Introduction
Although coleus does flower, it is grown for its brightly colored leaves (Fig. 1). The plant grows in sun to partial shade and requires a lot of water. Coleus reaches 20 to 24 inches tall but trailing types can be used in hanging pots. Pinch young plants or older, leggy plants to encourage branching for a fuller plant. Coleus may be used as a potted plant indoors in a sunny window or outdoors in part sun. They are sometimes planted en mass on 12 to 18 inch centers to add a splash of bright color to any landscape. A mass planting looks nice with a backdrop of green shrubs. Remove flower spikes as they appear to encourage more foliage growth. Cold wet soils and poor cultural practices can result in leaf drop.

General Information
Scientific name: *Coleus x hybridus*
Pronunciation: KOE-lee-us x HYE-brid-us
Common name(s): coleus
Family: *Labiatae*
Plant type: annual
USDA hardiness zones: all zones (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 7: Jun; Jul; Aug
Planting month for zone 8: May; Jun; Jul; Aug
Planting month for zone 9: Mar; Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep; Oct
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: Mar; Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep; Oct
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: mass planting; container or above-ground planter; edging; accent
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Figure 1. Coleus.

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; and Teresa Howe, coordinator, Research Programs/Services, Gulf Coast Research and Education Center, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.
**Description**

Height: 1 to 3 feet  
Spread: 1 to 3 feet  
Plant habit: round  
Plant density: dense  
Growth rate: moderate  
Texture: medium

**Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite  
Leaf type: simple  
Leaf margin: crenate; lobed; undulate  
Leaf shape: ovate  
Leaf venation: bowed  
Leaf type and persistence: not applicable  
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches  
Leaf color: yellow; green; variegated  
Fall color: not applicable  
Fall characteristic: not applicable

**Flower**

Flower color: blue  
Flower characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

**Fruit**

Fruit shape: no fruit  
Fruit length: no fruit  
Fruit cover: no fruit  
Fruit color: not applicable  
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable  
Current year stem/twig color: green  
Current year stem/twig thickness: very thick

**Culture**

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun  
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; loam  
Soil salt tolerances: unknown  
Plant spacing: 12 to 18 inches

**Other**

Roots: not applicable  
Winter interest: not applicable  
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding  
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance**: long-term health usually not affected by pests

**Use and Management**

Coleus is propagated by seed and cuttings. Cuttings as short as two inches can be taken from newly grown shoots and rooted in plain water. The seed germinates in 10 to 14 days at 70°F to 75°F. Light stimulates germination so seed should not be covered. Set plants outside after the weather has warmed. In USDA hardiness zones 8 to 11, coleus can be set out spring through late summer. Winter plantings are successful in south Florida in the full sun provided adequate moisture is available.

**Pest and Diseases**

Mites cause the leaves to be puckered and distorted.