

Spring Trials Day 6: Danziger, Syngenta, Benary

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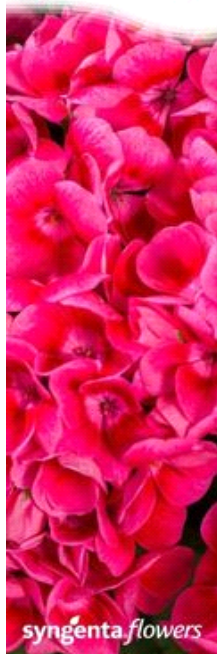


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Ellen doesn't get to skydive

Chris: Last day, Ellen!

Ellen: Last day of what would have been six days of (more than likely) beautiful California weather. Ahhhh ... I did miss it, indeed. Been cloudy here in Boston nearly the whole time we've been writing this. But I'm grateful for weather—any weather—and that we all seem to be feeling well and are safe. So many are not! And, well, good thing CAST was ... I don't want to say cancelled, but, heck, here we are.

Chris: Yup! Writing from our home offices in Illinois and Massachusetts and Ohio just isn't the same as writing from the Hampton Inn Morgan Hill.

Ellen: Ooo ... what was that good Italian restaurant there?

Chris: Sicilia in Bocca? Mama Mia's? Maurizio's? Any ring a bell?

Ellen: Nope. Even though I'm a bit of a homebody, I sure would love to go out to eat right about now.

Chris: Same here. I'll take a thick burger and a day trip to some garden centers! That's what Laurie and I are doing as soon as the stay-at-home order is lifted.

Ellen: Me, too, and I'll be headed to the friendly folks at Ace to pick up some raised gardening bed supplies. Hard work, fresh air, someone to do the heavy lifting ... Ahhhh ...

Chris: Ace is the place, they say! Okay, on to our last day of the California Spring Trials—actually, the NEXT to last (penultimate, if one wants to get erudite) day because I have a surprise up my sleeve.

Ellen: Surprise? I can deal with most things except being pushed out of a plane. So keep it on the ground.

Chris: I can assure you it does not include skydiving. Now, on with today's show: Three big stops to cover, Syngenta, Danziger and Benary, and Ellen, it is your turn to do the honors.

Ellen: Well, thanks for that intro, Chris. Now to get on with it.



To Danziger, right behind Garlic World



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Ellen: If we had actually been in California, we'd have had to hit the Danziger stop extra early, as this is one of their biggest introduction years in a while—something like seven new series, two new programs and 55-plus new varieties!

I wrote about Danziger's new Durabella combo program in the **February** issue of *Green Profit*, but for a refresher, the Durabella combos are two- and three-plant combinations meant for low inputs, i.e. just one plant of each variety. This lowers grower costs while allowing them to still finish the crop quickly. One benefit: The finished combo's root balls are not as dense, so they hold more water and last longer at retail. This benefit carries through to the consumer, as well. Their most popular mixes so far are those with the Amore Petunias in them. I quite like Maui Wowie and Tropical Sunset, myself.



Durabella Tropical Sunset

A quick rundown of Danziger's new annual series includes:

Harmony Colorfall New Guinea Impatiens: A truly trailing, premium item for shade baskets, pots and combos. It's the Harmony genetics you know, with a new trailing habit. There are 12 colors in all.



Harmony Colorfall Light Coral New Guinea Impatiens

Sol Luna Impatiens interspecific hybrid: The interspecifics, Lisa Heredia told us, are the “future of New Guineas,” mainly because you can put them anywhere, sun or shade. The Sol Lunas all have a well-matched, compact habit and are good for packs, quarts and gallons. Four colors—Tropical Punch, Pink, Candy Apple and Dark Lavender.

Glow Lobelia: A compact and mounded lobelia series well-suited for quarts. Heat tolerant, too, and so floriferous. Two colors—Electric Blue and White Lightening.

Scoop Petunia: A new series of early, smaller-flowered petunias for packs and quarts. Think of it as a “scoop” of petunia atop a small pot. Requires little or no PGRs and are meant for high-density production. Eight bright colors with tasty names like Cherry Gelato.



Scoop Strawberry Swirl Petunia

Ombre Calibrachoa: This is a new series with a semi-trailing, medium vigor that blooms early enough for any market. Best used in quarts, combos and baskets. Four colors.

Splash Dance Petunias: Danziger's new series of uniquely speckled petunias. These bloom early and keep the speckling even through the heat. Three colors—Bolero Blue, Purple Polka and Magenta Mambo. They've all got good habits in gallons and baskets. They're licensing that speckled pattern from Selecta One, by the way.

Mega Pazzaz Portulaca: The Pazzaz series is a good seller for Danziger, and the Megas have the same habit and heat tolerance of the original series—just with HUGE blooms. Four colors.



Mega Pazzaz Purple Portulaca

As for the second new program, ColorBlox is a program that incorporates better genetics for holding on racks, which can be a punishing place to be during the spring rush. Controlled growth in packs and quarts that then perform well in the garden—and all with the goal of high returns per square foot and high impulse-buy appeal.

To give you a better look, we put together this [VIDEO SLIDE SHOW](#) showing all seven of their new annual series.



Up Hecker Pass Road to Syngenta

Ellen: Rather than Zoom with the Syngenta folks, we hopped on their WebCAST two-part, multi-hour webinar, which they pulled together just a week after CAST would have been held. All of it was super-good and super resourceful. Both WebCAST days are available for your own viewing [HERE](#). Much of it was a detailed tour of their extensive website. It's all available to see on your very own and at your own pace. I suggest watching the webinars and noting what resource pages on the site you want to explore further.

No, that's not a way for me to just skip to the next stop! I'll cover five highlights each in vegetative (five new series!) and seed introductions (three new series and 55 new and improved!):

Vegetative annuals:

Florencio is their first foray into interspecific hybrid begonias. The breeding is from Koppe out of

Holland. These have an upright, grower-friendly habit, medium vigor and are good for mid- to large-sized containers. All five colors look great against the dark foliage.



Florencio Yellow Begonia

Grace is a *Begonia boliviensis* that fits well in a basket and container program. Cascading, double flowers on densely branched plants. Three colors—Red, Orange and Pink—shine in front of medium-green leaves.

On to geraniums and a new interspecific series called Caldera. They described it as the same flower intensity and heat tolerance of the Calientes, but with a large, vigorous, spreading habit that makes it a good choice for in-ground plantings, baskets and combos. You can tell from the flowers that it leans toward the ivy geranium side of the family. Three colors: Salmon, Red and Pink.



Caldera Red Interspecific Geranium

Remember Goldsmith's Fantasy, the world's first multiflora petunia? Here's a vegetative version of it, Petunia Itsy. They are Itsy "tough and tiny." Amazing color and coverage, great branching and habit, Itsy is a fun and fanciful item for baskets and landscapes. Just one color, Magenta, but they're calling it a series, so expect more to come.



Petunia Itsy Magenta

The *Hydrangea macrophylla* HI Collection is a totally new category for Syngenta, and is the start of their partnership with HI Breeding Company of the Netherlands. These florist hydrangeas were bred with growers in mind. For example, strong stems means no need to put rings on them, and the flowers hold on the plant much longer at retail. Six colors range from blue to white to pink to red, fading to nice antique shades. You can check them out [HERE](#). The cool one (to my eye) is Sugar—it stays pink no matter the soil pH. The HIs offer some reblooming, so might work in the landscape once they're done as a home beautifier.



Syngenta's seed offerings

Ellen: Syngenta has two new seed petunia series this year. FotoFinish is a fast-finishing, spreading series that's well-matched in habit and flowering across the colors. It finishes in nine to 10 weeks from sowing thanks to a reduced daylength sensitivity. Ideal for high-density growing, FotoFinish holds well at retail. And with little or no PGRs needed, it really gets going in the garden. Nine colors and two mixes. FotoFinish will replace two older series, Plush and Ramblin'.



FotoFinish Pink Petunia

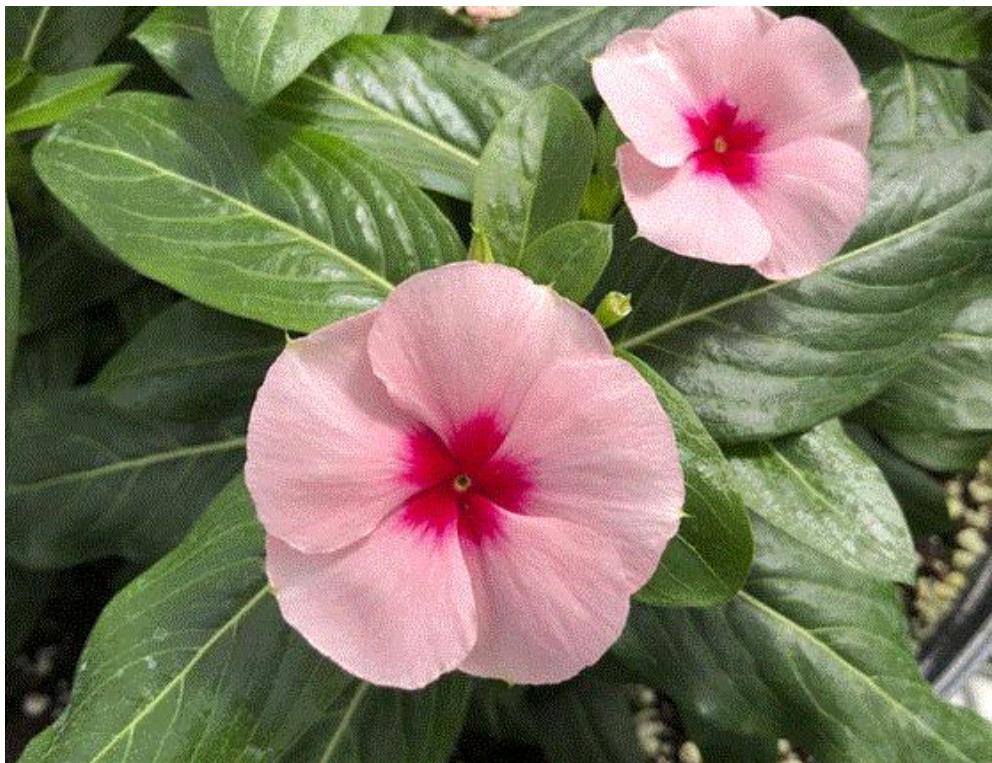
FlashForward, a spreading multiflora type, is an upgrade and replacement for the Picobella Cascades. Early to flower, these are tidy plants that “play well with others,” meaning they’re ideal for container combos. Flowers hold up well in summer weather. There are 11 colors and three mixes.



Petunia FlashForward series

I love a French marigold, so I'll be happy with Syngenta's Dwarf Crested Happy series, which they say is "extra dwarf" and is ideal for the southern grower due to its heat tolerance. Compact and uniform across the five colors and the mix.

My last two mentions for Syngenta both concern disease-tolerant garden workhorses. The first, the Imara XDR series of impatiens, which is tolerant to IDM (Impatiens Downy Mildew) has added five new mixes: Hot, Pastel, ProFormula, Rosy and Tango. The second is additions to the Cora Vincas. Cora XDR gets an Apricot, while Cora Cascade gets a Bright Rose.



Cora XDR Apricot Vinca

For these and more, check out the [VIDEO SLIDE SHOW](#) we put together for them.



Over Hecker Pass to Benary

Ellen: Benary's location in Watsonville is always a welcome stop—and not just to settle my car sickness from Beytes' driving over the winding Hecker Pass! They strive to relay some message each year and this year's would have been "B" Green, with an effort to create a zero-waste trials site. In fact, their goal as a company over the next decade is to become the most environmentally friendly plant breeder in the world!

Okay, on to all the fun plants we would have seen had we been there:

A beautiful *Rudbeckia hirta*, Amarillo Gold is a non-hardy black-eyed Susan that's an improvement over Prairie Sun. And as both a regional AAS winner and a FleuroSelect winner, I'd say so. Grow it in gallons and bigger. Limited availability right now, so get it while you can.



Amarillo Gold Rudbeckia

Benary certainly does begonias. They added one new series and had a bunch of additions to their existing series:

Groovy is a new compact *B. boliviensis* series that features smaller plants, which means they're more easily shipped. Flowers are still large, however. Five colors in all: Mellow Yellow, Orange, Red, Rose and White.



Groovy Rose Begonia

The Funky series gets a Red, giving the series six colors. Funky is a hybrid of tuberous and *boliviensis* begonias.

Benary's extremely popular Nonstop series get three colors: Fire, Sunset and Mellow Orange. The Nonstop Mocha dark-leaved series gets a Deep Red.



Nonstop Fire Begonia

The BIG series of *semperflorens* begonia gets a very important color addition: White with Green Leaf. Matt Mart called it the “holy grail” for *semperflorens*. It has a slightly cupped and rippled leaf, and overall sizes up like the others. Deep Rose Bronze Leaf is also a new addition.



BIG White Begonia

Other additions to existing series include a Light Pink in Success Petunias and Mad Magenta in the Brainiac Celosias (Mad Magenta had been Amigo). And they’ve also added some sempervivums to their lineup with the Hippy Chicks line. They’re pelletizing that seed and that helps increase the germ rate by 10% to 12%—and that’s a big advantage on a slow-as-molasses crop.



Sempervivum Hippy Chicks (not to be confused with Petunia Hippy Chick from Danziger ... although the combination might be interesting!).

Whew! I think that covers it, other than telling the folks to click [HERE](#) to watch a video slide show of all the new offerings. If we were actually at the Benary stop, we'd have an ice-cold German beer in our hands about now. Take the controls, Chris, while I take a sip.



Surprise: There's a Day 7!

Chris: Hey, Ellen, remember at the top of this newsletter I promised you a surprise? Wanna know what it is?

Ellen: I'm on the edge of my seat and not an airplane seat.

Chris: A Day 7 *Acres of Buzz* newsletter!

Ellen: I thought on the seventh day we got to rest.

Chris: Don't worry, I'll do all the heavy lifting. You just help me write the intro and ending. It'll be worth it, I promise. On the eighth day you can sleep in.

Ellen: I have a puppy. If I sleep in, there's more work for me later. But yeah, whatever help you need ... happy to write witty dialog!

Chris: Cool. Watch for it in your inbox Tuesday, everybody!



Thanks for reading! See you next time,

Chris, Ellen, Jen & Bill

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