

“Favorite Flowers of the Chesapeake Master Gardeners”

***Synandra hispidula* by Brenda Barrett**

Common name: Guyandotte Beauty

Family: Lamiaceae

This little plant is native to the east-central United States where it ranges from the southern Illinois to western North Carolina and Virginia. This plant grows in shady, moist forest habitat. It is sensitive to environmental changes and it does not persist after the removal of the forest canopy or removal of the litter layer. Threats to the species include habitat destruction and fragmentation, logging and other mechanisms that eliminate the shady canopy, overgrazing, trampling, recreational activity and pollution. Deer love it.



Some websites say it is secure as a species, others note that it is a rare plant about to be classified as endangered. It is now considered historic in North Carolina and it is listed as an endangered species in Illinois. It is more common in other states.

I found it at a plant sale in Richmond. A sign above it on the table said it was rare so I stopped to read the hand-written sign which said: *This beautiful 1– 2.5 foot biennial (plant has 2 year life cycle) is native to the dark hollows of coal country. Peter Heus rescued it from mower and deer induced oblivion; it now thrives at Enchanter’s Garden. In June white blossoms pop-out of a dark, rich deciduous forest like Christmas lights. Plants form rosettes the first year, bloom and die the second. In the right location, self-seeding colonies form.* It was in the rosette stage so I was not sure what I was getting but I was intrigued so I bought it. The first year it bloomed, died back and I forgot about it. This year it came back and it is beautiful. It must be happy where it is planted.

The plant’s common name comes from the Guyandotte River of West Virginia.



Zone: 5 – 8

Height: 12” – 18”

Spread: 12” – 18”

Bloom time: April – June

Bloom description: White/Mauve, White/Yellow, White/Near White

Sun: Part shade to full shade

Soil: Moist

Photos by Brenda Barrett

Resources:

plants.usda.gov

Wikipedia

Izel Native Plants

Dave’s Garden

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