

GROWERTALKS

Features

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Zoom CAST Part 2

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The Bobbleheads are back for the second part of our virtual Spring Trials coverage, including innovative new perennials, dramatic shrubs, on-trend indoor plants, bouquet fillers and much more.

Annuals tend to dominate at trials, by sheer numbers, but breeders and plant finders in other categories are hard at work bringing products to market with tremendous consumer appeal, from flowers that attract pollinators to those that deter deer and other pests.

Perennials A-Plenty



Lavender Primavera (Darwin Perennials)

Ball's vegetative perennial division is offering up a new Spanish lavender called Primavera that they think could change the class because of its long bloom time. Regular Spanish (*stoechas*) lavenders bloom April to June. Primavera is said to bloom from February to October! It's hardy in Zones 7 to 9.

Delphinium Delgenius (Pacific Plug & Liner)

An interspecific delphinium! Called Delgenius, it was bred by Bart Noordius, the same Dutchman who brought us the interspecific Echibeckias and the very nice FrostKiss Helleborus collection. What's the benefit of being interspecific? "Enormous" hardiness and heat tolerance, we're told, along with strong flower stems that hold up in the garden. Habit is compact and multi-branched, and plants will rebloom if cut back. Hardy in Zones 3 to 9—meaning pretty much everywhere. The collection has three colors: Breezin' (purple), Juliette (pink) and Shelby (lilac, pictured). They're from tissue culture, which might sound expensive, but they're "reasonably priced," we're told, and they'll have fewer problems than seed types, potentially giving you more yield at a lower cost.

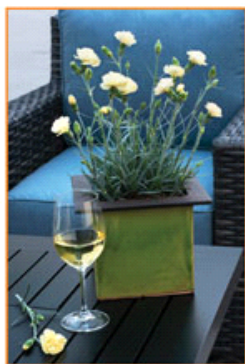
Hibiscus Summerific French Vanilla (Proven Winners)

Summerific gets two new colors, including a breakthrough: Summerific French Vanilla. The name gives it away: flower buds start soft yellow and flowers open to a creamy French vanilla color with a deep red eye. You won't mistake it for a tropical hibiscus, but getting any sort of hint of "yellow" into a perennial hibiscus is something.

The second Summerific color is Spinderella, an interesting pink and white pinwheel of color. Both Summerifics are super hardy in Zones 4 to 9.

Echinacea Artisan (Kieft Seed)

The Artisan Collection of echinacea from seed is revolutionary because it's the first F1 hybrid echinacea on the market. Just to dispel any misconceptions, these are NOT the individual colors found in Cheyenne Spirit (which are open-pollinated)—rather they're F1 hybrids from a unique breeding program. The collection currently has two cultivars: Red Ombre (pictured) and Soft Orange. More colors are anticipated. This series provides improved germination, better consistency and more uniform, first-year flowering. Zone 4 hardy.



Dianthus Hello Yellow (PlantHaven)

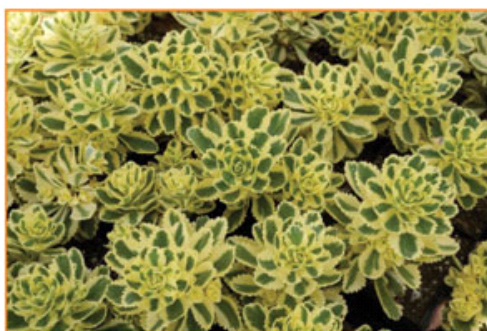
PlantHaven introduced a hardy-scented dianthus that Robert Bett calls the "Holy Grail" of fragrant dianthus. It's the first yellow dianthus from the Pinks program, bred by Whetman. New Dianthus Hello Yellow has blue foliage and soft yellow—you might say chardonnay-colored—flowers. It's hardy to Zone 5.

Phlox Luminary Opalescence (Proven Winners)

Opalescence joins Ultraviolet in the Luminary collection of tall garden phlox varieties shown to be disease and deer resistant in the garden, while offering bright colors. Opalescence has light pink flowers with dark pink eyes and dark green leaves. Luminaries are hardy from Zone 3 to 8 and grow up to 32 in. tall.

Pulmonaria Spot On (Proven Winners)

Spot On is a new lungwort with interesting salmon-pink buds that turn into blue flowers. The foliage features silver speckles like many pulmonarias, and gardeners know the leaves look nice even without flowers. This pollinator attractor grows about 16 in. tall and 20 in. wide, and is hardy from Zones 3 to 8.



Echinacea Evolution Colorific (Monrovia)

Colorific is a color-shifting addition to the Evolution series (which now has six colors). Colorific's flowers open golden yellow, then turn pinkish-salmon, then pink, before finally fading to deep pink. The Zone 5 perennial grows to about 18 in. tall in the landscape.

Sedum Atlantis (Jaldety)

This plant has a nice structure and color with a low-growing, dense, mounding habit. Attractive variegated, dark green foliage with creamy-yellow margins with hints of pink is heat- and drought-tolerant. This low-maintenance plant works great in containers, and contrasting with other small groundcovers in rock gardens, low borders, along walkways and in miniature gardens.

Salvia Midnight (Dümmen Orange)

The Midnight series includes Purple and Rose (pictured), and features a dark blue stem, adding to its garden interest. Compact in height, yet spreading quite wide, this salvia series fits a very popular profile and trend in salvia breeding.



Phlox Woodlander (Dümmen Orange)

It's an interspecific groundcover perennial phlox with blooms that are larger than the subulata types, so they're bigger and more appealing at retail. Four colors in all: Rose (pictured), Lilac, Pink and White.

Gaura Gambit Variegated Rose (Jaldety)

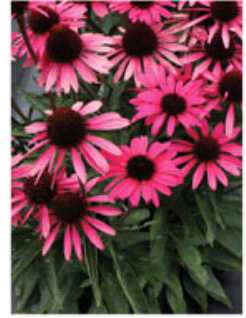
A profuse bloomer, this gaura has tall spikes of bright pink flowers with attractive variegated foliage. An eye-catching plant for the back of perennial borders, beds, wildflower gardens, rockery ledges, lining paths and in large containers.

Primula OakLeaf Yellow Picotee (Flamingo Holland)

The first color in a perennial primula series called OakLeaf, Yellow Picotee keeps its flowers for almost two months, held high above the oak-like foliage. There will be at least one more color coming in this Zone 4-hardy series next year.

Silene Rosalyn, Desert Glow (Hem Genetics)

A first-year-flowering perennial hardy from Zones 5 to 9, Rosalyn is floriferous, with small, lacy, rose-pink flowers on globe-shaped plants. It's daylength neutral, making it a winter annual in sub-tropic climates. Desert Glow has the same characteristics as Rosalyn, but with small, bright orange-scarlet flowers. Both grow to 16-in. tall and 12-in. wide. Pictured is a pretty combination of Rosalyn, Desert Glow and Mertensia Oyster Leaf Silver Ocean.



Buddleia Summer Bird (Cohen)

Bred by Volmary and a new line for Cohen, this butterfly bush is a more compact series, growing up to 2 ft. tall, making it perfect for patio pots and window boxes. All four colors (Violet, White, Magenta and Blue) show resistance to powdery mil

Delphinium Jenny's Pearl (Takii)

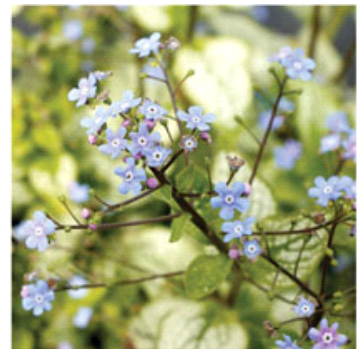
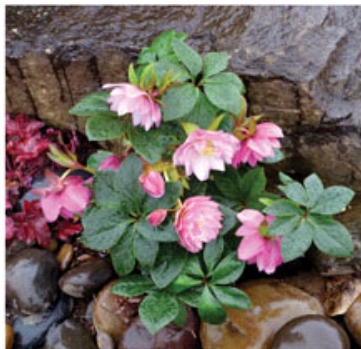
Delphinium grandiflora Jenny's Pearl Blue and Jenny's Pearl Pink offer stable color during high-temperature production. This first-year-flowering perennial can be used for pots or as a cut flower. Who's the Jenny the series is named after? Jenny Kuhn, Seed Product Manager at Raker-Robertas.dew. Pictured is White.

Lupine Lupini (Hem Genetics)

The new Lupini series is a seed-raised, first-year-flowering lupine with foot-tall blooms. They're hardy in Zones 6 to 8 and have a short crop time, requiring no vernalization. The new series has five colors—Blue Shades, Pink Shades, Red Shades, White Shades, Yellow Shades—and a Mix (pictured).

Echinacea Dark Shadows Wicked (Terra Nova)

Wicked joins the Dark Shadows series, bringing a very cool watermelon color to the blooms with extremely dark centers and dark flower stems. It's a Zone 4 to 9 perennial that grows upright with a compact habit that makes sense for patio containers and combos.



Dianthus American Pie Cherry Pie (PlantHaven)

The Dianthus American Pie series is a scented perennial dianthus from world-class Whetman breeding from Devon in the U.K. With large blooms up to 3-in. across and a modern color range, Cherry Pie is the new addition unveiled at Spring Trials. Growers in just about any region appreciate that once transplanted from a 72-liner to a gallon pot, these dianthus can be placed outside in unheated houses for the winter, emerging

Helleborus North Star (Terra Nova)

This collection of five colors from tissue culture is a short crop, meaning it will bloom for sales in the first year. The

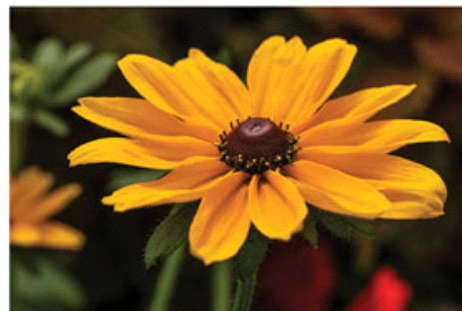
outward-facing flowers are held just above the foliage, growing 2 ft. in Zones 4 to 9. The colors are Crystalline, Garnet Frills, Pink (pictured), Plum and Ruby Heart. healthy for spring sales.

Heliopsis Punto Rosso Compact (Kientzler)

A first-year-flowering perennial that will bloom May through October—pretty unusual in a perennial. It's a Zone 3 plant that'll even flower down into Florida.

Brunnera Alexandria (Terra Nova)

Alexandria is an improvement on Alexander's Great, a classic variety. Alexandria has shown excellent hardiness in trials and shows off its pure silver foliage with no veins.



Leucanthemum Carpet Angel (Green Fuse)

Carpet Angel is the only groundcover shasta daisy in the world. With no vernalization or daylength requirements, Carpet Angel blooms continuously with a compact size, superior basal branching and fully double flowers. Hardy to Zone 5.

Kniphofia Poco Citron (Terra Nova)

New to the Poco series is Citron, a nice color that matches the habit of the rest of the six-color series. Cold-tested in Minnesota, it's hardy to Zone 5 or even colder climes. In year one out of TC, it's quick growing and grower friendly.

Rudbeckia Dakota Gold (Green Fuse)

Dakota Gold is the first fully hardy perennial Rudbeckia hirta cultivar on the planet. Just how cold hardy is it? Zone 5, they say—impressive! Like most First Light Perennials from Green Fuse, Dakota Gold is day- neutral and can be marketed any time—spring, summer or fall.



Aquilegia Earlybird (Kieft Seed)

The Earlybird series is an improvement to and replacement for the popular Songbird series. There are eight colors and a mix available, including several unique colors such as Purple Blue and Red Yellow. The other colors in the series include Blue Yellow, Blue White, Purple White, Red White, Yellow, and White.

Besides the unique colors, the Earlybird series has reduced vernalization requirements; they can be vernalized in five weeks with temperatures below 55F (13C). As the name suggests, they flower about one to two weeks earlier than the original Songbirds. The Earlybird series has a compact, controlled habit with upward-facing flowers and is very programable to meet various ship dates.

Anemone Satin Doll (Terra Nova)

Satin Doll begins with one color, Blush. The new breeding is focused on a fall anemone line that doesn't spread. Satin Doll is a clumper, not a runner, and trials show it blooms from July through the end of October. Available from tissue culture, plants can have up to 65 flowers the first year.

Phlox Super Ka-Pow (Darwin Perennials)

What makes them "super"? Super-sized blooms and a super-sized habit. Four new paniculatas come to market with vibrant colors and winter hardiness. Fuchsia, Lavender, Pink and White (pictured) offer growers four excellent colors to capture attention at retail and in the garden. They grow up to 20 in. tall and wide.

Echinacea Sombrero Fiesta Orange, Rosada; Sombrero Poco (Darwin Perennials)

Sombreros are known for excellent cold-hardiness (Zone 4) and maximum branching, and joining a wide range of in-demand colors for next season are Fiesta Orange and Rosada. Fiesta Orange lives up to its name with rich, orange blooms that are sure to attract butterflies. Rosada has rose-pink flowers on purple stems. The new Poco collection is more compact than traditional Sombreros but still offers the same garden performance and habit. Starting off with Yellow (pictured) and Hot Coral, the Pocos grow up to 16 in. tall and wide.

Chic Shrubs



Encore Azalea Autumn Majesty, Autumn Starburst (Sunset/Southern Living Collection)

Encore is a well-recognized brand at retail, so it's happy news that the line gets two new colors for 2020: Autumn Majesty and Autumn Starburst. Majesty is the first double purple variety in the collection. It stays dwarf, reaching 3 ½ ft. tall in the landscape. Starburst is similar to Sunburst, but with a much brighter color.

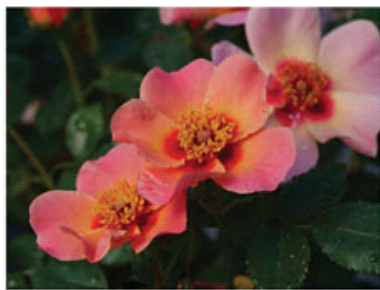
Hydrangea Wee Bit Giddy, Grumpy (Proven Winners)

Wee Bit Giddy and Wee Bit Grumpy are a pair of *H. macrophylla* offerings that have tight, compact growth, glossy foliage and strong stems. Giddy's mophead flowers are a rich red-pink, while Grumpy's (pictured) are deep purple. Zones 5 to 9.

Rose Nitty Gritty (Monrovia)

Five colors of spreading roses (White, Yellow, Red, Pink and Peach, pictured) grown on their own root, which

makes them hardy and disease-resistant. They compare to Drift. Nitty Gritty joins Grace N' Grit, which is Monrovia's shrub-type rose.



Rose Brindabella Pretty in Pink (Suntory)

An addition to the Brindabella series, Pretty in Pink is a sport of Purple Prince and has a nice heirloom rose fragrance. With excellent black spot and powdery mildew tolerance, there are now six Brindabella Roses in the series.

Rose Ringo (Proven Winners)

Ringo is a very unique rose, blooming bright yellow with a red ring in the middle. As the flowers age, they fade to white with a pink ring. It's a tough and disease-resistant rose that will rebloom summer through fall with no deadheading. It will top out at 3 to 4 ft. tall and wide when mature.

Hydrangea Seaside Serenade Newport (Monrovia)

Newport is another tetraploid *H. macrophylla* in Monrovia's Seaside Serenade collection. Being tetraploid means it's got thicker leaves and flowers. Foliage holds up to weather better and flowers last a bit longer, too. Flowers are a real pretty rose pink; as a bonus, they antique nicely over time—great for home flower arranging!

Crape Myrtle Center Stage Red (Proven Winners)

This new lagerstroemia will attract tons of attention in any garden with nearly black foliage and cherry-colored flowers. It blooms from spring through fall in Zones 7 to 9 and has excellent disease resistance compared to other varieties.



Weigela Towers of Flowers (PlantHaven)

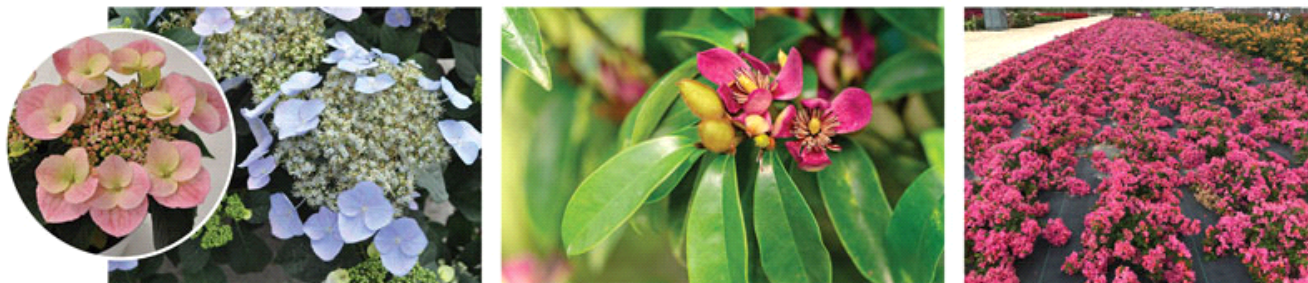
Gardeners love pillar-type plants in pots and baskets, and new Towers of Flowers Weigela is a vertical, easy-care plant that flowers from top to bottom. Available in Cherry (pictured) and Apple Blossom, growers can expect a saleable gallon in six to 12 weeks from a 21-cell liner.

Hydrangea Heartthrob (Sunset/Southern Living Collection)

This 3-ft. tall hydrangea blooms dark pink and develops a green edge as it matures, making it quite unique in the garden. The blooms hold up without fading and grows compact, ideal for just about any garden space.

Rose It's A Breeze (Sunset/Southern Living Collection)

This low-growing groundcover variety features attractive, red blooms and high disease resistance. It will rebloom into the fall with little effort and is more vigorous than others. It's winter hardy to Zone 4 and also heat-tolerant.



Hydrangea Mountain (Green Fuse)

The folks at Green Fuse call this one of the biggest breakthroughs in years. The Mountain series is part of Green Fuse's First Light perennial program because it's dayneutral and requires no vernalization. In as little as 11 to 12 weeks, growers can take these hydrangeas from URC to gallon. The series starts with four colors: Blue and Shell Pink (pictured), plus Picotee and Pink.

Magnolia Stellar Ruby (Sunset/Southern Living Collection)

A selection of an old favorite, Magnolia Stellar Ruby is a *Magnolia figo*, also known as banana shrub, as the pretty flowers have the fragrance of bananas. It blooms heavily in spring and then again in the summer. Its habit makes for a nice screen hedge. Hardy to Zone 6B.

Bougainvillea VF Garnet (Vista Farms)

A sport of the very popular commercial variety Helen Johnson, Vista Farms Garnet has orangy-pink bracts instead of pure pink. It's got the same super-compact and free-flowering habit that makes it perfect as a groundcover in tropical landscapes. Of course, you can use it as an annual patio plant in colder climates.

Potted Plants & Other Stuff



Campanula Champion II (Sakata)

With very large flowers that look upward, Lilac, Pink, Rose and Deep Blue make up the Champion II group, which is bred for uniformity and a narrow flowering window. Cut flower growers shipping these will notice increased durability in transit. Lilac is pictured.

Flowering Cabbage Condor Red (Sakata)

The Condor series featured two white varieties until the release of Red. It's a fantastic cut flower cabbage for bouquets and arrangements and the red color adds a new element. The stems grow straight, making it easy to cut and bunch.

Kalanchoe Tiger (Beekenkamp)

An all-new series, Tiger gets its name from the details of the two-tone flowers. It's a big, vigorous potted plant that starts with three colors: Yellow, Red and—our favorite—Light Orange.

Freesia Nano Micro (Flamingo Holland)

Flamingo Holland has released a genetically miniature freesia series within its already-compact Nano series called Nano Micro with extra-compact, uniform, 5- to 6-in. plants. Requiring no PGRs, this three-color series works well in 4-in. pots, which could open up a new market option for growers. They showed us three colors: Lucca (pale yellow), Torino (white) and Verona (pink, pictured).



Sempervivum Hippy Chicks (Benary)

Benary has added some sempervivums to their lineup with the Hippy Chicks. They're pelletizing that seed and that helps increase the germ rate by 10% to 12%—a big advantage on a slow-as-molasses crop.

Cyclamen Leopardo, Elegante (Schoneveld)

Elegante and Leopardo are new series for 2020, bred in Southern Italy and trialed and tested in hot climates. Elegante is a midi size, ideal for 4-in. and quarts, with a compact, uniform habit and excellent flower power showing no heat delay in Southern gardens. It's introduced with seven colors; Elegante Red is pictured.

Leopardo is larger, suited for 6-in. and gallon production. We learned that Schoneveld breeding focuses on high leaf count because every cyclamen leaf has the potential for a bloom.

Primula Princessa (Sakata)

This new series includes six key colors and a mix, and features extra-large flowers. But its claim to fame is great germination for a primula, 85+%, creating more usable plugs than other series on the market. This is Princessa Blue.

Hedera Tropical Blizzard (PlantHaven)

Fitting the indoor foliage trend perfectly, Tropical Blizzard makes a nice low-light houseplant with 4- to 7-in.

variegated leaves on pink-red stems. It can be trained up, making a unique houseplant, or used as a groundcover in Zone 8 or warmer. Northern growers can also consider it for use



Rex Begonia Bewitched, Curly (Green Fuse)

The Bewitched series is super-uniform for growers with a bushy, strong habit and is one of the fastest to finish Rex begonias on the market. With the key colors shoppers want (red, light green and bicolors), it'll make a solid premium offering.

A bit more unique is the Curly series of escargot-pattern Rex begonias with ruffled foliage coming to market this year with four colors. This is Curly Peppermint as a thriller in combo pots.

Philodendron Shangri-La (Ball Ingenuity)

A compact split-leaf philodendron that's dense and clumping rather than climbing. Nice for the houseplant trend!

Sempervivum SuperSemp Collection (PlantHaven)

Hens 'N Chicks fans know that sempervivum tend to look best in winter when few people are out admiring their gardens. The first three intros in PlantHaven's new SuperSemp collection bring the color interest forward to summer, with an added bonus of super-sized plants that are faster to finish than others on the market. Plant a 72-liner in an 8-in. pot and in 20 weeks you'll have a saleable 8-in. rosette filling the pot. This is Rose Quartz; there's also Onyx and Ruby. **GT**