

California Spring Trials Day 4: Takii, HilverdaFlorist, Danziger, Syngenta

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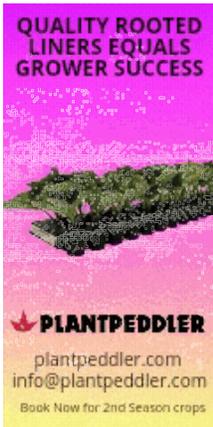
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Back at it ... Fully Energized

Chris: Good Saturday morning, flower fans, and welcome to Day 4 (of 5) of our California Spring Trials almost-live coverage from the road ... the "road" mostly being Highway 101 up the coast between Ventura and Gilroy. Bill, how you feeling so far? Hanging in there?

Bill: According to my Whoop, I'm at 40%. But I'm feeling more like 80%. I promise you, I'm on my game, boss!

Chris: I have no idea what that means ... Anyway, I'm at 100% because I love nothing more than looking at flowers and writing about them. Today's stops: Takii (where we also visited



HilverdaFlorist), Danziger (right behind Garlic World where you can get **GARLIC ICE CREAM**) and finally Syngenta Flowers at the old Goldsmith Seeds greenhouse, where Pack Trials got its start back in the late '60s ... well, it was actually a different greenhouse, but you get my meaning. Bill, kick off our day for the folks.



What's New at Takii?

Bill: Takii is always a fun stop because they're trials pros, with concise messaging and diverse products. When they introduce something, you know it's trialed, tested and ready to go. Their new Belize series of single and double zinnias is a prime example, don't you think?

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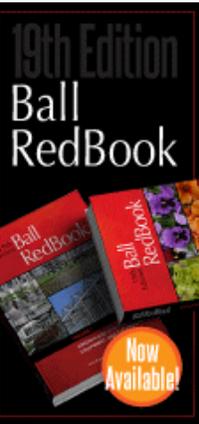


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Chris: They're up against some tough competition from those other zinnias from another Japanese breeder whose American office happens to be about 10 minutes away, so they know they have to bring their best. Based on what they showed us, Belize looks 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). And 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). I posted the big banner because it lets you see the colors.



Bill: I knew we'd see new canna lilies, so we weren't disappointed when our guide Mike Huggett

took us straight to two new colors for the South Pacific series—Yellow and White. South Pacific is an F1 seed series, meaning no disease issues. Those two bring the series to six colors, including two AAS winners!



Chris: I love that yellow—talk about vivid!

Bill: Speaking of vivid yellow flowers, Takii also has a new helianthus (sunflower) in their Smiley series called Gold, which is an appropriate name. Smileys are potted-types that finish quickly for the grower; they send up multiple flower heads, giving great value to the end consumer.

Chris: We'll probably only see one nasturtium series on this whole trip, the Baby series, which comes from Takii's acquisition some years ago of the breeding company Sahin. Baby has nothing new, but they did show four vivid-colored experimentals: Yellow, Red (pictured), Coral Reef and Gold. If you're doing edibles, consider these!



Bill: Takii also 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.



An advertisement for sungro horticulture and Biochar. On the left, there is a bag of sungro Professional Growing Mix. In the center, the text reads "See the Difference. Black Bear® Biochar". On the right, there is a circular logo for Biochar Black Bear, featuring a bear silhouette and the text "BIOCHAR BLACK BEAR GROWING MIX". The background is a blurred green landscape.

HilverdaFlorist: Gerbera & More

Chris: Next up within the Takii greenhouse compound was HilverdaFlorist, the company formed a few years back when breeders HilverdaKooij and Florist merged. They breed in several genera, but I suspect we think of them first for gerbera and I tend to gravitate toward their display of large-flowered Patio Gerbera. Here, we found a new one, Monte Viso, a super-vibrant bicolor with a pink center that fades to white at the edges.



Bill: A good tech tip for you: Remove the initial bud to encourage a WOW flush of flowers on the plant.

Chris: Handy tip, Bill! I suspect that works on all gerbera (although I won't swear to it).

Bill: Gerbera are what I always expect from HilverdaFlorist, too. Seeing all the blooms across the

greenhouse pulls me right in. 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.

Chris: Here's a plant that's tricky to find at retail: alstroemeria. I'm not quite sure why, seeing how pretty the ones were we saw. For instance, the Summer Paradise collection now has one called Summer Heat with red blooms, which they say will bloom from mid-spring until first frost (pictured below). That's a large landscape type; for patio pots, try their Inticancha series, which has sturdy stems and large flowers. Sunstar has bright pink flowers. And it has "sun" in the name, which means it has some heat tolerance.



Bill: Last, but not at all least, are three new first-year-flowering echinaceas in the Moodz series (yes, three Os). Each is named for an emotion: Jealousy is a cool green flower, Imagination is purple and Devotion is a spicy orange/red. Moodz are propagated from tissue culture, so expect a fast finish and tons of flowers.



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Danziger: In Tune With Nature

Chris: Next stop, Garlic World! ... er, actually, Headstart Nursery, which is right behind Garlic World, the temporary home of Israeli breeding company Danziger. This trial is always one of the easiest to cover and photograph, as they're masters of clean, clear displays. There are way too many to cover them all—for that, check out our excellent video linked at the bottom of this email—so Bill and I will give you a few of our absolute faves from the trial. Bill, what's your No. 1 pick?

Bill: No question: it's Bidens Blazing Star. The blooms are really big—golden yellow with a star pattern. They reminded me 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.



Chris: Hmm, my top pick? Of the whole trial? That's like asking me to pick my favorite power tools! But I'll go with Petunia Amazonas Plum Cockatoo. First for the name, but second for the ruffled green and purple flowers. Amazonas is a new petunia series that indicates it has the green gene. As a bonus, they say the green edge of the flowers is actually tougher than a regular flower, making it more weather-resistant. And there are more in the pipeline!



Bill: Another pick from the Danziger new variety assortment that jumped out at me was *Osteospermum* *Osticade Twilight Moon* (pictured). I swear there are five shades from purple to pink to yellow flowers on one plant. The other new *Osticade* is also nice—*Aurora*. An interesting point about this series is that they can be grown warm, alongside petunias and calibrachoas, for folks with a limited number of greenhouse zones to fill for spring sales.



Chris: We haven't seen any lobularia this year that I can recall; *Stream Compact* is a slightly (30%) smaller version of their *Stream* series that's a bit friendlier in combo pots. This new subseries gets White, Violet, Purple and Rose.



Bill: I remember last year at CAST you and Jen were surprised when I called out a series of landscape-type vegetative angelonia as one of my picks ... and so I'm gonna do it again! Danziger's Alonia Big Grape and Big Cherry were awesome. The Big subseries of Alonias are the largest in the collection, intended for the ground or large specimen containers. Grape is purple, obviously, and Cherry is rose-colored, as you'd expect.

Chris: Rather than spend time trying to describe another variety that you can see for yourself in our video (linked at the end), I'll give a shoutout to Danziger's Floresta foliage program. The goal is to professionalize the supply of tropical plant cuttings. Their stock is grown in greenhouses in Guatemala, not outdoors, kept clean and free of diseases, and maintained at the same quality level as any of their annuals. The goal is to provide dependable, clean, consistent foliage plant cuttings week in and week out.



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Syngenta's Pansypalooza

Bill: You're trying to stump me, but it's not gonna work that easily—there's one that joins a series that's ALWAYS in my garden. Calliope White Splash is a no-brainer for me. Interspecific geraniums were a game-changing breakthrough and I've planted them since the year they were released. New White Splash is the first interspecific in this pattern, I believe, so as soon as it gets to retail, you can guarantee I'm buying it.



Your gardens are easily twice (or 10 times) the size of mine, so why don't you pick TWO that you and Laurie will try at Casa Beytes?

Chris: Seeing how my next garden will be in Orlando, it's easy: Cora XDR Rose Punch (along with a slew of other Cora Vinca) and, in the winter, some nice beds of Delta Pro Pansies. Delta has long dominated the southern winter pansy market (along with the pansy markets around the globe, they say), so if I want wintertime pansy color, it seems these upgraded Deltas should do the trick. Some of the benefits are probably more for the grower than for me—super-uniform habit and timing. But every plant is expected to be vigorous, uniform and free-flowering in the garden, which will impress my neighbors. And with 16 colors and six mixes, I'll have plenty to choose from. I just can't wait for Blue Morpho to make it from the Delta Classics into Delta Pro.



Bill: Delta Pro is impressive, for sure. And it takes guts to overhaul an iconic series like Deltas, but it sounds like the growers and distributors who've heard the message this week are on board and will make the conversion without hesitation.

Another new series from Syngenta that we all like was Talavera Coleus. The fact that Syngenta didn't already have a sun/shade vegetative coleus line surprised me, 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.



Chris: Here's one for you: hydrangeas! Now, I used to grow florist hydrangeas ... well, finish them—they're the easiest spring potted crop there is when you bring them in pre-finished. A bit of aluminum for the blue ones and bam!—the florists love you. Which is why I'm drawn to the HI collection of florist hydrangeas Syngenta carries. This year they added some blues and pinks to the line. But most noteworthy was the pure white HI Ice, and the very unusual HI Moon of white flowers with tints of green and a sharp edge of deep red.





More from Syngenta ...

Bill: How about two new series of begonias ... that seems pretty important. 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 second new begonia series is Limitless—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.



Chris: Lastly, Bill, you mentioned that Syngenta has come to the coleus party maybe a bit late. But, hey, better late than never, right? The same could be said for succulents, a new product line Syngenta is now offering. They've got about 40 or so bread-and-butter succulent varieties, like crassula and echeveria and such, plus a few foliage plants, all coming from Guatemala and all from clean stock.

Bill: Whew! It was a really busy day, with three stops and four companies to cover. As I sit here writing this newsletter late Friday night and thinking back on the plants and people we've seen over the past four days, I can't help but to be inspired. So much hard work happens behind the scenes around the world breeding and selecting plants that solve challenges, drive trends and create excitement up and down the supply chain.

Chris: The best thing of all? There was no hint whatsoever of pandemic talk. In fact, we didn't hear anything about inflation, recession, interest rates or politics. The only topic of conversation was the weather—how much had it been raining in California and how likely was it to rain in the coming days. Thankfully, we saw zero rain while at the trials—nothing but sunny skies. Weather is what dominates our industry, whether it's Spring Trials or spring sales.

Bill: Osvaldo posted four videos from our day's adventures, all of which show many more varieties than we were able to list above. Check them out and [subscribe to the GrowerTalks YouTube channel](#) while you're at it!

- [Takii](#)
- [HilverdaFlorist](#)
- [Danziger](#)
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Chris: Oh, and here's one more from a couple days ago, [PlantHaven](#). It didn't upload correctly the first time, for some reason.

Thanks for reading and be sure to watch for the final installment of *Acrez of buZZ* Sunday morning!



Thanks for reading! See you next time,

Chris, Jen, Bill & Osvaldo

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