

PW's Newest Perennials, Guidelines for Protective Blankets & Holiday Traditions





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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

PW's Newest Perennials
Protective Blankets
Covering Guidelines
Spring Trials Are Coming!
What Are Your Traditions?

Perennial PULSE

News and commentary on the global perennial plant market



Proven Winners' Newest Perennial Intros

Proven Winners recently announce their new perennials for the 2026-27 growing season. If you're like me, when a company announces introductions, I would typically be happy with one to several introductions. Five to 10 new perennials in a single season would be pleasantly welcomed. But 29 new perennials in one year is absolutely phenomenal! That's exactly what my friends at Proven Winners have done—29 incredible introductions!

Unfortunately, I can't feature them all here at this time, but here's just a glimpse of their new introductions:

Allium All the Buzz





You'll know what all the buzz is about after you add All the Buzz to your perennial program (and hopefully to your landscape). Let's just say more than bees will appreciate this one. Allium All the Buzz blooms approximately two weeks earlier than its counterpart Millennium and its flowers have more of a rosy, pink hue of purple. This great ornamental allium grows 14- to 16-in. tall and is cold hardy to Zone 4.

Hibiscus Glitter Bomb



Attention TSA! (That's Terrestrial Showcase Admirers to avoid any confusion.) Glitter Bomb is about to steal the show, as it becomes a perennial showstopper in the landscape. This dynamite hardy hibiscus freshens up the landscape with its rare eye-catching peppermint patterned 7-in. flowers with prominent red eyes. Glitter Bomb has dark olive green foliage, a gumdrop habit, grows approximately 4-ft. tall and is hardy to Zone 4.

Hyssopus Nectar Ninja



It's more than just a pretty perennial—Nectar Ninja is a refined ornamental selection of the hardy perennial herb hyssop. Your customers will quickly fall in love with its incredibly fragrant soft lavender-blue flowers. Nectar Ninja delivers long-lasting blooms and is an absolute magnet for pollinators. It grows up to 24-in. tall and is hardy to Zone 4.

Persicaria Glowing Reviews



Its name says it all. Glowing Reviews is what it receives when people see its vibrant cerise-red flowers and the striking contrast they have with the golden chartreuse foliage. Glowing Reviews is

also what it receives from the pollinators that stop by for a snack or possibly even a full meal. It grows up to 20-in. tall and is hardy to Zone 4.

I plan on covering the other 25 new Proven Winners introductions for 2026-27 in future newsletters, but if you just can't wait to see them, go to [PW 2026-27 Perennial Introductions](#).



Protective Blankets

I had a couple of articles in the last newsletter about managing temperatures in the late fall and early winter. You can review these articles if you need a recap: [Perennial Pulse \(November 25, 2025\)](#). At the end of the second article, I mentioned that I would discuss protective blankets in the next issue. Let's get started.



There are a few options when it comes to what can be used to cover perennials during the winter months to protect them from cold. For simplicity, I'll be referring to cloth thermal blankets. Thermal blankets come in different thicknesses with each offering differing amounts of cold protection. They're usually sold by how much they weigh per square yard. Here are examples of blankets of various weights and the amount of cold protection they offer:

Thermal Blanket Weight Amount of Cold Protection

0.5 ounce per square yard	Up to 4 degrees F warmer than outside
1.0 ounce per square yard	Up to 4 to 6 degrees F warmer than outside
1.5 ounces per square yard	Up to 6 to 8 degrees F warmer than outside
3.0 ounces per square yard	Up to or > 10 degrees F warmer than outside

Coverings work by moderating the temperature of the root zones under the blankets. They create a barrier between the colder air temperatures above the blankets and the temperatures below the blankets, which often provides adequate cold protection and ensures survivability. They also decrease fluctuating daily temperatures in the late winter by keeping the root zones at more consistent temperatures, which delays de-acclimation and the plant's susceptibility to below-freezing temperatures.



Covering Guidelines

First, there isn't one answer I can provide for this topic. Keep in mind that the job of thermal blankets is to protect plants from the coldest periods of the winter. The decision of when to apply protective coverings will vary by geographic location and from one year to the next based on the outside conditions.

I may refer to a calendar and think to myself that it seems like I should apply thermal blankets to my crops on or around a particular date, however, I'm not a fan of that approach. Rather, I recognize that the onset of sustained cold temperatures varies from one year to the next and will make my decision on when to cover plants based on the current and anticipated weather conditions.

Therefore, I prefer to wait as long as possible before applying blankets. I generally allow the root zones to drop to near freezing and wait until the weather is expected to remain at or below freezing for extended periods before covering. Covering plants too early can delay acclimation and reduce the plant's ability to withstand and survive below-freezing temperatures.



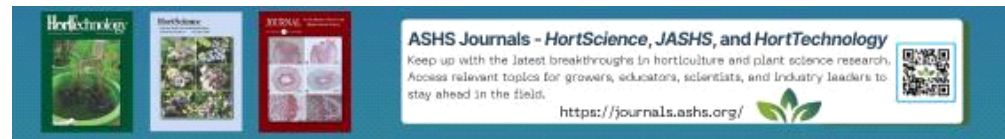
It's best to thoroughly water plants unless they're already moderately moist prior to applying blankets. Moist (not saturated) growing mix helps protect the roots from freezing temperatures by increasing the amount of time it takes for the root zones to freeze and by releasing heat (heat of fusion) as the water in the growing mix freezes.

I also recommend dispersing some type of rodent bait before applying the covers. Ideally, these baits should have been put out about one month before you anticipate covering. If that's the case, check them and replenish if necessary. Be sure to take steps to keep these baits dry to ensure they remain effective. Placing them in bait stations or inside short pieces of PVC pipes will both keep them dry and keep untargeted feeding from other animals, especially pets that may be roaming in these areas.

It may be necessary to remove and re-apply the blankets to some plants throughout the winter months. Plants that are semi-evergreen to evergreen (*Phlox subulata*, heuchera, leucanthemum

and others) should only remain covered during the coldest periods during the overwintering period. When the conditions are above freezing (> 40F for extended periods), the coverings should be removed to reduce the occurrence of diseases, such as Botrytis, and re-applied when freezing temperatures return.

Most overwintering losses occur in the late winter or early spring. I'm planning to cover de-acclimation and the importance of managing thermal coverings at that stage of the overwintering process in a newsletter early next year.



Spring Trials are coming! Spring Trials are coming!

Perhaps the early winter and several inches of snow on the ground already here in Michigan has me a little excited about the upcoming Spring Trials. I'm already visualizing the warmth and new varieties the event will have to offer.

Each spring, several of the industry's top genetics companies showcase their up-and-coming, jaw-dropping cultivars during the four-day event at various venues across central and northern California. The 2026 California Spring Trials are being held Tuesday, March 24 to Friday, March 27, 2026.



New perennial introductions have had a strong presence at Spring Trials over the past few years and I don't expect this year to be any different. Here are the companies that I'm hoping will have new perennials on display: Danziger, Darwin, Dümmer Orange, Green Fuse, Benary, Pacific Plug & Liner, PlantHaven, Syngenta, ThinkPlants and Walters Gardens. There are likely a couple I missed (not intentionally), but I think you can see perennials will be well represented at the California Spring Trials.

You can view the complete listing of participants, obtain relevant contacts, travel tips and more by going [HERE](#).

Pull out the calendar, free up your schedule and begin planning your journey to visit the California Spring Trials in March. Please note that not all of the stops are open the entire time of the event, so pay attention when referring to the dates and times listed with the stops.

If you can't make it this year, Chris Beytes, Bill Calkins and Jen Zurko along with video producer Osvaldo Cuevas (better known as the Bobbleheads) will be at every stop to bring you all of the highlights—via their *Acre's of Buzz!* newsletter, *GrowerTalks* YouTube channel and on social media.

What Are Your Favorite Holiday Traditions?



With the holiday season upon us, I really enjoy participating in a few holiday traditions. That got me thinking that it would be interesting to learn what traditions other families across the country and internationally have. Maybe it's baking cookies, caroling, having a family sing-along, hosting a holiday game night or maybe you have a less-common tradition.

I'm not forcing you to share, but I'd love to hear what traditions you have during the holiday season. I'd like to share them in the next newsletter so maybe other families can enjoy them this festive season. I'll share mine, if you share yours.

Send your traditions to me at paul@pace49.com.

Thank you in advance for your participation and I hope you're already enjoying the holiday season!

My email is ppilon@ballpublishing.com if you have any comments, article suggestions or if you'd just like to say hello.

Best regards,



Paul Pilon

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