licensed growers have been a little slower to pick up the crop than those in Australia and Europe. Why?

"I think this is mainly due to the consumer familiarity in other markets with Daphne as a genus, and the difference in retailer customer bases between these markets and USA," he says.

Currently, production of Perfume Princess is mainly on the West Coast, but will be expanding into other regions. He

says Monrovia lists it on their website, and Matsuda's Nursery has availability. Phillip adds, "We are still working through what happened to stock that was in production with Color Spot/Hines, but Village Nurseries and Treetown USA are licensed by Tesselaar, so I expect they will pick up the production on this program."

To learn more about Daphne Perfume Princess, go to www.tesselaar.com. For details on USA stock availability, contact Phillip Townshend at ptownshend@tesselaar.com. **GT**