“Favorite Flowers of the Chesapeake Master Gardeners”

Rehmannia elata by Rebecca Jones

Common name: Chinese Foxglove or Beverly Bells
Family: Orobanchaceae

Two specimens were purchased from a botanical garden plant sale four years ago and placed in an all-container patio garden. They are some of the longest-lasting and best producing plants in the collection. In 2019, the plant “jumped” from the pots to a small patch of soil and are now also thriving there. For anyone who loves common foxgloves, but doesn’t have the patience for their “biennial-ness,” this is the plant for you.

Rehannia elata is a herbaceous perennial, native to China, with veined, hairy leaves and pink tubular flowers. It is not related to the common foxglove (*Digitalis*). Basal rosettes produce flowering stalks up to three feet tall. It is a repeat bloomer, encouraged by deadheading, from May to September. In the Chesapeake climate, it performs best with morning sun and afternoon shade. During the early years, constant moisture may be required, but once established, the plants are fairly drought tolerant. *Rehmannia elata* spreads by rhizomes and, in moist, fertile soil, may be invasive. The growing zones are 7-10, so Chesapeake is at the northern end, and plants require some extra care in the winter: move pots to a protected area and apply a good layer of much to those in the ground.

(Named after Joseph Rehmann, a German physician and botanist.)

Photo by Rebecca Jones
Resource: Missouri Botanical Garden /plant finder

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