

GROWERTALKS

Culture Notes

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Combos Worth Growing

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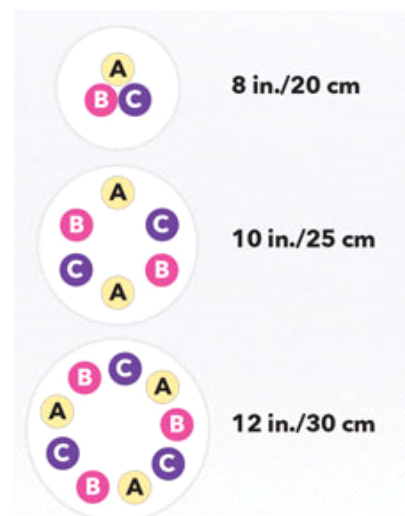
Visitors to this year's California Spring Trials got a sneak peek at PanAmerican Seed's newly invigorated combo program. Every Plug & Play seed combo is tested over and over to prove it delivers unstoppable performance from bench to store to garden. Our trialing in saleable sizes begins in our research greenhouses and in our outdoor summer containers. Yet we don't stop there—every potential introduction is sent to commercial greenhouses and into real-life gardens for our customers' approvals. Only when they're given two thumbs up do they move into our Plug & Play lineup.



Pictured: Wave Plug & Play Combo Lovin' It

In short, Plug & Play lets you grow and sell with complete confidence. The program is good for growers because of its easy, economical production. In addition, the combos offer superior, high-impact genetics and programmable finish times so you're always in control of when to sow, grow and ship. Another benefit to Plug & Play is you can hit multiple price points at retail: Value, Better and Premium. From the easy-sow Fuseables Precision Multi-Pellet to taking advantage of the popular Wave brand and on to dramatic mixes of seed annuals and perennials, greenhouses can produce instant gardens for the modern consumer.

The first step in defining the Plug & Play combination pot starts on the planting line. Follow the recipes and planting diagrams found at panamseed.com/plugandplay for the best success: Plug size, number and



planting position is key.

Plug size: Every Plug & Play recipe takes each ingredient’s growth rate and flower timing into consideration. Larger inputs are used when necessary to obtain the best balance of growth and flowering.

Plug number: It’s important to use the right ratio of inputs, just as with vegetative intermingled combos. The correct number of plugs per component leads to the best balanced combination finish.

Plug positioning: Plant your plugs halfway between the middle of the pot and the rim. A tight circle of plugs is key to getting the intermingled look desired in a multi-plant combination.

	Variety	Seeds per Cell	Plug Size	Plants per Pot			Critical Daylength
				8 in./20 cm	10 in./25 cm	12 in./30 cm	
A	Easy Wave Yellow	1	288	1	2	3	10 hrs.
B	Easy Wave Neon Rose	1	288	1	2	3	10 hrs.
C	Petunia Combo Blue	1	288	1	2	3	10.5 hrs.

Planting at the rim results in a “clumpy,” less intermingled look. All varieties in each Plug & Play combo are transplanted at the same time in order to finish at the same time. Sow times may vary. Note: In multi-species combos, shear Kabloom plugs before transplanting.

Next up is PGR application, specifically for multi-species combos. We recommend the following for the best toned and fully mixed multi-species combination finish:

PGRs*: Daminozide spray at 2,500 to 5,000 ppm (depending on your conditions) one week after transplant, followed by a second daminozide spray 7 to 10 days later. Daminozide will allow the axils to expand, versus a paclobutrazol treatment, which can lock up axillary branching. The result is controlled growth early, while still allowing good branching for the combination’s development.

When plants grow to the rim and begin to fill the pot, switch to a repeated low rate paclobutrazol drench at 1 to 2 ppm (depending on your conditions). Go easy—too high a rate for the paclobutrazol drench can stop the non-petunia components and lead to a bad mix result.

There are six combo offerings within the Plug & Play program:

- Fuseables
- Wave Fuseables
- Premium Annual Fuseables
- Wave Plug & Play Combos
- Plug & Play Combos with Premium Annuals
- Plug & Play Combos with Perennials

As mentioned above, each offers various price points for retail and overall garden appeal for the end user. From simple single species, multi-color magic to dramatic upscale concepts that WOW décor-conscious consumers, they're all worthy of endcap or front-of-store locations in stores. Many of the tested combos include Wave, the most asked-for flower brand, which means built-in marketing for your products.

As today's consumer prefers the grab 'n go shopping experience, the Plug & Play program can satisfy their needs while providing long-lasting, multi-color blooms to enhance every lifestyle. Enjoy some of the combos featured here and browse further online to see the full assortment and possibilities at

www.panamseed.com/plugandplay. **GT**

**Rates are based on trials in the northern U.S.*

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