

GROWERTALKS

Features

9/1/2021

New Annuals for Indies

Chris Beytes, Bill Calkins & Jennifer Zurko

Be sure to go to our YouTube channel (youtube.com/growertalks) to see all of our videos.



Coleus Spitfire (Ball FloraPlant)

Coleus Spitfire has a profile that's new to us: Ball FloraPlant calls it a “micro coleus” and that description makes sense when you see it next to standard sun coleus varieties—it's very compact. We can see it being used at the front of a bed in the landscape or in pots on patio tables. It also looked nice in a window box in the CAST vignette. It'll be interesting to see where this little guy finds a home in grower and retailer programs ... maybe even as an indoor foliage item?

Calibrachoa Chameleon Avant Garden (Westhoff)

“Chameleon” indicates multi-colored flowers. Best-seller Blueberry Scone is joined by Blackberry Pie (introduced last year via Zoom) and Avant Garden (a great name!). We've heard it repeated time and time again that the trend in bicolors, unique patterns and stars continues.

Pelargonium Aroma Bunny Brunch (Westhoff)

Something consumers have been asking for online is citronella. These scented geraniums make up the Aroma collection—six different plants with different citrusy scents, some with flowers, some without. Our favorite is Bunny Brunch. No, it doesn't attract bunnies (we don't think). Actually, believe it or not, the foliage smells like carrots!

Celosia Arrabona Red (Hem Genetics)

We've seen this plant before, performing like a rock star in The Gardens at Ball in summers past, but it went away about seven years ago due to some seed issues. Now it's back and Hem has the exclusive on the variety. They're relaunching it with the goal of sorting out the availability issue and bringing even more colors to market.



Begonia Garden Dreams (Beekenkamp)

Dutch breeder Beekenkamp is best known for begonias, and right in the center of the entrance to their greenhouse was a new offering called Garden Dreams, with two colors: MacaRose and MacaRouge. (The names are supposed to be like “macaron,” the French cookie.) These are tuberous/eliator begonias with small foliage and large single flowers sitting just above the leaves, with yellow centers. The effect is like an oversized fibrous begonia—it’s quite striking. Oh, and MacaRouge is a FleuroStar award winner.

Dahlia LaBella (Beekenkamp)

Beekenkamp has done a lot of work positioning each sub-series in their LaBella Dahlia line by size and profile to help build assortments. For intermediate 6- to 8-in. pots, the LaBella Grande series adds Fun Red White, a bicolor that holds its color and shows no reversion (“Fun” in the name indicates a bicolor dahlia at Beekenkamp). And the LaBella Maggiore series for 8- to 10-in. pots introduces Fun Flame, Fun Pastel, and our favorite of the bunch, Fun Chocolate Yellow (with bright blooms standing above dark foliage.)

Rudbeckia Rodeo Double Red (Green Fuse)

This rudbeckia looks like a regular *R. hirta* type, but it’s actually an annual. The beautiful, deep burgundy color is very stable on blooms with multiple petals and a dark center.



Petunia Blanket Silver Surprise (Green Fuse)

The spreading Blanket series gets an addition called Silver Surprise. What’s the surprise? That the flowers are both silvery blue AND rose ... and some flowers are both. It looks like a two-color mix, but without having to plant two varieties.

Rose Scentifall Lemon (PlantHaven)

Introduced as a rose for hanging baskets, Scentifall Lemon is a repeat bloomer, so consumers can enjoy the sweet fragrance all season long. It reaches 24-in. tall at maturity (so it should really be in a large hanging basket) and it has high disease tolerance.

Better Together, Pollinator’s Paradise concepts (Dümmen Orange)

Better Together is an idea that seems simple for folks to execute and very much on trend. The idea is that you pick

from three core Dümmer series—Geranium Big EEZE, Begonia l'conia or NGI Magnum and then add a Great Falls Coleus. You plant them up one-to-one (for instance, three of each in a 12-in. basket or 14-in. patio pot) and you've got a nicely matched combo ready to go. These combinations were picked for longevity and shelf-life, creating combos to sell at premium prices.

The Pollinator's Paradise concept includes tested annual and perennial recipes for pollinator-attracting combos. The key is they're not just generic "pollinator" attractors, but bee, hummingbird or butterfly attractors. That's a smart way to get consumers to buy more plants! And having designs at hand helps greenhouses produce well-balanced and curated combos.



Petunia Fun House Potpourri (Syngenta)

Fun House Potpourri is a unique color-changing stand-alone (for now), with flowers that change from yellow to yellow and red and finally to all red, depending on PGRs and environment. Syngenta technical folks have plenty of cultural information for manipulating the color on this vegetative petunia and in the future we hope to see new Fun House colors.

Petunia Itsy White (Syngenta)

Itsy White has an even better use than as a petunia: that is, as a bacopa replacement because the flowers look just like a bacopa, except without the drawbacks of bacopa. You can do a nice multi-color petunia pot, add in some Itsy White, and they peek through, adding an airy touch. Seeing this plant at CAST and in field trials has gotten a lot of greenhouses interested, so availability should be good in 2022.

Geranium Exotica (Syngenta)

Exotica Starry White is a star-flowered novelty geranium, while Exotica Coral Sunrise resembles the old Vancouver Centennial, but with showy coral flowers. **GP**