

CAST Day One: Ball Horticultural Company

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BallSeed



Back in CA ... in Spring!

Chris: Hi there, friends, and welcome to the first of five *Acres of buZZ!* newsletters that'll be coming to you live (almost) from the California Spring Trials—better known these days as CAST or #CAST2022. I'm Chris Beytes, editor of *GrowerTalks*, *Green Profit* and the newsletter *Acres Online*, and I'm joined by my fellow editor and *Tech On Demand* digital communications expert Bill Calkins. Say hello, Bill.

Bill: Thanks, Chris ... Hey everyone! Glad to be back in California and excited to talk plants.

Chris: Together, we're known as the Bobbleheads, and we report via words, pictures and videos from all the CAST stops on the California coast, sharing hot intros, new concepts, highlights, fan favorites and random notes.

Bill: We'll try not to be too random, but as you say, boss, life's too short to write boring stories, so expect some lively banter and perhaps some food reviews. Aside from that, we'll do our very best to fill your inbox every day with plenty of horticultural wisdom and variety info in an effort to help you make informed decisions when considering new additions and upgrades to your product mix.

Chris: One caveat: This will NOT be everything new—not even close. It's the highlights based on what the breeders feel is their most important introductions, plus those interesting items that we think will make you money and help you stand out from the competition. So, with that behind us, let's dive into Day 1 and all the Ball companies listed at the top of this email. Bill, let's start with PanAmerican Seed and a few of the highlights.

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PanAmerican Seed

Bill: Ooooh, I get to pick the first new variety! I'm honored. Let's start strong with Solarscape, the first interspecific impatiens from seed. This series has been in the breeding pipeline for more than a dozen years, they say, and is now a reality. Think about it ... a hybrid impatiens that can be economically produced to fit opening price point position at retail in a variety of sizes from jumbo packs and quarts to gallons and patio pots. The series launches with five colors (Neon Purple, Magenta Bliss, Orange Burst, White Shimmer and XL Salmon Glow) for in-ground use in full sun or part shade.



Solarscape Impatiens

Chris: It will be curious to see how it compares to the leading vegetative sun impatiens. We all know who that is ...

Okay, another big intro from PanAm is begonias—a new series and two additions, one of which is pretty major, I'd say. The new series is an interspecific begonia called Hula and it's said to have a spreading habit, growing more outward than upward. It's daylight neutral, so early to flower and fast to finish—just four to five weeks in packs, they say. The series has four colors: Pink, Blush, Red and Bicolor Red White.



Hula Begonia.

As for the two additions I mentioned, one is Megawatt White Green Leaf, a good addition to the series. But possibly PanAm's most significant begonia intro for 2022 is Dragon Wing White, which joins the original Red and Pink. If it performs like them, it'll be a winner.



Dragon Wing White Begonia

Bill: When PanAm introduced the Beacon series of impatiens with high resistance to Impatiens Downy Mildew, it was truly a gamechanger. One of the common requests they received from growers around the world was for more mixes. Ask and ye shall receive! New for the 2023 season are three 3-color mixes, all named for lighthouses to stay within the "beacon" theme. Consumers are going to like Lindau, Sanibel and Portland.

For all these and many more PanAmerican Seed varieties, check out our YouTube video [HERE](#).



Ball FloraPlant

Chris: On to Ball FloraPlant, the vegetative counterpart to PanAm's seed varieties, where I get the honor of talking about a significant intro—the world's first IDM-resistant double impatiens! It's called Glimmer, and it has the beautiful look of BFP's venerable Fiesta double impatiens, but with the same "high resistance" to IDM. The series has seven colors: Salmon, Apple Blossom, White, Burgundy, Dark Red, Bright Red and Hot Pink. Fiesta will go away, although they'll retain some of the novelty colors until those come to Glimmer. It's a winner!



Glimmer Double Impatiens

Bill: That's for sure. I've always liked doubles and it's cool to see them back in the mix.

BFP seems to be all about petunias these days, with the recent introductions of ColorRush (a vigorous landscape series) and CannonBall (a compact series), and new this year is the SureShot series. It's a medium type, fitting between those other two, positioned for baskets and launching with six colors, Blue Vein, Blueberries & Cream, Dark Blue, Dark Red, Magenta and

White. Oh, before we leave BFP petunias, there are a couple more additions to the existing series, ColorRush Pink Star, as well as CannonBall Burgundy Star and Coral.

Chris: I could mention new coleus or lantana, both classes of which get some interesting color additions, but I'll call out calibrachoa since Ball FloraPlant has three series, all of which get new colors—the breeder went crazy! The compact Conga series gets four new colors: Diva Orange, Pink Kiss, Purple Star and Yellow. The Cabaret series gets five additions: Diva Pink, Hot Rose, Midnight Kiss, Strawberry Parfait and Yellow. And Cha-Cha, their biggest series (25% bigger than Cabaret) gets six additions: Fuchsia, Lavender, Orange, Red, Red Kiss and Yellow. If you can't find a calibrachoa you like in this selection, there's no hope for you! Especially if you like yellow.

[HERE](#) is a link to our video featuring all these and more BFP introductions.



Calibrachoa Cabaret Yellow

Okay, Bill, on to Selecta One and more vegetative annuals.

Selecta One

Bill: Something Selecta has done over the past few years is clarify the positioning of some of their more popular series. If I remember correctly, this includes calibrachoa, petunia, geranium and dahlia. Maybe more ... Sometimes, this means renaming and other times it's more about categorization. In the case of dahlias, Selecta has organized their five series very well, starting from the smallest, Dahlita and Dahlietta, and moving up to Dalaya, City lights and Venti (the largest). New for 2022 are Dalaya Apricot and Venti Mango, which is a huge plant with massive, beautiful blooms. Chris, what caught your fancy at Selecta?

Chris: That's easy: Sky Petunias. They've got a new Headliner Strawberry Sky that exhibits that star pattern of the Skies beautifully. And we were told that Selecta has been working to stabilize and enhance the star pattern to make it more dependable and less influenced by growing conditions, like the original Night Sky was. In addition to Strawberry there's also a Light Pink Sky and an improved Pink Sky 23.



Petunia Strawberry Sky

Bill: Before we leave Selecta, we have to talk calibrachoa because they're one of the pioneers with so many great MiniFamous varieties. They recently created two MiniFamous categories, Uno and Neo. Uno varieties are compact, while Neos are more vigorous. New in Uno this year are Orange+Red Vein and White Gold, two fantastic colors. The Neo addition for 2022 is Double White.



Ball Ingenuity

Chris: Before we jump over to perennials and veggies, we'll wrap up the annual color with Ball

Ingenuity, the division that brings in genetics from third-party breeders. Plenty of unique offerings here, but my favorite, as a former weekly and holiday potted plant grower, is their new hydrangea offerings. Francy is a two-colored collection—Purple and Pink—with lacecap flowers and a free-branching habit that makes a good florist-quality pot. And to compliment these, Ice Boy is a white with nice, clear white flowers.

Bill: Did you just call me by my rap name ... “Ice Boy”? Oh, you meant the hydrangea. Nevermind. Let’s move on to a hanging basket dianthus called Falling In Love Rosie, which has a true trailing habit. The rose-colored blooms will keep up throughout the spring and summer, and for growers this crop can be started in the fall, grown cool through the winter to flush in spring or finished nicely from an early season start. It’s just the one color for now, but there are more coming in the series, they say.

We shot video of all the Ball Ingenuity products and you can watch it [HERE](#).



Dianthus Falling in Love Rosie

Darwin Perennials

Chris: Let’s transition to vegetative perennials from Darwin Perennials, shall we? I’m going to call out what I believe is the most striking bloom in the entire Ball trial: Delphinium Red Lark. This hybrid is just stunning, with rich coral-red flower spikes that are sterile, so they continue to bloom in the garden. Enjoy them as is or cut them for the house. Grows in Zones 5a to 8b.



Delphinium Red Lark

Bill: That delphinium is spectacular for sure. Me? I liked Darwin's new Veronica series Skyward. The first two colors are Blue and Pink, and the flower spikes are super sturdy. One of the best attributes of the plant is how dense the structure is, reducing the tendency to split open. It's also shown good powdery mildew resistance in trials, they say.

Chris: One more mention from Darwin, the Echinacea Sombrero Poco collection, which gets three new colors: Red, Pink and Hot White, bringing the collection to five colors. The Pocos are more compact than the regular Sombreros, growing to 12 to 14 in.

You can see these and more Darwin perennial intros in our exciting video [HERE](#).



Kieft Seed

Chris: Next door at Kieft Seed, which breeds perennials from seed, I liked their new perovskia (Russian sage) called Bluesette. It's both compact and early compared to the standard perovskia, Zone 4 hardy and compact enough that you could even put them into combos.



Perovskia Bluesette

Bill: Kieft has definitely had their share of breakthroughs in the past few years, not the least of which is the Artisan series of echinacea. This is the F1 seed series available in individual colors. Growers have been asking for a yellow and now Yellow Ombre is available, along with the existing Red Ombre and Soft Orange. The seed comes in an “amplified” form, meaning it’s hitting at least 85% germination in lot tests. Those are good numbers for echinacea seed!

Want to see our video of the new stuff? It's [HERE!](#)

Morel

Chris: Our last blooming plant company at the Ball trial is Morel, the cyclamen folks. Some nice color additions, but I'll mention two intros: First up is Abanico, which means “fan” in Spanish for its interesting wavy flower form. Abanico is a mini, with deep magenta flowers, suited for 3.5- to 5 -in. pots, making it a great little gift item. But Morel's most noteworthy intro is Absolu de Morel, a fancy name for a deeply scented cyclamen (which even had a cute perfume bottle hang tag). Display a big endcap of these and you'll knock your customers over!



Veggies: HandPicked & Burpee

Bill: Wow, Chris, we've seen a lot of cool, new flowers and we're not even through day one! Why don't we talk about some veggies? PanAmerican Seed has been back at vegetable breeding for about a decade now and their HandPicked Collection continues to expand every year. Their lineup includes a lot of varieties selected for disease resistance and they really seem focused on both grower and consumer success. My favorite new release is Sun Dipper Tomato, a small-fruited tomato with a very unique shape. It almost looks like a ladle with a handle and I can only

imagine it's perfect to scoop dip out of a bowl. This is perfect because I'm certainly not the only one who uses vegetables as a vehicle to shovel dip into my mouth. Am I? Be honest ...



Sun Dipper Tomato

Chris: A ladle? I thought it looked like a bowling pin. But to each his own ... as long as we get some samples!

Wrapping up the edibles is Burpee, where we saw hanging basket snack peppers with the name Peppers From Heaven. I guess that's because you reach up toward the heavens to pick it. Yellow, Red and Orange are the colors available in these sweet peppers. But if you want something a tad spicier, try Spinning Tops, which offers 30,000 Scovilles of sweat-inducing heat in a shape that looks like a toy top. Lastly, Pepper Aleppo is a Middle Eastern type normally dried and ground. It's said to have a rich, complex flavor and 10,000 Scovilles of heat.

Okay, Bill, wrap us up!

Closing Time ... Until Tomorrow

Bill: I want to wrap up some of those Spinning Tops, in a tortilla! ... but I digress. It was a busy, but fun, first day out here in Cali and we got into the swing of things pretty quickly. It's a good thing because we learned about more than 200 new varieties at Ball. Not a light year by any stretch of the imagination. With the boom we've seen in consumer demand, it's exciting to see the breeding companies responding with plenty of on-trend series and grower solutions.

Chris: And that's just today! Tomorrow, we visit two trials sites and 10 different companies, including Green Fuse, Suntory, Westhoff and PlantHaven, so expect a diverse and eclectic collection of genetics in your Thursday morning *Acres of buZZ!* Until then, be well! And if you have comments or questions, let us know by clicking our names below.

Bill: See you then!



Thanks for reading! See you next time,

Chris, Jen & Bill

Chi Jen Bill

Chris Beytes
Editor
[GrowerTalks/Green Profit](#)

Jen Zurko
Managing Editor
[GrowerTalks/Green Profit](#)

Bill Calkins
Senior Editor/Digital Editor
[GrowerTalks/Green Profit](#)

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