

GROWERTALKS

Features

7/27/2015

But Wait ... There's More!

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Part 2 of our Spring Trials coverage includes perennials, shrubs, potted plants and other colorful, profitable—and fun!—stuff we saw along the California coast.

Plenty of Perennials



1. Lavender Bandera Purple (Kieft)

This new intro is a *stoechas* (Spanish) lavender that's a cool, quick-to-finish (just 11 to 14 weeks) crop that's full of flowers. Think of it as an indoor plant you can take outside.

2. Scabiosa Flutter (Darwin Perennials)

Tall, delicate stems hold blue or pink flowers above compact, mildew-tolerant plants that are a big improvement over Butterfly Blue and Pink Mist. Blooms May through October. The new colors for the Flutter series are Deep Blue (pictured) and Rose Pink. Available as a rooted and unrooted cutting. Hardy to Zone 5.

3. Baptisia Decadence (Proven Winners)

They've added two colors to the Decadence series—Pink Ruffles and Sparkling Sapphires (pictured)—a tough-as-nails and drought-tolerant series that now has seven colors. Hardy to Zone 4.

4. Dianthus Cadence (Green Fuse)

This new series has three colors—Cherry Red, Salmon and Raspberry—with fragrant blooms that flower all season. Holds up well in bad weather. Hardy to Zone 5.



5. *Coreopsis Solanna Glow* (Danziger)

A Zone 5 perennial with what they call a “perfect coreopsis flower” and the flower is a perfectly sunny yellow. It’s naturally compact, with no pinch needed, too. If you want a sunny and glowing perennial on the retail bench between spring and summer, this will shine for you.

6. *Athena Brazil*

Athena is known for propagating mainly openly available warm-climate plants—the kinds of things that do great in the Sunbelt. And since they’re open-availability, we don’t often find exclusive products here to write about. But this year, the news is a whole new class they’re getting into: perennials. And not tropical perennials, but real, live temperate perennials, like salvia, gaura, veronica, leucanthemum ... 50 or 60 varieties total, we’re told. They say it’s due to strong demand for cuttings in this category. And Sau Paulo, where Athena is located, has a very mild climate that’s perfect for perennials.

7. *Leucanthemum Macaroon* (Terra Nova)

Looking for a different, yet compact, type of shasta daisy? Maybe Macaroon is the one you’ve been waiting for. The flowers are double and bicolor (is that a double-double?). They start out yellow and open to bicolor white with yellow centers and then mature to white with gold centers. The plants are well branched and short—only growing to 13 in. tall. Great in mixed containers or in monoculture containers, or when used in border or mass plantings.



8. *Monarda Leading Lady* (Proven Winners)

This new monarda series starts with Lilac and Plum (pictured), and blooms about two weeks earlier than typical monardas. They’re also naturally compact and mildew resistant. Hardy to Zone 4.

9. *Rhodanthemum Casablanca* and

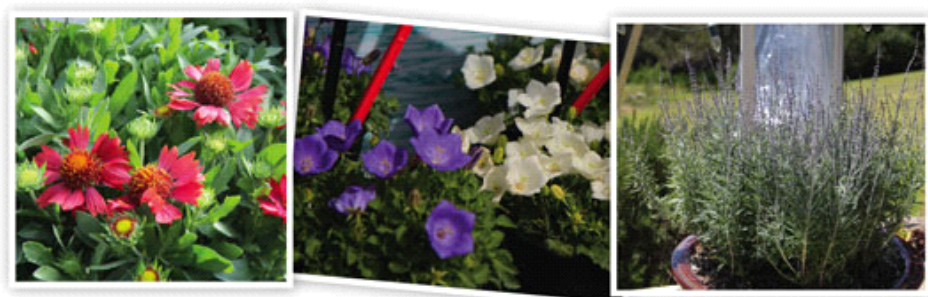
Marrakech (Darwin Perennials)

A new genus to us, both varieties bloom in the early spring and have cute flowers with chocolate centers and interesting foliage. Take note that rhodanthemum is only hardy to Zone 8. The delicate daisy flowers come in white with a dark eye (Casablanca) or pale pink (Marrakech).

10. *Lobelia Starship Deep Rose* (Kieft)

The placement of the Starship series at the center of the Kieft Seed display was likely not a coincidence.

Starship Scarlet was introduced last year, and this year, Starship Deep Rose (also a first-year flowering perennial) is being introduced, which now makes this the Lobelia Starship series. A great pollinator plant. Hardy to Zone 6.



11. Gaillardia Lunar Red Moon (Green Fuse)

Very compact and doesn't split. Hardy to Zone 5.

12. Campanula Rapido (Kieft)

The only F1 varieties on the market, both colors (Blue and White) were bred to be early and have strong vigor in the young plant stage. A big-volume plant that is also a popular gift plant, Rapido is hardy to Zone 4.

13. Perovskia Denim 'n Lace (Proven Winners)

A compact, yet bushy, and sturdy plant with lavender-colored flowers. Hardy to Zone 4.



14. Dianthus Pink Gem and Red Gem (Thompson & Morgan)

D. deltoides types that are first-year flowering and have a spreading habit. Hardy to Zone 4. Pictured: Pink Gem.

15. Phlox Opening Act (Proven Winners)

Disease resistant with some reblooming through the summer. Two colors: Blush (pictured) and

White.

16. Perennial Combos (Kieft)

Kieft has added three new combos to their perennial mixes program and they've got accumulated enough recipes that they're giving them names now. The new ones are Jewels of Cleopatra (pictured), Valley of the Kings and Paris in Springtime.



17. Skagit Gardens

This was Skagit's first time exhibiting at GroLink. While these guys are propagators from the Northwest, they do offer exclusives on occasion. Three of those exclusives this year are new Dutch-bred echinaceas from Plants Nouveau—Butterfly Rainbow Marcella, Butterfly Golden Skipper and Cone-fections Sweet 16.

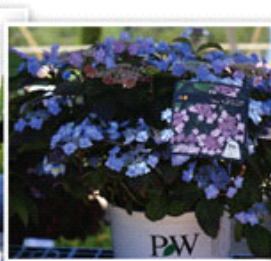
18. Echinacea Moodz (Hilverda)

No, that's not a typo—that's how Hilverda spells the name of their new echinacea series. The four colors represent different moods: Shiny (yellow), Cosy (purple-pink), Joy (orange) and In Love (pink, pictured). No vernalization required for these Zone 5 perennials.

Shrub Hub

1. Calluna Skyline (Ball Ornamentals)

Calluna is a really cool plant we'd never heard of. It's a heather, but in this case, it's prized for its spire-like foliage, not for flowers. It's sort of like an evergreen asparagus fern. Two varieties in the Skyline series—Sydney and Stockholm (pictured), which turn orangey and burgundy, respectively, in cooler weather. It even works well indoors. Hardy to Zone 5.



2. Hydrangea Tiny Tuff Stuff (Proven Winners)

This is a lace cap hydrangea from the mountain region of Japan, meaning it can endure cold better, including hardier buds on old wood. It's compact, growing to just 18 to 24 in.

3. Rose Starlight Beauty (Ball Ornamentals)

A climbing floribunda-type rose series with four colors: Ruby, Pink, Mauve and Tangerine (pictured). Pink is the most fragrant.

4. Loropetalum Jazz Hands (Proven Winners)

This intro is part of a foray into warm-climate shrubs. Jazz Hands is a Chinese fringe flower that's a Zone 7b shrub in five varieties, including variegated, dwarf white and dwarf pink.



5. Cordyline Electric Flash (Green Fuse)

The chocolate and yellow colors of the foliage make it a standout in California landscapes.

6. Rose Sunbelt (EuroAmerican Propagators)

This new line of florabunda roses was bred by Kordes and does especially well in hot, humid climates, with little problem with black spot or mildew.

7. Diervilla Kodiak (Proven Winners)

The plants in the Kodiak series offer color for dry shade areas. Kodiak Black has dark foliage in spring and fall, and yellow flowers in summer. Kodiak Orange offers the same, but with orange foliage spring and fall.



8. Anigozanthos Kanga Jump (Green Fuse)

Jump is a mid-height series, which is easier to ship and also handle in the garden. It flowers a lot, plus it's a day-neutral variety, so it flowers year-round—especially in the California market where anigozanthos is a popular plant. Pictured: Orange.

9. Grevillea Kings (Ball Ornamentals)

The water-sipping grevillea series is a native Australian plant that has three varieties: Fire, Rainbow and Celebration. Best-suited for the west and southwest.

Pots on the Spot



1. Calla Bubble Gum (Golden State Bulb Growers)

This variety is part of what they call “the next generation of breeding” because of the many attributes it features. Bubble Gum doesn’t “nod” and gets a good flush of second blooms. Plus, it has incredibly strong stems; a thick, leathery spathe; and a naturally open habit.

2. Cyclamen from Morel

The French cyclamen folks had several additions this year—Scarlet Red for the mid-sized Tianis series (pictured); Pure White Silverleaf and Rose Aquarel (a rose shades color) in the mini-sized Metis series; and Fantasia Magenta Silverleaf, Fantasia Purple and Curly Flame Mix, all in the Halios series. Halios, by the way, stands for their big plants.

3. Poinsettia Titan (Syngenta)

The only new poinsettias we saw were additions to the Titan series, White and Pink. With Titan Red, the

Titans are a well-rounded family now.



4. Cyclamen Petticoat (Schoneveld)

It's a mini-sized cyclamen that, if you look under the petals, has a petticoat or something better known as a "beard" in the trade. Comes in six colors.

5. Carnation Pink Kisses

(Selecta)

A popular gift plant in Europe, they're promoting it as a grab-and-go decorative plant for a windowsill or on a table. At retail, it'll have a complimentary sleeve. It also works as a Zone 5 perennial in the garden.

6. Calla Memories (Flamingo Holland)

This striking variety has the blackest foliage and blackest flowers of any calla we've ever seen.



7. Cyclamen Perfetto (Syngenta)

This brand-new cyclamen series features mid-sized cyclamen meant for high-density production. Includes eight colors and two mixes.

8. Scilla Caribbean Jewels Cayman (Golden State Bulb Growers)

A dwarf type of scilla that comes from a "true bulb" with blue flowers that are the first bloomers of spring.

9. Eucomis Kona (Golden State Bulb Growers)

The fourth introduction in their pineapple lily series has dark burgundy/coffee-colored flowers. And like the others, it's low maintenance—no disease or insect issues and has low fertilizer requirements.



10. Cyclamen Goblet Shine Wine Red (Varinova)

Named so because of the goblet-shaped flowers, which the first of its kind, this new variety is a mini type that features burgundy flowers (the Wine Red part) with white edges (the Shine part). There are more colors coming down the pike to eventually create a series of Goblets.

11. Freesia Main Street (Flamingo Holland)

Main Street is a collection of cut flower freesia selected for their pot plant potential. Being cuts, they've got great fragrance and vivid

colors. Main Street starts with six colors.

Other stuff

Here are some other products we saw that didn't really fit neatly into any category.

1. The Real Series (Ball FloraPlant)

The vegetative breeding company looked at their catalog and developed a program of varieties across 13 series that flower and ship in the same week. The criterion is that each color has to have the same culture, habit and vigor and it needs to encompass the entire series—no cherry picking here.



2. QT Petunia Series (Green Fuse)

QT stands for "Quality 'Tunia." It's a naturally compact series that doesn't need any PGRs and it stays compact even after time on the bench. Starts with four colors.

3. Deep Planting (Gediflora)

You may not yet recognize their name, but it's the company behind well-known Belgian mums. They introduced a handful of new ones for 2016, including Aramis White, which will replace Ibera White, the latest-blooming white Belgian mum (late October). But what we enjoyed most at Gediflora was getting a good production tip: When you

plant your Belgian mum cuttings (rooted or unrooted), be sure to plant them in the center of the pot and plant them DEEP, so the tip of the plant is level with the rim of the pot. Don't be afraid to bury it. That will give you the sturdiest plant possible. It's the chief mistake growers make, planting too shallow. Here's a photo showing



the end result of planting properly, and planting too shallow and off-center.

4. 3D System (MasterTag/Summit Plastics)

At Sakata's trials in Salinas, MasterTag and Summit partnered up to introduce their self-symmetricizing pots. What does that mean? It means that when you put the pot in its tray, it automatically turns so the front faces frontward. It does this by being D shaped, as are the holes in the tray, so there's only one way the pot can fit. They come in five sizes, from pint to 3 qt. As a bonus, they pack more tightly in their trays than standard pots, saving space on shipping racks. **GT**