

GROWERTALKS

Culture Notes

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Professor's Pride and Joy

Dr. Jake Henny

The Professor's Pride marketing program encompasses a new collection of foliage plants born from the research and breeding efforts of the University of Florida (UF). The Professor's Pride marketing program was originated by interested local growers, UF germplasm manager John Beuttenmuller, and myself.

In 2009, we launched the Professor's Pride website (www.professorspride.com) to supply information about growing the newest varieties in the home or in greenhouse environments. Commercial growers can find licensed nursery partners along with protocols for managing these crops. Links to breeding techniques for tropical foliage plants provide technical details for students and researchers. The Professor's Pride program includes eight varieties, including:

Aglaonema Emerald Bay, which originated from a sport, is a large foliage plant. Leaves can be 4 to 5 in. wide and 12 to 13 in. long. The durable, showy leaves exhibit dark green speckles against a central gray-green area, giving it a rich emerald jewel effect.

Grow Emerald Bay in 6-, 8-, or 10-in. pots, or use multiples for larger sized containers. Growers may purchase rooted or unrooted cuttings from licensed propagators. It prefers a well-drained commercial soil mix with slow release or liquid fertilizer application. Its fertilizer range is moderate compared to other foliage crops. Maintain light levels at 1,200 to 1,800 footcandles and keep temperatures above a minimum of 60F (16C). Emerald Bay will finish in six to eight months and performs well in commercial interior conditions.

Cascading like strands of jewelry from a hanging basket Pearls and Jade pothos was released in 2008. This new variety is an induced mutation from Marble Queen pothos. It's a small plant; the average leaf measures only 1½ to 2 in., making it perfect for 4-, 5-, or 6-in. hanging baskets. Direct stick eyes or small tip cuttings. For growing, this vine requires moderate fertilization. The unique foliage can't handle direct, bright sunlight and needs temperatures above 70F (21C) for best growth. Growth slows in winter when night temperatures drop below 60F (16C).

Aglaonema Mondo Bay can be grown using only one cutting per 5- or 6-in. pot. Mondo Bay resulted from an interspecific cross. This hybrid has narrow leaves and averages 10 basal shoots per single cutting. A cluster of the smaller Mondo Bay plants makes a big statement when used in interior design. GT

Dr. Jake Henny is a professor of environmental horticulture at the University of Florida's Mid-Florida Research and Education Center. Dr. Henny is the developer of all the varieties in the Professor's Pride program.