'Dunvegan' Foamflower

L.P. Perry¹

Department of Plant and Soil Science, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405

S. Adam²

Dunvegan Nursery, 1001 South New Street, West Chester, PA 19832

M.R. Huh³

Department of Horticultural Science, Korea University, Anamdong Seoul, Korea 136-701

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Tiarella cordifolia L., commonly called foamflower (Bailey, 1976), is native to North America and is distributed from Nova Scotia to Ontario and Minnesota, south to Georgia, and west to Indiana and Michigan. Racemes of white, rarely reddish flowers on stems to 30 cm long appear above long-petioled, pubescent, broadly ovate leaves between April and May. Depending on genotype, plants form either creeping stolons, creating irregularly spreading mats 50 to 100 cm across (Phillips and Rix, 1991), or foliage clumps 15 to 25 cm wide. Foliage remains green throughout the winter, marginal browning occurring at sub-freezing temperatures with no snow cover, and abscising in the spring when new growth emerges. 'Dunvegan', a recent selection named after the nursery at which it was developed, differs from the native species and other recently selected cultivars in leaf shape and markings (Fig. 1), bloom duration, and root hardiness.

Origin

Tiarella cordifolia var. *collina* 'Dunvegan' is a hybrid developed by the controlled pollination of *Tiarella cordifolia* var. *collina* (seed parent) with *Tiarella cordifolia* var. *collina* 'Oakleaf' (Adam and Kitto, 1993) in 1989 at Dunvegan Nursery, West Chester, Pa. Resulting seedlings (25) with interesting foliar characteristics (red or silver markings on shaped nonbroadly ovate leaves having shiny or rugose texture) were selected in 1990 and have been vegetatively propagated since then. 'Dunvegan' was subjectively evaluated at Dunvegan Nursery and the universities of Vermont and Maine in 1991 through 1995 for outdoor garden performance, growth, flowering time and hardiness, and in controlled freezing studies at the Univ. of Vermont in 1994–95 (Herrick and Perry, 1995). *Tiarella* 'Dunvegan'

was introduced into the commercial trade by Dunvegan Nursery in 1992 and is clonally propagated.

Description

'Dunvegan' is a vigorous-growing, clump-forming selection averaging 20 to 30 cm high (including flowers) and 20 to 30 cm wide. Foliage alone averages between 10 to 15 cm in height. Flowers, produced in profusion during mid- to late-May in southeastern Pennsylvania, are white-tinged with pink, which intensifies distally to tips. Sepals are 2 to 4 mm wide; petals are lanceolate and between 4 to 8 mm wide. Stamens are 2 to 7 mm long with bare coral-colored anthers. Inflorescences reach 10 to 15 cm above the foliage and are 2 to 3 cm in diameter. 'Dunvegan' differs from other varieties of *T. cordifolia* in its longer bloom time (6 vs. 4 weeks) and in its leaves emerging red and pubescent, and maturing to a dark green with distinct lobes. Foliage (6 to 7 cm wide and long) becomes darker green in autumn.

'Dunvegan' plants have survived with no loss over four winters in Burlington, Vt. [U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) zone 4], and are likely to survive throughout the species hardiness range (USDA zones 3 to 9). In preliminary controlled freezing studies, 'Dunvegan' was intermediate in hardiness between two other recent cultivars, 'Oakleaf' and 'Laird of

Skye', regrowing into a salable plant after root exposure to -9 °C (Perry, 1995; Perry and Herrick, 1995). Insect damage or foliar disease was absent on 'Dunvegan' at all sites in the years examined.

'Dunvegan' grows well in containers and its extended flowering period enhances this aspect of culture. Plants can be propagated by division and by tissue culture (Kitto and Hoopes, 1992). Although 'Dunvegan' grows best in moisture-retentive, highly organic soils in medium to heavy shade, it will grow in sandy loam soils given adequate water. Exposure to full sun results in poor vigor (Armitage, 1989), as do prolonged wet periods in winter (Huxley, 1992) and temperatures >30 to 35 °C.

Availability

Commercial availability of 'Dunvegan' ranges from tissue-cultured microcuttings (stage II) to liners and finished plants. No intellectual property protection applies, and source information may be obtained from the authors.

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Fig. 1. 'Dunvegan' foamflower leaf shape.

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¹Associate Professor.

²Propagator and Breeder.

³Postdoctoral Fellow.