



American Peony Society

Gold Medal Peony

Information & Procedures

General Statement: The American Peony Society, by way of awarding medals and certificates, has long recognized exceptional peonies. In this scheme of things the Gold Medal has always been considered the ultimate accolade, but as the Society and the interest in peonies have evolved, so too have the criteria by which these medals were awarded. Today, the American Peony Society selects the 'Gold Medal' based on five "Observable Considerations" described below.

Observable Considerations

The following list may be interpreted differently by those selecting plants for nomination, making it subjective to a certain degree. However, collectively the "Observable Considerations" should yield outcomes placing high quality cultivars into a pool for selection of the Gold Medal. Thus, this is a "GUIDE" and should be treated as such.

- 1) Flower Consistency
 - a. Form, size, color and other attributes are produced reliably each bloom season
 - b. Resistant to variable conditions (late freezes, rainfall, temperatures, etc...)¹
 - c. Must show consistent flowers in areas in which peonies are normally grown
 - d. Consistent flowers can be expected after no more than 3 years after planting
- 2) Plant Consistency
 - a. Foliage remains in reasonably good condition throughout the spring and summer
 - b. Stem habit may need support during bloom, but should not be prone or show extreme open space at clump center after bloom (typically for herbaceous plants)
- 3) Ease of Culture
 - a. Plants are resistant to disease in normal growing situations
 - b. Growth rate is average or better (3 to 5 years to become a visually appealing clump)
 - c. No specialized siting or conditions are required to grow this plant beyond what is normally needed for good peony growth
 - d. May be grown in most regions in which peonies are well adapted
- 4) Availability
 - a. Is available through multiple sources.

¹ Bud reproductive parts are not exposed during development (open areas in buds are susceptible to water damage)

- b. May be reliably propagated without specialized techniques and is easily propagated using typical propagating techniques
 - c. Is reasonably priced for gardeners familiar with peonies (prices are not considered for low budget consumers, but should not be extreme for type and value the market is demanding)
- 5) Distinction
- a. Flowers and/or plants have a quality that reasonably differentiates them from other cultivars²
 - b. Unique qualities may include:
 - i. Flower color
 - ii. Flower form
 - iii. Flower size
 - iv. Fragrance
 - v. Abundant bloom
 - vi. Unique foliage (color, size, etc...)
 - vii. Unique plant habit

***Longevity and Trials³

Nominated cultivars must be widely grown in multiple regions and must have been registered for a minimum of five years.

Procedures for Selection of Gold Medal Peony

1. Nomination
 - a. A single member may submit up to 3 cultivar nominations through website, email or postal mail submission
 - i. Member submission forms for nominations are distributed in February and entries close May 15
 - b. Nominees must reasonably fulfill the five Observable Considerations
 - c. Nominees must be listed within the APS Peony Registry
 - d. Seedlings, garden named plants and plants in commerce but not within the Peony Registry are **not** to be considered for nomination.
 - e. Nominations are collected by the Awards Chair or another designated member.
2. Selection from nominations
 - a. Awards Chair will submit nominations for vetting by the Awards Committee
 - b. Removal of cultivars from the nomination listing may include:
 - i. Cultivars not found in the Peony Registry
 - ii. Cultivars which have already received the GM
 - c. After initial vetting the remaining cultivar nominations are submitted to the BOD at the Annual Convention for final Gold Medal determination.
 - d. BOD members will discuss nominees and eliminate cultivars not meeting the five Observable Considerations detailed above.

² Reference to distinctive plant qualities are not related to the Award of Landscape Merit. These distinctive plant qualities are ornamental in nature.

³ APS recommends members submitting nominations have firsthand experience with plants they are nominating. Nominations should not be solely based on images, other's opinions, polls, bouquets, etc...

- e. Remaining nominees will be voted on, using elimination rounds, until a clear winner is selected. APS Directors will exercise objectivity when voting, with a clear focus on the list of Observable Considerations presented above.

GOLD MEDAL PEONY

1. Announced at the annual banquet the year of its induction
2. Publicized through the APS Bulletin and website
3. Will become the “Peony of the Year” the following year.

January 22, 2020; Carol Adelman/Nate Bremer/Lore Sampson

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