"Favorite Flowers of the Chesapeake Master Gardeners"
***Paeonia* 'Bartzella' by Vickie Greene**

Common name: Itoh peony
Family: Paeoniaceae

This Itoh peony is spectacular. It has the largest flower of any I have, about 5 or 6 inches in diameter. It grows in full sun, in regular soil and so far, it has had no problems or pests. The color is wonderful, and the flower persists longer than other peonies I grow. Itoh peonies are hybrids of herbaceous peonies and tree peonies. They are deer resistant. When it opens a little more, it has a rose-colored center. It is truly spectacular.

Peonies have been cultivated in China for 1000 years and originated in Asia and Mediterranean areas. There are 2 species of peonies native to the west coast of US, but those are not commonly found in East Coast gardens. Peonies were introduced to US early in the 19th century. These herbaceous perennials are easy to grow in zones 3 to 8 with at least 4 to 6 hours of sun a day, tolerant of a variety of soils, and are long lived. One peony in my yard was given to me 25 years ago by another Master Gardener. It has continued to bloom despite being transplanted at least 3 times and sporadically being underwater during flooding. Depending upon the cultivar, peonies bloom in May to June.

Photo by Vickie Greene
Resources: Missouri Botanical Garden

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