Black-eyed Susan is a great choice for Oklahoma gardens

If there’s one plant that is the epitome of summer, it’s the *Rudbeckia* ‘American Gold Rush’ black-eyed Susan. This bright yellow plant with a chocolatey brown center adds some excitement to the landscape and has been selected as the 2023 Perennial Plant of the Year® by the Perennial Plant Association.

The Perennial Plant Association is a trade association composed of growers, retailers, landscape designers and contractors, educators and other professionals involved in the herbaceous perennial industry. The organization’s mission is to connect professionals, provide education and promote perennial plants.

This black-eyed Susan grows well in USDA Zones 4 to 9, which fits right in with the Oklahoma USDA Zones of 6a to 8a. The bold yellow flowers feature arching rays and a reddish halo that surrounds the dark brown center. This plant is compact at about 22 to 27 inches tall but can expand up to about 40 inches wide if given room to grow.

Look closely and you’ll see tiny hairs on the green leaves and stems. These hairs give the plant a silvery cast on sunny days. Not only is this black-eyed Susan a showpiece in the garden, the hairy foliage is resistant to Septoria leaf spot – a debilitating fungal disease that causes black spotting and premature seasonal decline. This is a hardy and reliable perennial selection gardeners should consider.

The American Gold Rush black-eyed Susan is a striking focal point in perennial borders and shines bright when massed in a large landscape. This is a great selection for those wanting to attract butterflies and songbird to the landscape. Butterflies benefit from the blooms and birds eat on the plentiful seeds long after the flowers have passed. As an added bonus, the seedheads provide visual interest during the winter months.

For the best results, plant in average, well-drained soils. The plant is adaptable to clay, alkaline or acid pH, as well as gravelly soils. It may not be as prosperous in rich, fertile soils. When planting, choose a site in full sun to partial shade. Gardeners looking for a low-maintenance perennial plant can’t go wrong selecting the American Gold Rush black-eyed Susan.