

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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RIP Konrad Wagner

Chris Beytes



Konrad Wagner, the breeder behind the first true clear orange pansy, the F2 hybrid Padparadja, a dual award winner, died July 31 in Hannoversch Muenden, Germany, after a full life as a horticulturist, breeder and family man. He was 90.

Konrad, who was for many decades a breeder for Benary, was an excellent old school horticulturist with a passion for breeding. And while he contributed many varieties to Benary's famous Nonstop Begonia line, he considered the breakthrough in creating the first true clear-faced orange pansy as his personal highest achievement. The F2-hybrid Padparadja (named for a rare orange-colored

sapphire from Sri Lanka) is bright pumpkin orange without the "face" found on traditional pansies. It earned both All-America Selections and Fleuroselect awards in 1991.

The garden behind his house was his pride, they say. Even more than 25 years after reaching retirement age, he maintained contact with a group of beloved former colleagues. Long nights of horticultural discussions at his home were common. For the younger members of the group, he was a mentor and friend. **GT**