

GROWERTALKS

Features

11/26/2013

Trip Report: Jersey Mums

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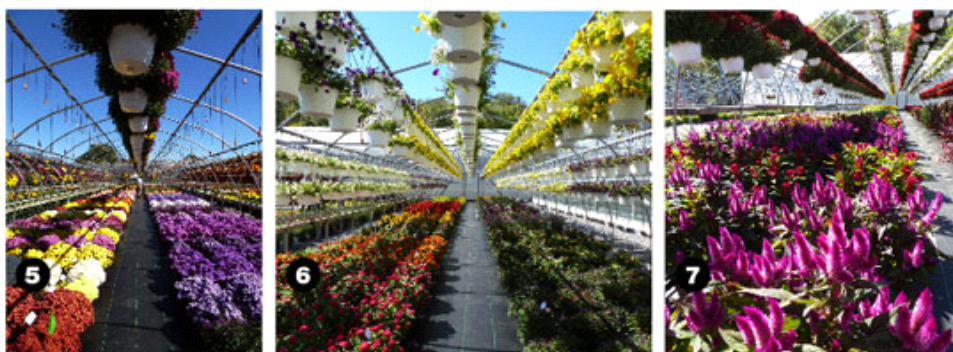


1. First stop was Kube-Pak in Allentown. This was my second trip to Kube-Pak's annual Fall Open House, but it was the fifth year holding the event. Its trial—which features Belgian mums from GroLink—is separated by flowering time, from early to late, making it really easy to walk through. GroLink's Bernard Chodyla said that their strategy is to build “families” of mums that feature different colors, but have the same bloom time, height and vigor to make it easier for growers to choose.

2 & 3. Kube-Pak's Open House isn't just about showing mums by timing—Rob Moore and his team also show visitors different ways you can decorate with mums.

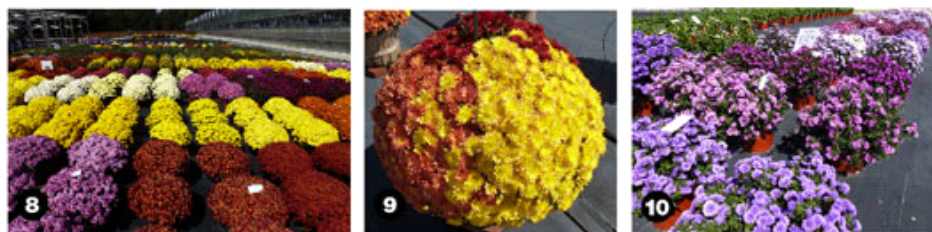
4. For the third year in a row, PanAmerican Seed was at Kube-Pak to educate growers about their Mum Pals program, which is more than cool-season plants, said Tom Contrisciano, technical product rep for PanAmerican. It's about extending the fall season with more than just pansies—although they are a major part of the program. Ornamental peppers, zinnias, celosia, coreopsis and grasses are easily grown and marketed

along with mums, Tom explained, and can offer more ways to decorate beyond fall colors, including pinks and purples.



5. About 20 minutes away in Hightstown, Lou Davino Greenhouses were having its third annual Fall Open House—which was the only one that had a comprehensive trial featuring multiple breeders. Head Grower Mike D'Igenova said it was getting too difficult to travel to other trials to see new varieties from multiple breeders, so they decided to have their own. According to Mike's calculations, Davino trialed 110 mums from GroLink, 110 from Syngenta and 500 from Ball.

6 & 7. Like Kube-Pak, Davino also showed some other flowering plants and grasses that complement mums, including sunflowers and a celosia trial with Intenz, Twister and First Flame. "They give you a lot of opportunity to sell other plants even before or while you sell mums," said Mike.



8. Lucas Greenhouses in Monroeville has been holding its Mum Open House for more than 10 years with Yoder mums. Owner George Lucas said this year they saw many new faces, both growers and brokers. Mark Smith of Syngenta said it's a pure breeding trial, which is very simple—most of the mums are trialed in 9-in. pots and are separated from very early to late, then by color and then family. "It makes it easy for growers to see what works together," Mark said.

9. Lucas has also been trialing mum mixes for the last five years, trying to determine which ones work best together. "Even if they categorized within the same flowering time, they don't always work together in the same combo," explained Mark. That's why using varieties from the same family works best.

10. This year, the aster trial has been refreshed a bit with new, improved varieties that offer better response time. Mark said Syngenta has been working to provide asters that have a later flowering time so that they last longer. Double flowers are the key to their longevity, he said, and asters offer different colors you don't get with mums, like light purple. **GT**