

perennial solutions



By Paul Pilon

Heliopsis helianthoides 'Tuscan Sun'

Offer customers a solar-powered boost with this perennial's brilliant golden blooms.

Every so often, a breeder introduces a new perennial cultivar that vastly improves on preexisting cultivars. *Heliopsis* 'Tuscan Sun' is a fairly recent Proven Winners introduction that offers such enhancements and provides the "Wow!" effect, both in containers and garden settings. 'Tuscan Sun' is compact, produces an abundance of flowers, and is fairly resistant to powdery mildew.

'Tuscan Sun' forms attractive clumps reaching 15-18 inches tall when in bloom by 20-24 inches wide at maturity. It produces numerous daisy-like flowers with yellow petals that shoot out from the golden, circular centers all summer long above attractive foliage on strong, sturdy stems. *Heliopsis* grows best well in

sunny locations throughout USDA Hardiness Zones 3 to 9. Once established in the landscape, this tough plant can tolerate a great deal of abuse, including heat and drought stress; however, plants produced in containers will require more frequent irrigation.

With its ease of production and show-stopping appearance, 'Tuscan Sun' has received numerous awards in recent years, including 2009 Knock Your Socks Off from the University of Georgia, 2009 Best Performer from Michigan State University and 2009 Top Performer from University of Kentucky Arboretum.

'Tuscan Sun' is a fierce, sunny variety that will be sure to attract the attention of passersby. It is great as a mass planting, as an accent in beds and borders, or in containers.

Propagation

Heliopsis 'Tuscan Sun' is vegetatively propagated by tip cuttings by a limited number of licensed propagators; self-propagation is strictly prohibited. Rooted liners are available in various sizes. See page 51 for a listing of the current licensed propagators.

Production

'Tuscan Sun' is well suited for production in small (5-inch) to intermediate-sized (one-gallon) containers. It performs best when it is grown in a good quality, well-drained peat or bark based growing medium. Plant one plug liner in the center of each container such that the original soil



line of the liner is even with the surface of the growing mix of the new container. Although it branches freely, a pinch two weeks after transplanting promotes fullness and increases the number of blooms; large container sizes may require two pinches.

Heliopsis requires moderate to moist irrigation; it will require more water as the crop progresses and approaches flowering. Water as needed when the plants are young and becoming established. Once they are well established, more frequent irrigations will be necessary. Keep them moist but not saturated during production.

They require a moderate amount of fertility. Nutrients can be delivered using water-soluble



Photos: Proven Winners