

## CAST Day Four: Danziger & Syngenta

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### No Foolin' Around on Day Four

**Bill:** This is going to be a big day, although we've only got two stops, Chris, and both in Gilroy, the garlic capital of the world. Gilroy is where all of this started, right?

**Chris:** That's right, back in the late '60s, when a young Glenn Goldsmith had bred something visibly superior to the competition, so he invited some "seedsmen" out to see his stuff trialed in packs next to the competition and "Pack Trials" was born. We've come a long way since then, although we still see the occasional pack, albeit big 306 and not a 1206 pack like the old days. I suppose you could call Gilroy the Flower Trials Capital of the World. But enough history from the old guy—tell the folks what we saw on April 1, 2022 ... and no foolin'!

### Starting the Day at Danziger

**Bill:** I'm not fooling when I say I was happy to start the day at Danziger because they always have cool products and messages—plus, we got to stop at Garlic World to introduce Osvaldo to the magical taste sensation that is garlic ice cream! (You can watch the video of that bit of fun [HERE](#).)

But I digress—let's talk flowers, not garlic! I remember you saying that one of the first new varieties we saw at Danziger was one of your favorites of the trials. Which one was it?

**Chris:** That would be *Salvia farinacea* Blue Lagoon, part of their Sallyfun series. I have been a fan of *S. farinacea* since I first grew it in my garden 20-plus years ago. It's bulletproof—drought tolerant, pest-free, no dead flower spikes ... the plants look as pretty in October as they do in May. Blue Lagoon has big, rich blue flowers that would look good in a bed, solo pot or combo.



*S. farinacea* Blue Lagoon

While I'm writing, let me call out another favorite of mine from Danziger's trial—Petunia Rimarkable. This one is different enough that they didn't want to drop it into any of their existing series, so they made it a standalone. The name describes the wide white rim framing the vibrant violet flowers. The rim is much wider than what you see on their Cascadia Rim Cherry or Rim

Violet (both of which have been improved for a more stable rim and better branching).



Petunia Rimarkable, alongside Rim Cherry Improved and Rim Violet Improved.

**Bill:** Well, if you're taking Rimarkable (so awesome ...) I'm snagging Splash Dance Petunias. These are Danziger's speckled-flowered petunias with the special gene that results in spotted patterns. This year, they showed five new ones—Moonwalk, Calypso Cherry, Rumba Rose, Violet Vogue and Fuchsia Flamenco.



Splash Dance Fuchsia Flamenco

Their Sol Luna series of hybrid impatiens gained a few nice, new colors. Electric Pink, Red and Ultra Violet will be good choices for smaller containers, like 306-packs, and you can grow them

with no PGRs and still make a uniform crop. Not a hybrid, but a traditional New Guinea impatiens, Harmony Colorfall Dark Leaf Red is the first bronzy dark leaf in the series. What else did we see at Danziger, boss?

## Danziger's Diversity & DuraBellas

**Chris:** In some more series additions, Cascadias Petunias gets Mulberry, which is a velvety purple (probably the first “mulberry” color description we’ve seen); Calibrachoa Ombre gets Sunrise; Calibrachoa Calibri gets Exotic Red Bling and Pure White; and Verbena Vanessa gets Compact Rose, Compact Bordeaux and Optik Grape.



Verbena Vanessa color additions

And how about a tiny-flowered variety, Cuphea Cubano Cristo? Cuphea is also called cigar flower, so hence the variety name. It’s got a burgundy flower and, of course, that cute little mouse face when seen close up. It’s not the most exciting in a mono pot (although it’s a pollinator-attractor), but it would make a good addition to mixed combos, with the long stems poking out through the other plants.

**Bill:** Speaking of combos, Danziger had a big display of their DuraBella combos. DuraBella means durable and beautiful, I think; their goal is easy-to-grow recipes featuring three varieties, one liner each, planted in the center of the pot and finished in 12 weeks with no special production regimes—just water, fertilize, grow and sell. Your order includes bags of the three varieties—no creativity required! They’ve got more than 70 recipes with more on the way ... in fact, they had attendees voting for their favorite new ones.



DuraBella combinations

Watch our stellar [VIDEO](#) to see these varieties up close and personal.

Okay, boss, take us across the 101 to Syngenta Flowers.

## Syngenta Pt. 1

**Chris:** This has been a fabulous stop since it was the Goldsmith Seeds location, and Syngenta has kept the tradition of great displays and good hospitality (and even free t-shirts) alive. But, of course, we were here to work, so once we'd finished our lunch and fancy coffee and mooched our t-shirts, we hit the greenhouse for the latest and greatest.

**Bill:** After walking through the greenhouse to get the lay of the land, which was peppered with some of the most artistic and focused displays we've seen so far this year, we started in what Syngenta called "The Flower Shop." This was a showcase of specialty cut flowers like dahlias and snaps, but also where they positioned some of their other annual and perennial crops that can be used as cuts, like lavender and Sunfinity Sunflowers. We also saw florist potted crops like mums, hydrangeas and cyclamen. A new mini cyclamen series called SeeWhy was displayed, in a wide color range, in the hopes that our North American market might find them as appealing as Europe does.

**Chris:** For more on the hydrangeas, we popped to the next display of all their HI Hydrangeas, beautiful florist hydrangeas, all of which are sourced through Creekside Greenhouses in Ontario, who produces dormant prefinished plants that make for an easy finish. The four new ones are HI Sky (blue or pink), HI White Sun (white), HI Shadow (purple-blue or pink) and HI Horizon (blue or pink).



Hydrangea HI Sky Blue, HI Sky Pink and HI White Sun

**Bill:** Diving into bedding annuals, Syngenta has a very strong lantana lineup with very few gaps to fill, but they saw a need for a spreading and mounding basket type. The new Bandolista series launches with four colors—Pineapple, Mango, Red Chili, and the only non-sterile one in the group, Coconut.

**Chris:** I'll continue with the hot-weather annuals with Cora Cascade Vinca. No new colors in the series, but there's important news: The whole series—all 11 colors—is now "XDR'd"—meaning it's got Syngenta's "extreme disease resistance" rating against aerial phytophthora, the same as the rest of the Cora series.

**Bill:** I covered the wild selection of petunias at Danziger and Westhoff, so I'm going to explore Syngenta's circus of unique patterns called Fun House. Last year, they started the collection with Potpourri, and this year they added Peach Melba (pink centers with light pink edges), Amethyst Sunshine (yellow throats with purple edges) and Papaya (yellow with light pink edge).



Petunia Fun House Amethyst Sunshine, Peach Melba and Papaya.

There's a production nuance with these varieties that the Syngenta technical experts called out at the trial. Be careful when selecting a PGR for your Fun House Petunias. B-Nine will drastically change the colors, so stick with Bonzi to stay true to the color palette.

## Syngenta Pt. 2

**Chris:** Perhaps we should have covered these first, since Calliope Geraniums are one of Syngenta's most important annual crops. This year, the interspecific geranium line gets two new colors in the Medium (original) series: Medium Salmon and Medium Bright Rose. Salmon lends a bright and light component to the series. Also, Medium Rose Mega Splash has been improved. Another addition is Caldera Lavender Glow. Caldera is Syngenta's interspecific that leans more towards the ivy geranium size of the family.



Geranium Calliope Medium Bright Rose, Medium Salmon and Medium Rose Mega Splash Improved.

A new interspecific series (in fact, all of Syngenta's vegetative geraniums are interspecific now) is called Mantra. It's a dark-leaved, vigorous series with good zoning on the leaves. Grow these in gallon or larger pots. They're more upright than Calliope. The series starts with three colors.

Last, but hardly least, in vegetative interspecific geraniums is another new series, Calliope Cascade. You can guess that it's a cascading geranium, but what's interesting is just how much the foliage looks like an ivy geranium and just how much the flowers do *NOT* look like an ivy geranium—they're traditional zonal flowers. The new series starts with just one color, Violet, but they assure us more are coming.



Calliope Cascade Violet

**Bill:** The last new series we need to cover in Gilroy are hybrid begonias named Bionic. These are seed-raised begonias suitable for gallon pots and larger, with substantial foliage and big flowers. They come in green- and bronze-leaf types with red and rose blooms. Syngenta had a huge sign positioning all of their begonias from largest to smallest. Here they are in order of size (L-S): Bionic, Bowler, Tophat, Eureka, Topspin and Bada Bing/Bada Boom.



**Begonia Bionic Green-Leaf Red and Bronze-Leaf Rose, two of the four new Bionics.**

**Chris:** In a big tent (two, actually) in the beautifully landscaped inner courtyard at Syngenta, we saw a big selection of perennial offerings of the ThinkPlants program. ThinkPlants brings together breeding from more than a dozen companies, all of whom are partnering to offer interesting and unique genetics from multiple breeders—some big and some small—under one umbrella, with the marketing and supply power of a partnership. We didn't cover any of the perennials because there were just too many of them, but if you're looking for perennials, give 'em a look!

**Bill:** Before we left the trial, we stopped to check out a big, touch-screen monitor in the entryway and ended up taking a virtual tour through Syngenta's [WebCAST microsite](#), where they've collected all the information pertinent to this year's introductions. At the link above, you'll find seed and vegetative product links, video presentations, catalogs and culture guides.

**Chris:** Whew! A big stop ... but as always, this is only a tithe, a sample, a morsel of what was on offer at Syngenta. You can see them all up close—and in 4K color—in our [VIDEO](#).

## **Social Shout Out**

**Bill:** Before we wrap this up for today, I want to give a shout out to our social media coverage of #CAST2022. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for plenty of product pics, news and timely information that'll continue throughout the year.

**Jen:** And don't forget to watch all of the videos in our [Spring Trials 2022 playlist](#) on YouTube! Osvaldo and I have posted everything we've recorded and edited on this trip so far.

**Chris:** That's it for today, but have no fear—we'll be back tomorrow for our fifth and final day of coverage. We're heading to Watsonville to see the latest and greatest from Hishtil, Jaldety, Cohen, Nir and Benary. Should be a fun day!

Thanks for reading! See you next time,

Chris, Jen & Bill

Handwritten signatures of Chris, Jen, and Bill in black ink.

Chris Beytes  
Editor  
[GrowerTalks/Green Profit](#)

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