‘Marshalls Delight’ Monarda

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Monarda or bee-balm is grown as a short-lived, ornamental perennial. Plants are very floriferous and produce white, purple, red, or pink blooms but are not attractive after the flowers fade due to the development of powdery mildew (Erysiphe spp.) and rust (Puccinia menthae Pers.). Plants may be almost totally defoliated by these diseases. The majority of cultivars currently available have been developed either in the United States or in Europe and appear to be selections of Monarda didyma L. Monarda fistulosa L. is native to the Canadian prairies and was used as a source of hardiness in a breeding program initiated by Henry H. Marshall, now retired from Agriculture Canada. ‘Marshalls Delight’ monarda is a new cultivar with high resistance to powdery mildew and moderate resistance to rust. The cultivar is named in honor of Henry H. Marshall.

Origin

‘Marshalls Delight’ was developed through a series of open pollination and selection cycles originating from the cultivar Souris (Fig. 1). One manually cross-pollinated population was interjected into these cycles. ‘Souris’ was selected from a seedling population developed from M. didyma ‘Cambridge Scarlet’ × M. fistulosa L. menthaefolia (R.C. Grah.) Fern. Plants were selected for disease resistance in the field under natural conditions.

Description

‘Marshalls Delight’ (Fig. 2) is a vigorous plant averaging 680 mm in height. The flowers are pink (63-B) (2) and the inflorescences are 50 to 60 mm in diameter. Leaves are yellow-green (147-A), shiny, and contrast well with the flower. ‘Marshalls Delight’ has survived in plant hardiness zone 3 (1) since 1980. Plants can be propagated from rhizomes in early spring, division in fall or spring, or softwood stem cuttings taken early in the growing season.

Availability

‘Marshalls Delight’ monarda is registered with the Canadian Ornamental Plant Foundation (COPF), P.O. Box 725, Durham, Ontario, N0G 1R0. A limited supply of propagating material is available upon request until 1 July 1989 from the Research Station, Morden, Manitoba, to COPF members for commercial production, and to research institutions for test purposes.

Literature Cited


Fig. 1. Parentage of ‘Marshalls Delight’ monarda.

Fig. 2. ‘Marshalls Delight’ monarda.