

'John Clayton' Trumpet Honeysuckle by Ceil Rochevot

Botanical Name: *Lonicera semperavirens f. sulpherea*

Family Name: Caprifoliaceae

Lonicera semperavirens f. sulpherea 'John Clayton' is a cultivar of coral honeysuckle, commonly called trumpet honeysuckle. It is a twining vine that needs to be supported on a trellis or fence unless it is to be used as a ground cover. I purchased mine from a Chesapeake Master Gardener plant sale a couple of years ago. I like it because, for a vine, it is small and easy to manage in my small sun garden. I planted mine with the support of an obelisk that I purchased from a vendor at one of our local flower extravaganzas. I think this vertical form adds interest to the garden. It should not be confused with the invasive Japanese honeysuckle.



When flowering, the 'John Clayton' honeysuckle has beautiful clusters of yellow trumpet shaped blooms that are very attractive to hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies. Bloom time is May through June, but may bloom sporadically throughout the summer. Towards the end of summer, the vine is full of beautiful orange-red berries that the birds find attractive. I have it paired with the pink blossoms of Joe Pye weed and the purple blooms of *Allium millenium*. Any necessary pruning should be done after the bloom time to keep it in check.

'John Clayton' honeysuckle was found in 1991 in woodlands on the grounds of a 17th century church in Gloucester, Virginia. It is named after John Clayton (1694-1773), who was a colonial botanist and plant collector from Gloucester County, Virginia.

The vine is primarily native to the southeastern United States. It is easy to grow and has relatively low maintenance needs. It flowers best in full sun but will tolerate some shade. It grows in zone 4 to 9 and can reach 6 to 12 feet tall with a 3 to 5 feet spread. After flowering I have performed a little snipping here and there on wayward branches to keep it close to the obelisk. Mine has been semi-evergreen the past two winters.

Photo: Ceil Rochevot

References:

Missouri Botanical Gardens

Virginia Native Plant Society

www.almostedenplants.com