



# 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...)<sup>1</sup>
  - 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 cultivars<sup>2</sup>
  - 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 Trials<sup>3</sup>

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 (**it is important to eliminate suspect cultivars no matter how much they are individually favored**)
  - 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

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

<sup>3</sup> 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 (not a popularity contest), bouquets, etc...

- c. The Awards Committee will present the cultivar nominated (for a given year) to the Board of Directors for approval one year prior to publicly announcing the awarded cultivar.
- d. BOD members may discuss the nomination(s) and their relationship to the Observable Considerations detailed above. BOD provides direction in cases where there is general disagreement with the Awards Committee's choice(s).
- e. The Awards committee is responsible for determination of this award, not the BOD. If not approved, Directors disagreeing with the Awards Committee nominated choice will be asked to join the Awards Committee to make a final determination.

### **GOLD MEDAL PEONY**

- 1. Announced at the annual banquet the year after its induction
- 2. Publicized through the APS Bulletin and website
- 3. The Gold Medal Peony is decided full year ahead of its announcement to the public

Revised April 14, 2022

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