

GROWERTALKS

Features

10/29/2013

Passing the Test

Jennifer Zurko



Midwest

Field Trials Location | Michigan State University Horticulture Demonstration Gardens—East Lansing, Michigan

Trials Manager | Daedre Craig

Planting Dates | Mid-May though mid-June

Best New Varieties | Angelonia Archangel Raspberry Improved (Ball FloraPlant); Begonia

Dragone Dusty Rose and Sunset (Dümmen); Calibrachoa Celebration Banana (Westhoff); Calibrachoa MiniFamous iGeneration White (Selecta); Calibrachoa Superbells Pomegranate Punch (Proven Winners); Confetti Garden Rockin' Red (Dümmen); Gerbera Jasmina and Orangina (Florist Holland); Lobularia White Knight (Proven Winners); Marigold Alumia Gold (Floranova); Petunia Trilogy White (Takii)

Best Overall Performers

In containers | Begonia Dragone Dusty Rose (Dümmen); Begonia Dragone Sunset (Dümmen); Calibrachoa Celebration Banana (Westhoff); Confetti Garden Rockin' Red (Dümmen); Begonia Breezy Pink (Ball Ingenuity); Calibrachoa MiniFamous iGeneration White (Selecta); Calibrachoa Superbells Pomegranate Punch (Proven Winners)

In beds | Angelonia Archangel Raspberry Improved (Ball FloraPlant); Begonia benariensis Surefire Rose and Red (Proven Winners); Coleus Sultana, Wasabi, Vino, Henna, and Redhead (Ball FloraPlant); Lobularia White Knight (Proven Winners); Pennisetum Graceful Grasses Vertigo (Proven Winners); Dahlia XXL Durango (Dümmen); Gerbera Jasmina and Orangina (Florist Holland); Marigold Alumia Gold (Floranova); Petunia Trilogy White (Takii); Vinca Vitesse Rose Morn (Floranova)

In hanging baskets | Lophospermum Lofos Compact White (Suntory); Petunia Surfinia Patio Coral Pink, Patio Yellow, Patio Blue (Suntory); Petunia Surfinia Giant Purple, White Improved, Giant Blue (Suntory)

Trial Manager Favorites

- Lophospermum Lofos Compact White and Compact Rose (Suntory)—Produced flush after flush of flowers. In between flushes of flowers, the foliage still looks very interesting with contrasting shades of green in the leaves and flower calyxes. Still looks fantastic in October!
- Angelonia Archangel Raspberry Improved (Ball FloraPlant)—Unique raspberry color. Flowers stand out among the wispy foliage.
- Calibrachoa Superbells Pomegranate Punch (Proven Winners)—Dark eyes are very eye-catching.
- Portulaca Cupcake series (Dümmen)—Very fun series of glowing flowers on carpet-like plants.
- Marigold Alumia Vanilla Cream (Floranova)—Nice soft buttery yellow color, unlike the typical harsh yellow marigold.

Weather Conditions | One of the wettest springs on record. Regular rainfall throughout summer with moderate temperatures and one week-long heat wave into the 90s.

Any pest/disease issues? | Few pest/disease issues overall. Japanese beetle damage to geraniums, cannas, hollyhocks. Rabbit damage to some crops, especially verbenas. Rhizoctonia and sclerotinia diagnosed in some crops. Late-season downy mildew on coleus.



East

Field Trials Location | Penn State University Landisville
Flower Variety Trials—Manheim, Pennsylvania

Trials Managers | Dr. Alyssa Collins and Dr. Rob Berghage

Planting Dates | May 21-23

(All varieties are trialed in containers, and only combinations are trialed in hanging baskets.)

Visitor Favorites | Evolvulus Blue My Mind (Proven Winners); Rudbeckia Tiger Eye Gold (Syngenta); Caladium Rose Glow (Classic Caladiums); Celosia Arrabana (PanAmerican/Kieft)

Trial Managers' Favorites | Argyranthemum Butterfly (Proven Winners); Bracteantha Sundaze Blaze (Proven Winners); Calibrachoa Aloha Tiki Neon (Dümmen); Canna South Pacific Scarlet (Takii); Trixi Double Date Combination 14-in. hanging basket (Selecta); Coreopsis Highland Blast (Danziger); Pennisetum Graceful Grasses Fireworks (Proven Winners); Zinnia Profusion Double Yellow (Sakata)

Weather Conditions | Like much of the Northeast, conditions this summer were largely wet and mild, with high humidity. A few periods of hot, dry weather gave the plants some water stress, but overall it was a challenge to keep roots dry.

Any pest/disease issues? | Root rots were a challenge for some of the calibrachoa, petunia and lobelia

varieties early on. As the season progressed, foliar disease was widespread on many petunias and some other genera. We didn't experience any disease pressure from impatiens downy mildew this season.



West

Field Trials Location | Oak Creek Center for Urban Horticulture—Corvallis, Oregon

Trials Manager | Melodie Edwards

Planting Date | First week of June 2013

Best New Varieties | Zahara Sunburst Zinnia (PanAmerican Seed), Flash Mob Bluerific Petunia (Burpee Home Gardens), Akila White Improved

Osteospermum (PanAmerican Seed), MiniFamous Double Red, Double White and Double Blue Calibrachoa (Selecta), Sun Drop Bidens (Ball FloraPlant)

Best Overall Performers | (In beds) Sun Drop Bidens (Ball FloraPlant), Zahara Sunburst Zinnia (PanAmerican Seed), Flash Mob Bluerific Petunia (Burpee Home Gardens), Akila White Improved Osteospermum (PanAmerican Seed), MiniFamous Double Red, Double White Calibrachoa and Double Blue Calibrachoa (Selecta)

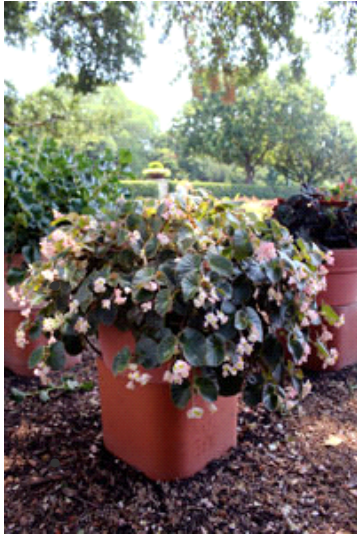
Trial Manager Favorites | Cheyenne Spirit Echinacea, *pictured above*,

(Darwin Perennials), Sweet Black Cherry Dianthus (PanAmerican Seed), Zahara Sunburst Zinnia (PanAmerican Seed), Akila White Improved Osteospermum (PanAmerican Seed), Enduro White Blush Verbena (Ball FloraPlant)

Weather Conditions | Most of the season was sunny with temperatures in the 80s/90s and little rainfall. Near the end of August and throughout September, temperatures cooled a bit and caused plants to flourish for a second time this season. As September drew to a close, we experienced a lot of rainfall, which drastically diminished the number of flowers on most varieties.

Any pest/disease issues? | Some insect damage on SunSpun Purple Star Petunia and Blue-A-Fuse Petunia. Damage from deer to the verbena varieties.

Cha-Ching Cherry was a lovely variety during most of the season, but foliage at the center of the plants became sparse in August and September.



South

Trials Location | Arboretum and Botanical Society—Dallas, Texas

Trials Manager | Jenny Wegley

Best New Varieties

Lantana Chipotle Cream (Plug Connection)—If you like a vigorous sprawling plant, Lantana Chipotle Cream is the plant for you. Creamy colors of yellow cover this lantana late spring throughout the summer until frost. Chipotle Cream can reach a wingspan of 3 ft.

Chrysocephalum Silver Leaf Yellow (Suntory)—This is one that gets overlooked and I'm not sure why. Who doesn't want a plant that has silver foliage, trails and is covered in orange yellow pencil-eraser flowers all

summer? The hotter the better for Silver Leaf Yellow. Plant in full sun and keep the hose away. Chrysocephalum does well in both a container and in-ground.

Best Overall Performers in Hanging Baskets

- Begonia Ikon Bronze, *pictured,*

Floranova)—Wow, what a sight to see mid-summer when the furnace is on high—Begonia Ikon Bronze flowing 2 ft. over the side of a container. Soft fuzzy gray-green foliage that has a tinge of silver sprinkled with dainty flowers. Plant it in your hanging baskets and container. It's a showstopper!

- Vinca Cora Cascade Strawberry (Syngenta Flowers)—Cora Cascade Strawberry is a standout by far in the vinca world. It loves it hot and dry! A true trailer that reaches 3 ft. in a season that is covered in soft pink flowers with a dark pink eye. A must have and a visitor favorite.

Best Overall Performer in Containers

Purslane Cupcake series (Dümmen)—The Cupcake series was a new introduction last year that stands out in containers. A perfect trailing habit that's covered in bright flowers mid-spring to first frost. The Cupcake series is a lover of heat and is drought tolerant.

Best Overall Performers in Beds

Scaevola Blue Fan, Romeo and Scala Blue (EuroAmerican Propagators & Dümmen)—Both Blue Fan and Romeo performed well in containers and the landscape. Romeo has a compact habit that doesn't get away from you and is covered in baby blue fan-shaped flowers. Blue Fan is a mounding scaevola that's vigorous with deep blue flowers. Scala Blue is another vigorous, florific scaevola that can take the heat of summer. It has blue-purple flowers that allow Scala Blue to stand out.

Visitor Favorite | **Nicotiana Only the Lonely (Diane's Flower Seed)**—Only the Lonely is not your average nicotiana. It boasts extra long, showy-white flowers that can be seen across the garden. The plant stands between 3 and 4 ft. tall and blooms consistently mid-spring until frost.

Trial Manager Favorite | Chrysocephalum Silver Leaf Yellow (Suntory)

FlameProof Winners for 2013

- Lantana Chipotle Cream (Plug Connection)
- Begonia Ikon Bronze (Floranova)
- Vinca Cora Cascade Strawberry (Syngenta Flowers)
- Chrysocephalum Silver Leaf Yellow (Suntory)
- Lantana Santana (Danziger)
- Lobularia White Knight and White Stream (Proven Winners & Danziger)
- Purslane Cupcake series (Dümmen)
- Scaevola Blue Fan, Romeo and Scala Blue (EuroAmerican Propagators & Dümmen)

Weather Conditions | We had an amazing spring this year with rain and pleasant temperatures that lasted 12 weeks. This might make you laugh, but our spring tends to only last for six to eight weeks. Our summer was short with highs in the 100s for a few weeks. Average in the mid 90s.



Canada

Field Trials Location | Sawaya Garden Trials—Simcoe, Ontario

Number of Cultivars in Trials | 2,200

Trials Manager | Thomas Sawaya

Planting Dates | May 15 in the greenhouse, then they're outdoors June 12

Best Overall Performers In containers | Petunia Soleil Purple (Selecta)

In beds | SunPatiens (Sakata)

In hanging baskets | Cabaret Calibrachoa combo (Selecta)

Visitor Favorites | The Vista Petunia umbrella tree,
pictured above,

(Proven Winners)

Trial Manager Favorites | Lobularia Lavender Stream (Danziger)

Award Winners | We give awards to the best combination and this year it was a simple Dragon Wing (PanAmerican Seed) with a white scaevola.

Weather Conditions | Very nice weather. Hot some days, but not for long. Some rain, but not too much, with a nice, cool nights.

Any pest/disease issues? | Downy mildew took every *Impatiens walleriana* whether they were in the beds or in the containers. Also, we had some broad mite on the New Guinea impatiens because the plants were never sprayed with any chemical, only biological controls, and none was targeted for broad mites. **GT**