GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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The First Seed Calibrachoa

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Photography by Mark Widhalm



If you're wondering if there will be any significant breeding breakthroughs at this month's Spring Trials, we can assure you there will be at least one. PanAmerican Seed will be debuting a new calibrachoa series at their display in Santa Paula, California.

PanAmerican? Introducing calibrachoa? That can only mean one thing: Their new series is from seed—the first-ever commercial seed calibrachoa.

Pictured is Jason Jandrew, the breeder of Kabloom—as the new series is called—looking over the crop at PanAmerican's production facility in Guadalupe, California. For the last three years, Kabloom has been running Jason's life—and for good reason.

"I think this is one that people have been waiting on for quite a while," he says. "This was the next veg-to-seed conversion that's been on the horizon and that people have been talking about." PanAmerican's previous veg -to-seed breakthrough was Serena angelonia.

The project began more than five years ago, with Jian Ping Ren, another PanAmerican breeder. Jason picked it up when he started at the company and has been working on developing the seed ever since.

The biggest challenge with seed calibrachoa is obtaining a germination percentage high enough to be viable in the market. Jason said that's why it's likely taken so long.

The series is so new, PanAmerican is still finalizing the color assortment—Jason said that it could be as many as seven. Since last fall, about 70 growers around the country have trialed Kabloom. So far, the

response has been positive, he says.

In terms of overall growth habit, Jason said the end consumer won't be able to tell the difference between a seed and vegetative calibrachoa when they're side by side. So PanAmerican is marketing Kabloom as another option for growers who are already growing vegetative calibrachoa, but are looking for more flexibility.

There have been other veg-to-seed varieties that have come down the pipeline, such as the aforementioned Serena—but not in what many consider to be a "core crop" category, at least not lately. But this doesn't mean Kabloom is going to take over the calibrachoa market; vegetative varieties will always have the edge when it comes to unique colors, in single and double flowers.

"The exciting thing about the calibrachoa market is the color breakthroughs that come out every year," explained Jason. "And those will most likely occur in veg first, so it gives us an interesting opportunity to continue to grow in vegetative and create a new segment in seed."

If you weren't able to attend Spring Trials or skipped the Ball stop in Santa Paula, read more about our coverage of Kabloom and other trials highlights at www.springtrials.com, and stay tuned for the July issue of *GrowerTalks* for more in-depth Trials coverage. **GT**