



## Recommended Peonies for Beginners

If you're new to growing peonies, or just want a short list of popular proven plants, take a look at our list of tried and true cultivars. These options are a great place to start, but are by no means comprehensive. You'll find literally thousands of plants to choose from that may be suitable for your garden and level of expertise.

### Lactiflora Peonies:

Lactiflora cultivars are excellent starter plants. These herbaceous plants are a bit more forgiving than some of the other groups and are known for their fragrance and cut flower use. There are thousands of named varieties (cultivars) available, some are easier culture. A wide variety of flower forms are expressed within the group to suit each person's definition of beauty:

- **Elsa Sass**-Double white, Gold Medal
- **Minnie Shaylor**-Semi-double white, Gold Medal
- **Kansas**-Double red, Gold Medal
- **Moonstone**-Double blush, Gold Medal
- **White Cap**-Japanese form red and white, Gold Medal
- **Krinkled White**-Single white, Gold Medal



### Herbaceous Hybrid Peonies:

Herbaceous hybrids are a diverse group, including many different plant habits and flower forms. Consulting American Peony Society's Awards pages or Registry of Peony Cultivars is helpful, but asking a commercial grower will provide further insight.

- **Etched Salmon**-Double salmon pink, Award of Landscape Merit, Gold Medal
- **Mahogany**-Single to semi-double deep red, Award of Landscape Merit, Gold Medal
- **Eliza Lundy**-Bomb double red, Gold Medal
- **Red Charm**-Bomb double red, Gold Medal
- **Coral Charm**-Semi-double coral-pink, Gold Medal



### Woody (Tree) Peonies:

Like the herbaceous hybrids, the woody peonies are a diverse group in both plant habit and flower characteristics. Cold hardiness of the stems is variable among different groups. The Chinese suffruticosa group should be avoided as they are poorly adapted to American continental climate. *P. rockii* cultivars are the best adapted group for cold climates and the Lutea hybrids are most tolerant of damp conditions. Japanese suffruticosa are relatively easy to grow in areas that have relatively dry growing seasons. Woody peonies are not considered for the Award of Landscape Merit, due to their upright growth habit.



- **Rock's Variety**-Single white with dark flares, very hardy *rockii* x *suffruticosa* cultivar
- **Hephestos**-Semi-double deep red, Lutea hybrid, Gold Medal
- **Anna Marie**-Semi-double lavender, Lutea hybrid
- **Chojuraku**-Semi-double deep lavender, Japanese *suffruticosa*
- **Leda-Semi-Double** lavender pink, Lutea hybrid, Gold Medal
- **Murad of Hershey Bar**-Single deep red, American *suffruticosa*, earliest woody peony to bloom
- **Age of Gold**-Semi-double light yellow, Lutea hybrid

### **Itoh Peonies:**

Itohs are hybrids produced from a cross of a *lactiflora* peony and a woody peony. They are generally grown as a herbaceous peony, but have foliage and flowers that much resemble their woody peony parents. Most are very hardy plants, are of easy culture and are disease resistant. Many new varieties are being introduced each year. Some are better than others.



- **First Arrival**-Semi-double lavender pink
- **Garden Treasure**-Semi-double, cut flower, Gold Medal, Award of Landscape Merit
- **Bartzella**-Semi-double, Gold Medal, Award of Landscape Merit
- **Unique**-Single red, deeply dissected foliage
- **Cora Louise**-Single to semi-double blush with dark flares
- **Sonoma Halo**-Double yellow

## Species Peonies:

These peonies are the relatives of all of our hybrids and selected *P. lactiflora* cultivars, which grow in the wild. *Paeonia* species are often somewhat more challenging to grow and most are not suitable for the beginner. A couple is considerably less fussy and may be grown in rather generalized conditions.

- ***Paeonia anomala***-Single pink, shade or broken sunlight
- ***Paeonia tenuifolia***-Red single or double, known as the fern leaf peony
- ***Paeonia mlokosewitschii***-Yellow single, but may be other colors, known as 'Molly the Witch'
- ***Paeonia ostii***-Single white, woody peony
- ***Paeonia rockii***-Single white with dark flares, woody peony



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