

Trends Full of Habit & Vigor

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE NEXT BIG THING FROM CALIFORNIA SPRING TRIALS, WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED.

By Pete Mihalek and Tim Hodson

They say trends start on the coast and work their way inward. If that's true, we have several noteworthy trends from this year's California Spring Trials that are sure to end up in one of your greenhouses ... it's only a matter of time.

Unlike years past, the GPN team took to the California coast going north to south, flying into SFO, out of LAX, and making stops everywhere in between.

We traveled along the Pacific Ocean, up into the mountains and down in the valley to learn about new breeding breakthroughs and marketing concepts.

We know everyone can't make it to Spring Trials each year, so we make it our job to snap as many photos as possible, so we can share all the latest trends and new variety introductions with you. You can see many of these photos in our photo gallery on www.CaliforniaSpringTrials.com. Read on to learn about some of the trends we came across during our week-long journey.

Next month, we will give you an overview of some of the new variety introductions from the 2014 Spring Trials.



...Better Than One

Whether it's better gas mileage or improved disease resistance, hybrids are where it's at when you're looking for the best of both worlds. Here are three introductions with double the upside.

1. A new class for the company, Proven Winners' Anytime Sugarplum pansiola has the best traits of a pansy and a viola — a cool-season crop that can handle the heat.

2. PanAmerican Seed introduced the Heirloom Marriage Collection of tomatoes. The new 'Genuwine' F1 tomato is one of three in the collection. It is a cross Costoluto Genovese + Brandywine and has that rippled "heirloom look" many consumers look for. 'Genuwine' is indeterminate and harvests two weeks earlier than Brandywine.

3. At Pacific Plug & Liner, Echibeckia Summerina is, as the name suggests, a cross between rudbeckia and echinacea. It has the strength of echinacea and the look of rudbeckia. The large flowers can last up to two months.



The Year of the Petunia

The National Garden Bureau has declared 2014 as the Year of the Petunia, but judging by the many new colors that debuted at California Spring Trials this year, 2015 is going to be another banner year for petunias too! Shown here is just a sampling of some of the newest colors; be sure to check out our photo gallery on www.CaliforniaSpringTrials.com to see even more more new colors that were introduced this year.



1. 'Supertunia Black Cherry' from Proven Winners
2. Syngenta Flowers' 'Sanguna Picotee Punch'
3. 'Cascadias Autumn Mystery' from Danziger "Dan" Flower Farm
4. Benary's 'Success Blue'
5. 'Happy Magic Dark Star Caramel' from Cohen Propagation Nurseries
6. 'Mambo GP Rose Veined' from Hem Genetics
7. Sakata's 'Rose Star'
8. 'Peppy Sunset' from Dümmer/Red Fox
9. 'Perfectunia Pink Sugar' from Westhoff
10. Green Fuse's 'Blanket Yellow'
11. 'Suncatcher Blue Blast' from Ball Floraplant
12. 'Easy Wave Berry Velour' from PanAmerican Seed
13. Suntory's 'Surfinia Sumo Plum'
14. 'Glamouflage Blueberry' from Hort Couture

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Remember a couple of years ago when “true black” was all the rage. For 2014, it looks like “true orange” — a comment we heard at multiple stops — is stepping in to take over. And this time around, there are plenty of options to choose from.



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Uniquely Delicious Debuts

As edible gardening at the consumer level remains a hot and hip category, seeking out the uncommon has become a common occurrence at the retail level. Here are five interesting introductions to appease the foodies in all of us.



1. The new, ball-shaped 'Brice' zucchini from Syngenta Flowers is packed with features: it's easy to grow, is disease resistant and has a manageable compact habit.
2. At Pacific Plug & Liner, we got a chance to see (and taste) the new and intriguing white strawberry 'Hula Berry'. The plant will produce fruit in only 55 days and the berry has a pineapple flavor to it.
3. Sakata's new 'Kandy Korn Plus' F1 baby pumpkin is a real seasonal looker thanks to its dark green handles set on deep orange miniature fruit. Tight on space? This variety yields a tremendous amount of fruit per plant on a bush vine.
4. Speaking of space issues... Vegetalis' 'Big League' tomato is a determinate variety perfect for a patio container. It produces huge, 14- to 21-ounce beefsteak fruits.
5. Not your typical basil plant, Burpee's 'Emerald (and Ruby) Frills' basil boast gigantic, flavorful leaves all season long. It would make a striking and useful centerpiece in a container garden, too.

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Reaching Out to Retail

Along with its copious amount of new variety introductions, this year's Spring Trials took an assertive step toward the end game — retail. From easy-to-implement event ideas to signage and social media, many breeder stops had a voice in how to succeed with their products at the retail level.



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1. Small space gardeners are popping up all over the place. At the Syngenta Flowers stop, we found signage and displays in its Home and Garden Vegetables area geared toward providing solutions — sales suggestions and design cues — for those gardeners short on real estate.

2. Everywhere you looked at Benary, it was clear the retailer and consumer were part of the plan. This breeder offered a number of retail-friendly ideas that included cocktail recipe cards to promote BIG Pink Lady Begonia and an interactive (and safe) graffiti display to highlight the Graffiti series of pentas.

3. Using Pinterest to inspire home gardeners was a priority at Sakata. Encourage garden centers with active Pinterest pages to inspire their customer base by pinning new varieties, showing off custom container designs and sharing family recipes.

4. Golden State Bulb Growers did an excellent job showing visitors how to get more mileage out of their lilies by simply using them in a non-traditional way.

5. Consumers are always looking for retailers and growers to do it for them. At MasterTag's Container Creations display, signage takes guessing out of the equation. 

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Don't forget to go to
www.CaliforniaSpringTrials.com
to see even more photos in our
online gallery.

