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Verschoor

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(54) **ASTILBE PLANT NAMED 'FIREBERRY'**

(50) Latin Name: *Astilbe arendsii* × *Astilbe japonica*
Varietal Denomination: **Fireberry**

(76) Inventor: **Jan Verschoor**, Marcellisvaartpad 17,
2015 CS Haarlem (NL)

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patent is extended or adjusted under 35
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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **Plt./407**

(58) **Field of Classification Search** **Plt./407**
See application file for complete search history.

Primary Examiner—June Hwu

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—C. A. Whealy

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of *Astilbe* plant named
'Fireberry', characterized by its compact, upright and strong
plant habit; strong and healthy foliage; freely and uniformly
flowering habit; red purple-colored flowers; and good garden
performance.

2 Drawing Sheets

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Botanical designation: *Astilbe arendsii* × *Astilbe japonica*.
Cultivar denomination: 'Fireberry'.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar
of *Astilbe*, botanically known as *Astilbe arendsii* × *Astilbe*
japonica and hereinafter referred to by the name 'Fireberry'.

The new *Astilbe* plant is a product of a planned breeding
program conducted by the Inventor in Haarlem, The Nether-
lands. The objective of the breeding program was to create
new strong *Astilbe* cultivars with attractive foliage and flower
coloration.

The new *Astilbe* plant originated from a cross-pollination
made by the Inventor in 2001 in Haarlem, The Netherlands, of
an unnamed *Astilbe arendsii* seedling selection, not patented,
as the female, or seed, parent with an unnamed *Astilbe*
japonica seedling selection, not patented, as the male, or
pollen, parent. The new *Astilbe* was discovered and selected
by the Inventor as a single flowering plant within the progeny
of the stated cross-pollination in a controlled greenhouse
environment in Haarlem, The Netherlands in 2003.

Asexual reproduction of the new *Astilbe* plant by divisions
in a controlled environment in Honselersdijk, The Nether-
lands since the summer of 2003, has shown that the unique
features of this new *Astilbe* plant are stable and reproduced
true to type in successive generations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Plants of the new *Astilbe* have not been observed under all
possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary
somewhat with variations in environment and cultural prac-
tices such as temperature and light intensity without, how-
ever, any variance in genotype.

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are
determined to be the unique characteristics of 'Fireberry'.
These characteristics in combination distinguish 'Fireberry'
as a new and distinct cultivar of *Astilbe*:

1. Compact, upright and strong plant habit.
2. Strong and healthy foliage.
3. Freely and uniformly flowering habit.
4. Red purple-colored flowers.
5. Good garden performance.

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Plants of the new *Astilbe* differ primarily from plants of the
parent selections in plant height and flowering habit as plants
of the new *Astilbe* are more compact and more freely flower-
ing than plants of the parent selections.

5 Plants of the new *Astilbe* can be compared to plants of
Astilbe arendsii 'Europa', not patented. In side-by-side com-
parisons conducted in Haarlem, The Netherlands, plants of
the new *Astilbe* and the cultivar Europa differed in the fol-
lowing characteristics:

- 10 1. Plants of the new *Astilbe* were more compact than plants
of 'Europa'.
2. Plants of the new *Astilbe* were more freely flowering
than plants of 'Europa'.
- 15 3. Flowers of plants of the new *Astilbe* were darker in color
than flowers of plants of 'Europa'.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

20 The accompanying colored photographs illustrate the over-
all appearance of the new *Astilbe*, showing the colors as true
as it is reasonably possible to obtain in colored reproductions
of this type. Colors in the photographs may differ slightly
from the color values cited in the detailed botanical descrip-
tion which accurately describe the colors of the new *Astilbe*.

25 The photograph on the first sheet comprises a side perspec-
tive view of a typical flowering plant of 'Fireberry' grown in
a container.

The photograph at the top of the second sheet is a close-up
view of typical inflorescences of 'Fireberry'.

30 The photograph at the bottom of the second sheet is a
close-up view of the upper surface of a typical leaf of
'Fireberry'.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

35 The aforementioned photographs and following observa-
tions, measurements and values describe plants grown in
containers in Afferden, The Netherlands, under commercial
practice in during the early summer in an outdoor nursery
40 with day temperatures ranging from 12° C. to 27° C. and night
temperatures ranging from 4° C. to 16° C. Plants had been
growing for one year when the photographs and description
were taken. In the following description, color references are

made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart, 2001 Edition, except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used.

Botanical classification: *Astilbe arendsii* × *Astilbe japonica* ‘Fireberry’.

Parentage:

Female, or seed, parent.—Unnamed *Astilbe arendsii* seedling selection, not patented.

Male, or pollen, parent.—Unnamed *Astilbe japonica* seedling selection, not patented.

Propagation:

Type.—By divisions.

Time to initiate roots.—About three weeks at 20° C.

Root description.—Thick, fleshy; brown in color.

Rooting habit.—Freely branching; dense.

Plant description:

Plant form/habit.—Herbaceous perennial. Compact, upright and strong plant habit; roughly triangular. Flowering stems and leaves basal; dense and bushy growth habit; moderate to low vigor. Freely and uniformly flowering with numerous flowers on branched panicles.

Growth rate.—Moderate to slow; from divisions, about 28 weeks are required to produce fully-grown flowering plants.

Plant height (soil level to top of foliar plane).—About 17.6 cm.

Plant height (soil level to top of inflorescences).—About 21.9 cm.

Plant width (spread).—About 24.1 cm.

Stem description.—Length: About 8.4 cm. Diameter: About 2 mm. Internode length: About 2.5 cm. Strength: Strong. Texture: Sparsely pubescent. Color: Close to 144B.

Foliage description:

Arrangement.—Alternate; biternately compound.

Leaf length (excluding petiole).—About 9.5 cm.

Leaf width.—About 8.9 cm.

Lateral leaflet length.—About 2.8 cm.

Lateral leaflet width.—About 1.2 cm.

Terminal leaflet length.—About 3.2 cm.

Terminal leaflet width.—About 1.4 cm.

Lateral and terminal leaflet shape.—Ovate to narrowly ovate.

Lateral and terminal leaflet apex.—Acute.

Lateral and terminal leaflet base.—Rounded to attenuate.

Lateral and terminal leaflet margin.—Serrate.

Lateral and terminal leaflet texture, upper and lower surfaces.—Sparsely pubescent; slightly rough.

Lateral and terminal leaflet venation pattern.—Pinnate.

Lateral and terminal leaflet color.—Developing leaves, upper and lower surfaces: Close to 143A. Fully expanded leaves, upper surface: Between 139A and 147A; venation, close to 146C to 146D. Fully expanded leaves, lower surface: Between 137A and 146A; venation, close to 144B to 144C.

Leaf petiole length.—About 3.9 cm.

Leaf petiole diameter.—About 1.5 mm.

Leaflet petiole length.—About 4 mm.

Leaflet petiole width.—About 1.5 mm.

Leaf and leaflet petiole texture, upper and lower surfaces.—Smooth, glabrous.

Leaf and leaflet petiole color, upper and lower surfaces.—Close to 144B; at the nodes, close to 175C to 175D.

Flower description:

Flower type/habit.—Numerous single rotate flowers arrange on terminal branched panicles; flowers fact upright, outward or downward depending on position on the panicle. Panicles conical in shape. Freely and uniformly flowering habit with about 1,000 flowers and flower buds per inflorescence.

Fragrance.—Faintly fragrant; sweet.

Natural flowering season.—Continuously flowering during the summer to late summer in The Netherlands.

Postproduction longevity.—Flowers last about ten days on the plant; flowers persistent.

Flower buds.—Height: About 1.8 mm. Diameter: About 1.2 mm. Shape: Broadly ovoid. Color: Close to 59C; towards the base, close to 145B.

Inflorescence height.—About 10.5 cm.

Inflorescence diameter.—About 7.9 cm.

Flower diameter.—About 4 mm.

Flower depth.—About 3 mm.

Petals.—Quantity per flower: Typically five in a single whorl. Length: About 2 mm. Lobe width: About 1 mm. Shape: Oblanceolate. Apex: Broadly acute. Margin: Entire. Texture, upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous. Color: Developing petals, upper and lower surfaces: Close to 61C. Fully expanded petals, upper and lower surfaces: Between 60D and 61C; color becoming closer to 60D with development.

Sepals.—Quantity per flower: Typically five in a single whorl, fused towards the base; campanulate calyx. Length: About 2 mm. Width: About 0.6 mm. Shape: Ovate. Apex: Acute. Base: Cuneate. Margin: Entire. Texture, upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous. Color: Developing sepals, upper and lower surfaces: Close to 145B flushed with close to 59C. Fully expanded sepals, upper and lower surfaces: Close to 145B flushed with close to 59C.

Peduncles.—Length: About 11.9 cm. Diameter: About 2 mm. Angle: Erect. Strength: Strong. Texture: Smooth, glabrous. Color: Close to 144B.

Pedicels.—Length: About 0.5 mm. Diameter: About 0.5 mm. Angle: About 45° from vertical. Strength: Moderately strong. Texture: Smooth, glabrous. Color: Close to 145B flushed with close to 59C.

Reproductive organs.—Stamens: Quantity per flower: Typically ten; anthers basifixed. Filament length: About 1.3 mm. Anther shape: Ovate. Anther length: About 0.4 mm. Anther color: Close to 62D. Pollen amount: Scarce. Pollen color: Close to 155D. Pistils: Quantity per flower: Two. Pistil length: About 1.5 mm. Stigma shape: Club-shaped. Stigma color: Close to 61B to 61C. Style length: About 1.3 mm. Style color: Close to 61C. Ovary color: Close to 61D.

Seed/fruit.—Seed and fruit development have not been observed.

Disease/pest resistance: Plants of the new *Astilbe* have not been noted to be resistant to pathogens and pests common to *Astilbe*.

Garden performance: Plants of the new *Astilbe* have been observed to have good garden performance and tolerate rain, wind and high temperatures of about 35° C. Plants of the new *Astilbe* have been observed to be hardy to USDA Zone 5.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct *Astilbe* plant named ‘Fireberry’ as illustrated and described.



