

Spring Trials Day Three: A Windmill, an Orchid and a Winery

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IN THIS EDITION

Windmill (Terra Nova, J. Berry, KiwiFlora, Kientzler)

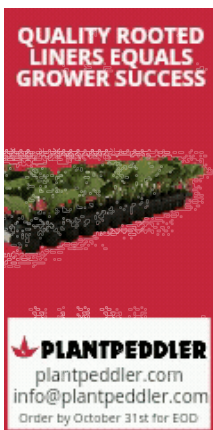
Chisan Orchids (Cohen, Jaldety, Hishtil)

Dümmen Orange

30 YEARS wave

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Halfway there

Chris: Hey, Ellen! We're halfway done! Or we will be, when we hit the bottom of this page. Three stops, eight companies and another couple hundred introductions, from which we get to pick the highlights. Fun, eh?

Ellen: Tons of fun. Let's get this started, shall we?

Chris: Okay. Let me set the stage for our first stop: Windmill Nursery, a small retail nursery in Buellton, sorta in the middle of nowhere, with eight exhibiting companies— Terra Nova, J. Berry Nursery, Kientzler, KiwiFlora, Oasis, Dramm, Pelemix and McConkey. Now, due to time and space constraints, our policy has been that we only cover the plant companies in this space. The hardgoods companies will get our attention at Cultivate, which means we'll be talking about the first four companies in the list. Nothing personal—it's just what it takes to get the job done. So, Ellen, that bit of explanation behind us, what was your favorite from those four companies?

Ellen: My fave? Well, I'd say the Nautilus Begonias from Terra Nova. While it looks like a rex begonia, it apparently has no rex blood in them. With five varieties in the series, these guys have large leaves, a garden height of 14 in. and a nice rounded habit.

Chris: Good call. My favorite from Terra Nova would have to be Heuchera Forever Red. On the surface, it looks sorta ordinary compared to Terra Nova's very colorful, multi-hued heuchera. But this red stays red from beginning to end, spring to fall. So if you want a red-leafed plant in your garden or combinations, you can be assured to always have a red-leafed plant.

We caught all the Terra Nova goodies on video, of course. Check it out [HERE](#).



Bidens Funny Honey

Ellen: As my next favorite, I have to choose the Bidens Funny Honey (below) in the two-variety Beezar series from Kientzler. Aside from its awesome name, Funny Honey has an orange and smoky yellow flower with an almost painted appearance. There's another in the series, Fire Wheel. What's your next favorite?

(FYI—there's a [VIDEO](#) about it.)



Chris: Plenty to choose from, but I'll pick a shrub: Black Diamond Crepe Myrtle from Trials newcomer J. Berry Nursery. It's a collection of nine crepe myrtles—three reds, two purples, a white, a blush, a dark pink and a light pink—all of which have dark burgundy foliage. While none were in flower, they look like they'll contrast nicely against the foliage. And they were smart enough to have a couple of combination planters featuring Black Diamond in the center surrounded by white flowers or light-colored foliage (pictured below). Striking! We've caught it all on **FILM**, of course.



Ellen: Speaking of J. Berry, what didn't they show us? Perennial hibiscus! Coming from breeding in Texas (which doesn't necessarily need perennial hibiscus), these are still in testing. But what were were told was coming down the pipeline (at least three blue varieties), these as-yet-unnamed hibiscus have us excited.

Chris: Blue hibiscus? I was sure that photograph was an April Fool's. But it's April 2, so it must be true. We will see in about 18 months, they said.

I'll wrap up our first stop of the day with KiwiFlora's lavender, called Meerlo. This is a *Lavendula allardii*, with nice variegated foliage that's got a great fragrance. Flowers are inconsequential. What I found most interesting was that this plant is in the plant collections of both *Southern Living* magazine and *Sunset* magazine. You couldn't have two more diverse climates represented than the Southeast and the West Coast. Several other of KiwiFlora's offerings are in both collections, such as Beach Ball Pittosporum.



A Sweet Treat



Chisan Orchids

Ellen: Alright, moving on from there, our next stop is Chisan Orchids in Los Alamos, where we find the three Israeli companies we've formally seen up the road at Pacific Plug & Liner. It's a

several-acre cymbidium orchid facility, but instead of those, we were shown a bunch of annuals and herbs.

If we're still doing our favorites from the stops, I'll begin with the four new thunbergias in the Arizona series from Jaldety. These aren't your typical black-eyed susans, I tell you. Lots of colors (pink, rose, white, orange) and big blooms, which the Arizonas are known for. These add to the four existing Arizonas to make eight altogether. That's Arizona Pink Beauty, below. (We cover them [HERE!](#))



Chris: Drat! I was going to pick those. Who doesn't love a blooming vining plant. But there's plenty more, such as the new bracteantha series from Cohen called Hello. Bred by well-known Israeli breeder Breier, Hello seems to have great uniformity in habit, but a variety of flower shapes and sizes. They've picked out six colors thus far, but showed lots of experimentals from which they'll be selecting additional additions. If you know what I mean. We've got a [VIDEO](#) about it here.



Ellen: My pick from Hishtil is something really cool and totally unexpected: *Oxalis tuberosum* Crimson and Gold. What's so cool about this? Well, instead of its foliage being ornamental or even an edible fodder crop, it's the tubers here that are edible. About the size of fingerling

potatoes, these tubers are full of Vitamin B, C and iron. Not sure what it tastes like, but I'd give it a go!



Cool herbs

Chris: Bred in Ireland by my friend Pat Fitzgerald, no less. Well, Ireland is known for that other edible tuber. Hishtil had two cool herbs, too: a mint called Jessica's Sweet Pear. Now, it doesn't smell or taste like pears; instead, it's claim to fame is an upright habit with no sprawling side shoots. You know how mint will spread across a bench and tangle with the other plants nearby? Or take over a combination planter? Sweet Pear won't. The other intro is a rosemary called Haifa, named for the city in Israel. It was found in the famous Bahai Gardens in Haifa, and features a true trailing habit, so you could try it in baskets or as a spiller in combos (pictured below).

We've got a Hishtil video for you right [HERE](#).



Ellen: I'll chime in with one more thing, this from Cohen. I really liked their alternantheras. They've introduced 11 varieties from different breeders and with different looks. Chartreuse, thin-leaved, wide-leaved, different textures What do you use them all for? Mixed combos, of course, plus other applications, such as public works projects and so forth. With drought

tolerance and toughness, they're the perfect application.

Moving on to Dümme Orange, Chris ...



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Dümme Orange

Chris: Up the road from the orchid nursery to the winery (Spring Trials is diverse, that's for sure), we hit Dümme Orange, which has thankfully condensed down to one location, Edna Valley Vineyard, from two. It's always a fun stop, with good food and good wine and plenty of flowers.

Seeing how you got to pick the first favorite from the last two stops, I'm going to start Dümme Orange with my favorite: Wild Romance New Guinea Impatiens. It was the star of their trials; the first thing we saw when we entered the winery and the greenhouse. Wild Romance is a true New Guinea, not an interspecific hybrid, so it's intended for full shade. It's a semi-double, with big flowers that open from a rose-shaped bud. It starts with just two colors, White and Blush Pink. When open, the white flowers, contrasting against the dark green foliage, almost resemble a gardenia. And the plants and flowers are both big—this is definitely a premium item! They say plenty of other traditional New Guinea colors are in the pipeline.



Ellen: I'll call out the new Great Falls series of trailing coleus. Truly cascading, these coleus add a new texture in trailing products for baskets and containers. There are four items in the series, all named after significant waterfalls in the world, and each with different and significant color combos. This is Yosemite.



Calibrachoa

Chris: They added Great Falls into some of their Confetti combinations, too, giving Confetti some new textures and colors. Hmm, my next favorite from Dümmer ... I've gotta go with calibrachoa, always one of my favorite crops. Dümmer has added a fourth size category to calibrachoa: Bloomtastic (extra-large) now joins Aloha (large), Kona (medium) and Nani (compact). Bloomtastic is a "phenomenal" garden performer, we were told, with good heat and humidity tolerance. The series starts with two colors: Rose Quartz (pink with eye) and Serenity (lavender with eye). And Kona gets a new Yellow.



Ellen: I'll take the new bidens intros from Dümme Orange—Bidy Boom Wildfire and Bidy Bop Blaze. First, aren't those great names? Yes! Second, aren't they great colors? Also, yes!

Bidy Boom

Ellen: While yellows have dominated bidens forever, the recent orange-hued flowers have really caught growers' and consumers' attention. Bidy Boom Wildfire has slightly larger flowers with a bit more distinction in the flower color. Bidy Bop Blaze has a bit more texture in its foliage and slightly darker and smaller flower petals.

Chris: As you know, we're suckers for unique and clever names, which is why I'll call out Potunia Starfish. I mean, I've always wondered why salmon is the only fish that gets to be a flower color. That and coral. Now we've got starfish! But, seriously, the color is as great as the name: sort of a deep watery purple-blue, with a white star. Potunia also gets a cherry color, called Cherish.



Ellen: Common denominator there is “ish,” Chris.

Chris: You mean StarfISH and CherISH? Should be the ISH sub-series, then.

Ellen: Right! Speaking of childISH, my next pick is the Kinder Garden retailer concept. Obviously directed toward getting kids involved in gardening, the Kinder Garden idea is one that retailers can pick up to appeal to small kids and their parents—and especially those who are into pollinator initiatives. I liked it!



Retail concepts

Chris: That was part of a display of retail concepts—something we haven't seen thus far at Spring Trials. They showed herbs with some nice, simple POP; an "Effortless Fall" display of ready-to-enjoy fall containers; Ellen's aforementioned Kinder Garden; and a five-step "Grab & Gro" do-it-yourself container display for consumers who want to make their own combo. Good ideas that are just concepts, but if you like it enough to try it at your retail store, Dümmer Orange can offer the POP.

We've got a [VIDEO](#) showing all we saw at Edna Valley Vineyard.

Ellen: That's it for Day 3, Chris? That means we're officially halfway done with Trials! Where to next?

Chris: Day 4, Monday, we drive north to Salinas and the start of the northern end of the trials, where we hit three stops and see 10 different companies. Not too tough a day ... but hey, we look at flowers and write about them for a living. What's tough about that?

Ellen: You've got a good point, Chris. Let's carry on from here—after a good night's sleep, of course! See you all tomorrow!

Chris and Ellen

Handwritten signatures of Chris and Ellen in black ink.

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