

GROWERTALKS

Features

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The Color Continues

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Perennial Pleasers

For annuals, the top intro this year (at least in sheer numbers) was petunias. For perennials, it was heuchera. Even Pacific Plug & Liner's annual comparison trial helped reinforce the trend by focusing on this popular foliage perennial. Here are eight heucheras intros, plus some other hot perennials.



1. Heuchera Fire Alarm and **2. Paprika (Terra Nova)** It was Terra Nova's first time at Spring Trials, and they put their focus on six different species of heuchera. Both of these new varieties have bright bronze-orange foliage, but Fire Alarm's leaves are bigger.

3. Heucherella Glacier Falls and **4. Copper Cascade (Terra Nova)** These new heuchera/tiarella crosses feature attractive leaf patterns. They're vigorous growers even in heat and humidity.

5. Heuchera Dolce Cinnamon Curls and **6. Dolce Blackberry Ice (Proven Winners)** Two new additions to the Dolce series include Cinnamon Curls, which has curled leaves on a compact habit, and Blackberry Ice, which blooms with no vernalization and is said to be very heat tolerant.



7. Heuchera Carnival Rose Granita and **8. Carnival Fall Festival (Darwin Perennials)** The Carnival series from Darwin now includes a complete color range with these two new additions. The colder these varieties are grown, the more vivid their foliage color.

9. Leucanthemum Real Series (PlantHaven) Bred in the UK, this new series includes four colors (Real Glory is pictured) with unique flower forms and are hardy to Zone 5.

10. Gaura Gaudi (Florensis) A Zone 5 perennial here in the States, in Europe Florensis is promoting this new series as a compact, container variety suited for annual production. Florensis' Robbert Hamer said that the production time is 10 to 12 weeks in the spring in the greenhouse and 9 to 11 weeks outdoors. And as they overwinter, you'll see a larger plant with more flower spikes.



11. Arabis Lotti Series (Kieft Seed) The new Lotti series features two colors, Deep Rose (pictured) and White, that are uniform with a tight habit so that you don't get those rangy plants.

12. Coreopsis Li'l Bang Daybreak (Skagit Gardens) Originally introduced by Sunny Border Nurseries in Connecticut, this Zone 5 perennial features single red flowers with a vibrant yellow- orange edge and dark green foliage. Like the rest of the Li'l Bang series, it's compact and long blooming.

13. Gaillardia Mesa Peach (Kieft Seed) Also from Kieft is a new color for the Mesa series. It's early to flower and drought tolerant like the other two varieties, but Peach is slightly earlier.

14. Helianthus Double Whammy (Hishtil) Vivid yellow 6-in. double flowers and lots of them. Hardy to Zone 5.



15. Achillea New Vintage Series (Darwin Perennials) Mike Klopmeier says that achillea is one of the top 10 perennials in the marketplace, and Darwin has introduced four new varieties with this series. The key to the New Vintage series is the blooms resist fading and the foliage completely fills out.

Viola Little Angel (Jaldety) Not pictured. This cute little perennial viola is hardy to Zone 5 and is covered with very fragrant blooms.

16. Helenium Short 'N Sassy (Skagit Gardens) Named for its short, compact habit, this plant has bright gold and orange blooms that flower earlier than most heleniums on the market. It's also very long blooming. Hardy to Zone 4.

17. Lavender Luxurious (Darwin Perennials) A *stoechas*-type, this variety has dark purple flowers with wider foliage, which is atypical for Spanish lavender. The strong stems enable it to be very versatile.

18. Hibiscus Summerific Cherry Cheesecake (Proven Winners) An indeterminate bloomer, so you have beautiful flowers from late summer on. Grows 4 to 5 ft. tall with 8-in. white flowers featuring a cherry-red eye and magenta veining. Zones 4 to 9.

Going to Pot

And we mean that in a good way! These new varieties were introduced to make great additions to potted plant programs. Or work them into your patio planter or mixed combo offerings.



1. Cyclamen from Morel It was the French cyclamen breeding company's first time at Spring Trials; they were showing off their new intros at Plug Connection. A few highlights were: the new Metis Fantasia series of bicolor flowers for small pots (Purple is pictured); the Metis PomPom Mix of blooms with fringed petals; and Halios Curly Magenta With Edge, which is the biggest type for larger pots. Ball Seed is the exclusive distributor in the U.S.

2. Kalanchoe Mid Sunkissed Pink (Fides) Great for Easter sales with a beautiful tricolor flower pattern.

Calla Pink Sorbet, **3. Coral Passion** and **4. Callaifornia Red (Golden State Bulb)**

We saw three new callas at Golden State this year: Pink Sorbet has maculated foliage and is ideal for 12-in. pots; Coral Passion is a pretty pastel color; and Callaifornia Red is a new addition to the series and is a true red that only needs three to four weeks on the bench.



5. Kalanchoes from Greenex This Danish breeding company always has some interesting kalanchoe colors and this year they were showing quite a few. Phoebe and Bright Phoebe are under the Rose Flower series because they have double flowers. (Bright Phoebe is a lighter orange.) For smaller pots, you have the Paris series with Dark Pink, Appleblossom and Evergreen that have unusual pinecone-shaped flowers. Their original series of kalanchoes, featuring women's names, sees the addition of Alexandra, which has yellow blooms.

6. Sansevieria (Greenex) Something novel Greenex was showing was their new line of flat-leafed sansevieria, which you can braid or twist to make interesting displays.

7. Gerbera from Florist Okay, so gerberas aren't technically potted plants, but you do find them in pots out on the patio or picnic table. And they're a consumer favorite. Florist has added four new colors to their Patio series for larger containers (Volcanoes is pictured). There's also a new subseries in the Garvinea line called Sweet (Sweet Dreams is pictured).

Fine Foliage

For those who like texture and cool color patterns, these non-flowering varieties fit the bill perfectly.



1. Coleus Mighty Mosaic (PanAmerican Seed) The camo-colored leaves feature green foliage with

splashes of burgundy. Mighty Mosaic is said to perform well in the sun under high humidity.

2. Rex Begonia Shadow King additions (Green Fuse Botanicals) There are four new varieties in this series, including Green Pink Tips and Lava Red (both pictured).

3. Pennisetum Graceful Grasses Fireworks (Proven Winners) This pink and white variegated fountain grass has an upright, arching habit. Great in full sun as a mass landscape planting.



Mums & More

There were only a few new chrysanthemum introductions this year, but one breeder hopes to breathe new life into the category by trying a different way to market pot mums (much like Fides did with “Calandiva” vs. kalanchoes).

4. Zenia Series (Syngenta) Liz Hunt said that one of the challenges of pot mums is making them more hip and relevant, so Syngenta has come up with a concept to appeal to younger generations. “Zenia” is their new name for a line of pot mums that starts with six anemone-types, including some from the Springs collection, Encino and Green Valley. The theme is rooted in Asian culture and is carried through in the POP and tags.

Pot Mums from Syngenta There were also new “regular” mums from Syngenta, including **5. Hilo Tangerine**, **5. Hilo Fuchsia**, Seaside White (which they said would be great paired with a poinsettia) and **6. Freeport**.

7. Belgian Mums from GroLink GroLink had a handful of new Belgian garden mums in their fall festival display: Fiora Pink is a mid-September variety with larger blooms; Antica Bronze is a nice orange color for early October; and Amica Yellow and Amica Bronze have a long shelf life, but there’s a bit of heat delay with these varieties. The timing is late September for northern growers and mid-October if you’re in the south.

Shrub Hub

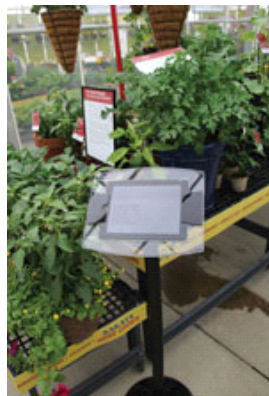
Traditional annuals suppliers such as Proven Winners and Ball have made strong forays into the woody ornamentals category, and are offering up some intriguing new varieties.



- 1. Patio Rose Veranda Series (Ball Ingenuity)** Specially bred for patio pots and mixed containers, this new floribunda rose series boasts disease and heat tolerance and cold hardiness (Zones 5 to 9). All six colors are “old-fashioned” repeat bloomers.
- 2. Physocarpus Tiny Wine (Proven Winners)** This dwarf ninebark stays small (3 to 4 ft. tall) in the landscape and is said to be powdery mildew resistant. The foliage stays dark brown-maroon all season with white flowers appearing in late spring. Hardy to Zone 3.
- 3. Buddleia CranRazz (Ball Ornamentals)** The folks at Ball say that this butterfly magnet is “short, but strong.” The blooms are a deep cranberry color, and each head grows 10 to 12 in.
- 4. Hebes from Proven Winners** Three new hebe varieties—Frozen Flame, Magic Summer and Wild Romance—provide year-round evergreen color as tender perennial shrubs (hardy to Zone 8).
- 5. Hydrangea Let’s Dance Rhapsody Blue (Proven Winners)** This new color in the reblooming Let’s Dance series starts pink and turns blue. Proven Winners said that this is a grower-friendly variety because it’s a true blue color that consumers really like. Grows 2 to 3 ft. tall and is hardy to Zone 5.
- 6. Duetzia Yuki Snowflake (Proven Winners)** We were intrigued with this shrub because none of us had ever heard of duetzia. This one flowers two to three times more than its counterpart Nikko, PW says, getting covered with white flowers in the spring. Grows 12 to 24 in. in full sun and is hardy to Zone 5. It’s also deer resistant.

Tech Savvy

Our industry may be a bit cautious when it comes to adopting new technologies, but we found several instances of breeders who took advantage of the latest tools—think iPads and tablets—to provide Trials attendees with new variety information.



iPads at Sakata Some displays at Sakata had special stands that held iPads so visitors could scroll through and learn more. (pictured)

Virtual combination design website, app and video library (Suntory)

Suntory unveiled its new YESS program, which stands for “Your Easy Suntory Solution.” YESS encompasses a number of online tools for growers, retailers and consumers, such as the virtual Combo Designer, which allows gardeners to plan and design their own mixed containers and landscapes, starting with selecting the container type and arranging different combos by dragging and dropping in the plants.

There's also an app for the iPad and Android Tablet. Online, Suntory's video channel houses more than 200 how-to videos, including a Video Catalog about each variety, planting and care tips. Also, growers and retailers can download custom POP from Suntory's website, www.suntorycollection.com, using high-resolution files that you can save on your computer or email to your printer. Plus, there's a place to include pricing so you don't have to hand-write them.

iPad Tour at Fides Visitors could choose a virtual tour via iPad to take them through the trial. You could also get your picture taken to be posted on their Facebook page.

Tablet Tour at Ball All of the new varieties at Ball's Spring Trials stop included special tags that you could scan with a tablet (supplied by Ball). Ball would then email you the details on that variety so you didn't have to worry about writing anything down or carrying home stacks of trial books. **GT**