

GROWERTALKS

Features

7/1/2023

Next Year's New Stuff

Chris Beytes, Bill Calkins & Jennifer Zurko

We may call Chris “Pa-Paw” when he still calls it by the quaint and outmoded term “Pack Trials,” but we tease because we love. But, in fairness to the Bossman, there really were some packs and comparison trials at this year’s CAST—most notably at Syngenta, who’s rolling out a series-wide upgrade of their venerable Delta pansies (first introduced to North America in 1994—Chris’ first Pack Trials—when he and fellow editor Kathleen Pyle gave the new series *GrowerTalks*’ “Cream of the Crop” award).

Other trends we noticed:

- **A bit of “me-too” additions to breeders’ lines.** Back in 1996, Daehnfeldt (now part of Sakata), launched its first impatiens series, called Carnival, in spite of the overwhelming dominance of then-industry-leaders Accent, Impulse and Super Elfin, not to mention all the other series fighting for market share. When we asked them why, they explained that it was because the impatiens pie was very big, and if they could carve off even a little slice of it, it could be lucrative. This is a key reason breeders continue to add “me-too” lines to their catalogs. Why let the competition get all the business when you can put your own spin on a class? Plus, if the other guy has a crop failure, you may be ready to fill the order. There’s nothing wrong with this strategy.

- **Displays—a real product or just a concept?** It’s always something you have to be aware of when looking at displays at CAST, Cultivate, IPM, Flower Trials or any other industry event: Is this an actual for-sale program? Or is it just a concept, idea or inspiration to show what’s possible? Not that there’s anything wrong with concepts and ideas—we need all the inspiration and recipes we can get! We just have to understand the difference.



For instance, Benary displayed “Mix It Up” combos featuring both seed and vegetative varieties. Scores of colorful recipes with imaginative names and plant-ogram descriptions. But you can’t tell them, “Send me 100 Daydream and 100 Moon & Stars” and get the cuttings or plugs pre-packaged like with some other programs. The same goes for similar recipe and plant-ogram concepts from Ball FloraPlant (“FunFusions”) and Selecta (“Dynamix”). Benary also reminded us that some of their annuals also work as potted gift plants (“Benary to Go”) and that herbs are more fun and lucrative when planted in tasty combinations (“Season Me! Fusions”).

• **Sow Fast, Grow Fast.** PanAmerican Seed has organized a detailed list of more than 150 varieties of

annuals that you can grow in a gallon late in the season, from sow to ship, in 10 weeks or less. The idea is to help you fill empty benches and get one more turn from your greenhouse. Smart!

If you want to make the trip next year, jot down the dates now so you can plan ahead: March 20-24, 2024.

Pictured: Clockwise from left: We actually saw packs at what used to be called Pack Trials! Syngenta's Mike Murgiano talks to Jen and Bill about their new Delta Pro Pansies after re-tooling the popular series.

• *We saw many ideas and conceptual displays at CAST this year, including Benary's Mix It Up combo concept made up of seed and vegetative varieties.*

• *PanAmerican's Sow Fast, Grow Fast program is a detailed list of more than 150 varieties that you can grow in a gallon later in the season in 10 weeks or less.*

[Go here to watch all of our videos from CAST.](#)



The Year of the ... Begonia

We saw more than a dozen new begonia introductions this year, in a multitude of species. And why not? They're easy, colorful and take a wide range of conditions.

Adora; Limitless (Syngenta)

The new Adora series has dark foliage and small double flowers, and fits in quarts to 8-in. pots and larger. There are three colors to begin—Satin Rose, Velvet Red and Moon Dance (white).

The Limitless series are tuberous hybrids with flowers that the folks at Syngenta say are as much as 20% larger than the competitive series. They're also touted

to be seven days earlier. Launched with eight colors and a mix, the series looks uniform and should require fewer

PGRs due to naturally compact breeding.

Nonstop Joy Peaches & Dreams (Benary)

We're pretty sure we've never written about Benary's trial without mentioning something new from the Nonstop Begonia family because it's an industry leader and a very active breeding program despite being 50 years old or more. That's impressive! New this year within the Joy basket types is Peaches & Dreams, an absolutely beautiful offering that shades from pale yellow to apricot to pale pink, with the characteristic huge blooms of Nonstop. And don't miss Benary's new Stonehedge Begonia in our Memorable Intros section.

Emerald Ring; Jurassic Jr. Strawberry Heart; Jurassic Snowfall (Ball Ingenuity)

Jurassic has been a Ball Ingenuity staple for at least 12 years now and they continue to add to the assortment, which now includes four distinct sizes: (from smallest to largest) Dino, Jurassic Jr., Jurassic and Megalo. Nothing new in Megalo, but the rest have new additions. Jurassic adds Snowfall, Jurassic Jr. now includes Strawberry Heart and Dino adds Cherry Fields.

Emerald Ring is a standalone shade-loving variety that spreads and cascades in baskets and can also be used indoors. And it makes great shade combos.

Baby Wing Red Bronze Leaf; Dragon Wing Pink Bronze Leaf, Red Bronze Leaf; Hula Red & White Mix (PanAmerican Seed)

PanAm simplified their begonia program for CAST attendees by showing their four types side by side, creating a clear visual of their habits. Each of their four series gets an addition for 2024. BabyWing adds Red Bronze Leaf. Megawatt upgrades its own Red Bronze Leaf—completely reworked, eliminating the green off-types, darkening the red and deepening the bronze foliage. Dragon Wing gets Pink Bronze Leaf and Red Bronze Leaf. And Hula, their new spreading-habit series, introduced last year, adds a new Red & White mix.



Bellissa (Kientzler)

A boliviensis hybrid, with an upright habit and tons of flowers on top. They told us it can be grown in just about any size pot, from 4-in. to baskets. They've got four colors in the series—Orange, Red, White and Yellow.

I'conia (Dümmen Orange)

I'conia are all interspecific hybrids, giving them plenty of hybrid vigor. There's a range of sizes and habits, and all take full sun. Additions to the collection include First Kiss Saffron (semi-double with an upright habit), Upright Blush (single flowers and, as the name implies, it's upright), Portofino Dark Orange (mounded with double flowers and chocolate foliage), and a stand-alone called La Luna, with pinky-peach semi-double flowers and dark foliage. Pictured are Upright Blush and Dark Orange.



Memorable Intros

Pansy Delta Pro (Syngenta)

The folks at Syngenta say (based on confidential sales data) that Delta is the best-selling pansy in North America AND the world. You don't upgrade a 30-year-old series lightly, hence their desire to show the new Delta Pro next to three leading comparisons: Spring Matrix (PanAmerican Seed), Inspire Plus (Benary) and Spring Grandio (Sakata), as well as their own original Deltas (now called Delta Classic), which are being

phased out as the colors get "Pro'd."

Begonia Stonehedge (Benary)

Stonehedge Begonia is a new series that could borrow the "hedgiflora" moniker from Ball's Tidal Wave Petunia. This two-color (more on the way) series is said to grow to up to 5 ft. tall, with large, dark, textured leaves, big blooms and yet a tidy habit. We'll be curious to see how Stonehedge works as a blooming hedge or back-of-the-border plant in the landscape

Asparagus Fuzzy Fern Frizz (PanAmerican Seed)

PanAmerican is hoping to solve the recent shortages of *Asparagus sprengeri* seed worldwide with Fuzzy Fern Frizz, their fun relaunch of this simple but important component plant. With reliable seed supply and a high germination rate, this new intro will make a reliable accent plant in combos and baskets—and it's pretty on its own!

Saad Assaf Cannas

We'd like to try the canna lilies from Saad Assaf, an Israeli breeding company that specializes in canna and amaryllis, in *GrowerTalks*' garden. The first-time CAST exhibitor says they are producing virus-free vegetative cuttings from rhizomes, and can ship them to you for sticking, rooting and bumping up. Varieties include many of your favorite older types with green, bronze and variegated bronze foliage, and a wide range of flower colors and patterns. (They offer canna seed, too.)

Petunia Sweet Sunshine Magenta Sky; Headliner Violet Sky, Lavender Picotee (Selecta One)

Some new petunias that feature Selecta's now-famous "sky" pattern of speckles include Headliner Violet Sky, which looks most like the original Night Sky, featuring dark flowers and slightly creamy spots. Sweet Sunshine (their name for double flowers) Magenta Sky has the spots on magenta blooms.

Petchoa Caliburst (PanAmerican Seed)

PanAmerican's key intro of CAST was Petchoa Caliburst. Petchoa (say "pet-koa") is a cross of petunia and calibrachoa that breeders say delivers the best of both crops: the early season performance and cold-tolerance of petunia, and the colors, patterns and durability of calibrachoa. Most unique of all, Caliburst is the first petchoa from seed!



Granted, the series starts with only one color, Yellow, but it looks bright and vivid. And it pairs well with PanAmerican's Easy Wave and E3 Wave Petunias. Plug growers will be happy to hear the pelleted seed has an 85% germination rate. It'll be interesting to see where this new series goes.

Lantana PassionFruit (Ball FloraPlant)

The color is as vividly tropical as any we've seen. PassionFruit is a trailing hanging basket type loaded with flowers, and they say it won't cycle out of flower.

Petchoa EnViva (Selecta One)

Selecta One is offering a vegetative version of petchoa they call EnViva. As with the seed version, EnViva combines the best of petunia (cold- and weather-tolerance) and calibrachoa (great colors and good branching). The series starts with four colors: Pink, Red, Blue and White.



New Annuals Series

Anigozanthus Celebration (Ball Ingenuity)

The new Celebrations series of anigozanthos puts a new spin on the Australian native with some color breakthroughs. The four colors last a long time on plants, which will make nice patio decorations. Check out Masquerade (blue), Fireworks (red/blue), Aussie Spirit (green/yellow) and Carnivale (purple).

Gerbera Joybera (Schoneveld)

It's always fun to see a breeder launch a series in a new category. For Schoneveld, it's gerbera and the new

Joybera series of seed gerbera. We asked, why gerbera? Their answer? The key problem with current gerbera is uniformity, they say; they want to bring more uniformity to the class. Joybera, bred for small leaves with short internodes, starts with seven colors and three doubles. They're shooting for three blooms up and two buds coming on every plant.

Cuphea Sweet Talk (PanAmerican Seed)

Pollinators will be pleased with Cuphea Sweet Talk, a heat-loving, large-flowered cuphea in three colors: Red, Lavender Splash and Deep Pink. It's an aggressive grower, so you want to give it about 1 ppm of paclobutrazol right at sowing or within three days, and another light shot two weeks after transplant (rate depends on your geography).

Petunia Discoball (Westhoff)

Discoball features the white-speckled flowers made popular by Petunia Night Sky. Colors include Pink, Purple (pictured) and Violet. These patterns come from their own breeding.

Lobelia HotSpot (Westhoff)

HotSpot is a genetically dwarf addition to the Hot series of Lobelias. Its five colors—four different blues and a white—feature big flowers on small plants that require no PGRs. HotSpot is ideal for high-density quart production, but Westhoff says they'll continue to grow and develop for the end consumer.





Coleus Down Town (Dümmen Orange)

The story on these (and how they got their name) is that the series is a “down”-sized version of their Main Street Coleus collection. Down Town varieties are named for cities—like Vegas Neon (pictured), Miami Magic, Columbus, Greenville ... you get the idea. They’re excellent, full sun stand-alone or combo plants, well-matched and very late to flower. On a production note, to help with sourcing efficiency, Dümmen has moved all coleus production to El Salvador.

Dahlia Revelation (Dümmen Orange)

Dümmen has an all-new dahlia series called Revelation, a dark-foliaged offering with semi-double

flowers. It will replace their Mystic series, which they say was a bit too vigorous and uneven. Revelation starts with five colors (only four are shown here; Red is missing).

Fuchsia Ballerina’s (Dümmen Orange)

Yes, that’s correct, Ballerina’s—possessive—because the seven colors are all named for ballet poses—like Ballerina’s Pirouette, Ballerina’s Brisé, Tendu, Relevé and so on. The series is daylength neutral so early to flower with a tighter habit than most fuchsias, and with good heat tolerance.

Zinnia Belize (Takii)

Takii is up against some tough competition from those other zinnias from another Japanese breeder, whose American office happens to be about 10 minutes away, so they know they have to bring their best. But based on what they showed us, Belize looks promising. It’s an interspecific hybrid zinnia—like other top series—and it looks extremely uniform in habit and bloom time. They say they’re breeding for abundant branching and a more compact habit (10- to 12-in. tall). The series has already earned an award or two—Double Scarlet is a Fleuroselect Gold Medal winner! The series starts with five double colors (Cherry, Orange, Rose, White, Yellow) and the singles get four (no yellow yet).



Lobularia Stream Compact (Danziger)

Stream Compact is a slightly (30%) smaller version of their Stream series, making it a bit friendlier in combo pots. This new sub-series gets White, Violet, Purple and Rose.



Coleus Talavera (Syngenta)

The fact that Syngenta didn't already have a sun/shade vegetative coleus line surprised us, but although some might say they're late to the coleus game, demand for this type continues to grow so there's plenty of room for six good colors/patterns and reliable supply right out of the gate.

Pansy Highflyer (Benary)

Launched with five colors, Highflyer Pansies, which join a couple other trailing series on the market, were described to us as more trailing and spreading than mounding, with larger flowers and better flowering

across the entire basket, with no "bird's-nest" effect—meaning bare on the top.

Nemesia Whimsy (Selecta)

Another good early season annual is Nemesia Whimsy, which Selecta says is compact and uniform, with "huge" and fragrant flowers. They say young plant supply is excellent. Five colors: Deep Rose, Orange Sunset, Red, White and Yellow.

Erysimum Brightside (Selecta)

The new Brightside series of erysimum from Selecta One has benefits for growers, retailers and gardeners. With four cool bicolors—Purple Glow, Lemon Glow, Magenta Glow, Orange Glow—plus Dark Yellow, the series has a relatively short crop time and medium vigor.

Nemesia Escential (PlantHaven)

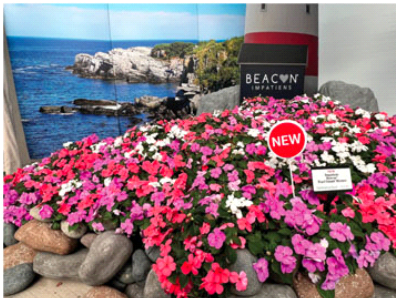
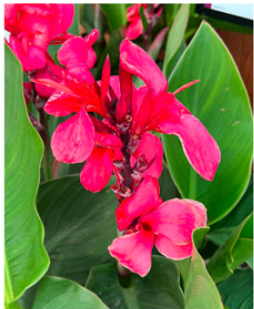
PlantHaven is launching a new series of nemesia for 2024 called Escential, referencing the fragrance. With five vibrant bicolors—including Elderberry, Zazzleberry, Snowberry, Cherryberry and Sunberry—this series is positioned for anything from jumbo 6-packs, 4-in., quart and gallon pots, all grown sans PGRs.

Diascia Little, Towers of Flowers (PlantHaven)

The range of diascia PlantHaven showed included a relaunch of Little Diascia, a compact, spreading collection with four colors; as well as a taller, columnar new series named Towers of Flowers (pictured). They looked almost foxglove-like, with flower spikes growing up to 8 in. in length. Look for four colors in this series, as well.



Other Notable New & A+ Additions



Impatiens Beacon Lipstick, Pearl Island Mix (PanAmerican Seed)

Beacon Impatiens is a key series for PanAm, being IDM resistant and helping bring Impatiens walleriana back to gardens around the world. New to Beacon is a good, bright color—Lipstick—one of those hot impatiens colors everybody loves. Beacon also gets another mix, Pearl Island, named for a lighthouse in Nova Scotia. It features a future Beacon color, Blue Pearl.

Canna Cannova Rose Dark Bud (Ball Ingenuity)

We all know the Cannova series, but now there's a twist. It's called Rose Dark Bud and it's the beginning of a collection of more compact 18- to 20-in. Cannovas

with big, sturdy stems and larger flowers. You can produce it without PGRs, too.

Petunia Blanket Double Silver Surprise (Green Fuse)

This double-flowered variety joins Silver Surprise as a unique variety that produces two different color blooms—silver and rose—on the same plant. It looks like a mixed combo with the economic benefit of just one plant in a basket. Double Silver Surprise has—you guessed it—double flowers.

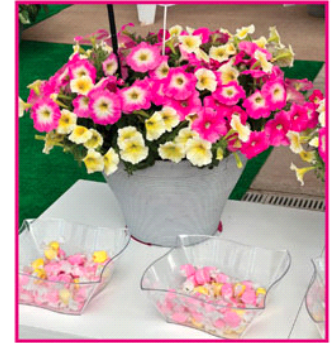
Petunia E3 Yellow, Sweet Taffy Mix (PanAmerican Seed)

A few years ago, the E3 series of Easy Wave was launched, touting three Es—early, efficient and “the evolution” of Easy Wave—as its attributes. This year, Easy Wave Yellow was moved to the E3 series because it fits that assortment better. They also created a new mix, Sweet Taffy, which includes Yellow, Pink Cosmo and Rose Morn (not available yet outside of the mix). Improved in the Easy Wave series is Blue, a core color that is now a whole lot better for growers, being earlier (9.5 vs. 10 to 11 hours of daylength), with much denser flowering.



Calibrachoa Cha-Cha; SureShot; SlingShot (Ball FloraPlant)

Cha Cha Calibrachoa, Ball FloraPlant's larger calibrachoa series, gets a new denim blue called Diva Lavender (pictured right), which features “purple-shifting color.” SureShot Petunias, their mounded pot petunias launched last year, gets four new colors: Hot Pink, Pink Vein, Raspberry Cheesecake and Red. And their SlingShot Petunia collection of novelty colors and patterns for patio pots, gets Burgundy Bliss and Lemonberry.

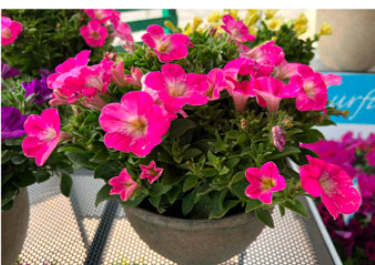


Petunia Crazytunia Cosmic Violet, Gingersnap (Westhoff)

The German breeder known for their Crazytunia petunias, with colors unlike those from any other flower breeder, introduces Cosmic Violet and Gingersnap.

Calitastic Cappuccino (Westhoff)

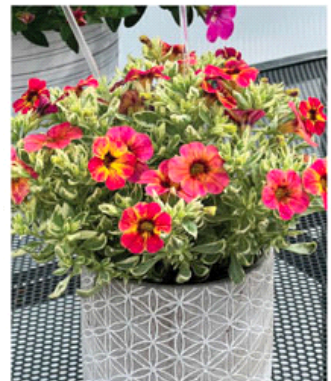
Westhoff is also known for wild calibrachoa patterns, and they didn't let us down this year. They showed off a compact little variety called Calico, the first calibrachoa we've seen with variegated foliage; along with Calitastic Cappuccino, with a beautiful light coffee-colored picotee edge, yellow star and an orange-mahogany center.



Calibrachoa Calico;

Petunia Surfinia Mounding Patio Party Pink (Suntory)

Surfinias are known for their garden performance—vigorous to make showy baskets





that hold up well in rainy conditions but compact in greenhouse production. Patio Party Pink joins the mounding series, bringing a nice, vibrant color to the party.



Echibeckia Summerina (PP&L)

The real excitement of their trials was in echibeckia, with three interesting intros with semi-double to double flowers: Summerina Glow Swoop, Summerina Glow Sugar Shake and Summerina Glow Dizz (not pictured). The colors are muted autumn tones of yellow and bronze. Sugar Shake is especially interesting for its fully double flowers that resemble mums or dahlias.

Hellebore Frostkiss Vibey Velvet (PP&L)

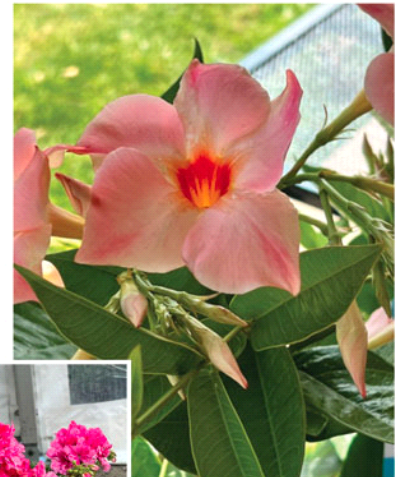
Hellebores are excellent additions to shade gardens, and Vibey Velvet from Pacific Plug & Liner has big, burgundy blooms above green marbled foliage that looks classy in the garden throughout the year. Cold hardy to Zone 5 as well as heat tolerant, this new variety adds nicely to the collection.

Pericallis Senetti Red Halo, Lavender Dawn (Suntory)

New for the Senetti program were examples of their latest breeding, like Lavender Dawn, which looks like a great Easter variety, and Red Halo.

Mandevilla Sun Parasol Giant Peach Sunrise (Suntory)

Suntory's Sun Parasols are synonymous with mandevilla, and their new breeding is moving toward varieties with thicker, more durable foliage thought to be more resistant to leaf spots. Giant Peach Sunrise not only has this leaf type, but also beautiful soft peach blooms that will add a nice dimension to the tropical landscape or temperate patio.



Geranium Big EZZE Pink Batik, White (Dümmen Orange)

Dümmen's breeding in interspecific geraniums (meaning ivy/zonal cross) continues to expand, and we saw their Santana and Big EEZE series—similar in their focus on uniformity, but different in that one (Santana) has more ivy blood, making it great for hanging baskets, and the other (Big EEZE) has more zonal genetics, so it's great for containers. New for Big EEZE is what might be the first mosaic pattern in interspecifics, Pink Batik (pictured), as well as a nice clear White.



Petchoa SuperCal Premium Red Maple (Sakata)

Seeing how petchoas (those petunia/calibrachoa crosses) were a topic back down the coast, it's only fair to mention the one that launched the class, SuperCal. Sakata calls theirs a petunia, however, since the flowers are so big and petunia-like. It doesn't really matter, as long as they look good and perform. New to the series is SuperCal Premium (meaning more suited to fall, although, really, you can grow any of them anytime) Red Maple, which sports a stunning red color with an orange eye. It's a traffic-stopper and an endcap item.



Petunia Trilogy Cherry Morn (Takii)

Takii added to their Trilogy spreading petunia series and gave it an upgrade for color and habit. Cherry Morn is a new color and Rose Gen 2 is a solid upgrade. They also showed two experimentals, Red (which was lost to the series in the great orange gene debacle) and a Purple upgrade. Watch for those coming soon.



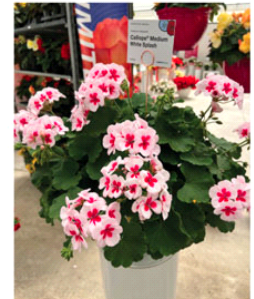
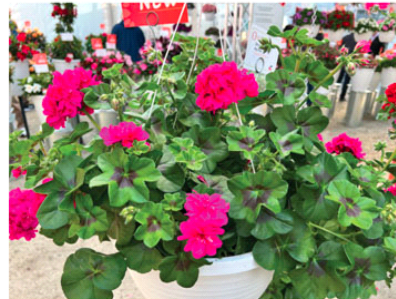
SunPatiens Compact Red Candy (Sakata)

Sakata is working on bringing more bicolors to the popular SunPatiens line, and this is one of them.

Geranium Great Balls

of Fire Hot Pink, Lilac (Dümmen Orange)

New in their ivy geranium series Great Balls of Fire are Hot Pink, Lilac and an improved White. This series was bred for high Edema resistance and reliable mother stock production—benefitting the entire supply chain, from farm to grower.



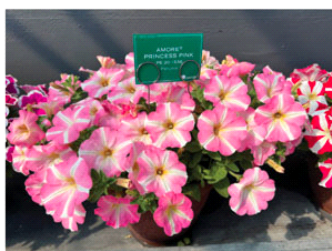
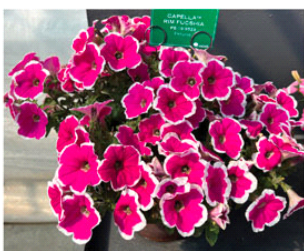
Geranium Calliope Medium White Splash (Syngenta)

Syngenta's interspecific Calliope geraniums were a game-changing breakthrough; new White Splash is, we believe, the first interspecific to carry this splash pattern.



Gerbera Garvinea Sweet Joy; Patio Monte Viso (HilverdaFlorist)

New in the Garvinia series of landscape gerbera is a bright yellow called Sweet Joy. It's actually an upgrade to one called Smile, offering better uniformity. It's worth noting that the Garvinia are hardy down to Zone 7. In their large-flowered Patio Gerbera is Monte Viso, a super-vibrant bicolor with a pink center that fades to white at the edges.



Petunia Capella Rim Fuchsia (Danziger)

With stable white edges around vivid fuchsia centers, new Capella Rim Fuchsia from Danziger adds a unique color to the series bred for pot-tight, low PGR production.

Petunia Amore Princess (Danziger)

Amore petunias from Danziger are the varieties with a heart shape on every bloom; Princess brings a soft pink to the series. Early to flower with a mounded habit, Princess joins six other colors in the series.

Vinca Cora XDR Rose Punch (Syngenta)

The original Cora series came to market in 2007, bringing aerial Phytophthora resistance to vinca and changing the game in many markets. Syngenta continues to upgrade and add to the series just about every year; new for 2024 is Rose Punch.

Bidens Blazing Star (Danziger)

The blooms are really big—golden yellow with a star pattern. They reminded us a little bit of coreopsis flowers. But it's definitely a bidens, and although it's fairly large, you can drop one input into a quart (or even a larger pot) and off it goes. **GT**

