

# New Poinsettia Releases for 2012

TWENTY-ONE NEW CULTIVARS WERE INTRODUCED IN THE POINSETTIA TRIALS THIS YEAR.

By John Dole, Jim Barrett and Wayne Brown

Welcome to the “North American Poinsettia Trials” — we have changed the name of the National Poinsettia trial program this year to highlight that the University of Guelph, Vineland Station, Ontario, is now part of the program. Wayne Brown coordinates the trials, providing an important service for the many poinsettia growers in the region. University of Guelph joins our current trial sites at Homewood Nursery in Raleigh, N.C.; North Carolina State University; and the University of Florida. This trial program has been evaluating poinsettias, in cooperation with the poinsettia breeder companies, for 19 years since it was started in 1993.

This year, 21 new cultivars were introduced in the Poinsettia Trials. These cultivars should be available in 2012; however, not all new cultivars are listed in the breeder company catalogs. Contact your supplier if you see one you want to try, but it is not listed yet.

In 2011 we saw a continuation of the last years’ emphasis on releasing new reds, which is not surprising considering the movement of the consumer market back towards red in the last few years. Of the non-red cultivars, we see several that round out a series, a couple that are improvements of older cultivars, and two new novelties types.

## Red Cultivars

**‘Bella Italia Red’ (Dümmen).** This cultivar produces the ball of red effect with large medium red bracts that are similar in shape and color to ‘Premium Red’. Plants are medium to high vigor and will require more PGR than does ‘Premium Red’. Plants flowered late season and have very strong stem strength. Plants should work well in a variety of container sizes.

**‘Charon Red’ (Beekenkamp).** ‘Charon Red’ had medium-sized, bright-red bracts and dark-green leaves. Bracts were held flat and had a smooth appearance. Plants flowered mid to early-late season and were medium vigor. The strong upright plants should work well in a variety of container sizes.

**‘DramaticRed’ (SK81) (Selecta/Ball).** With large, elongated, bright-red



1. ‘Bella Italia Red’  
2. ‘Charon Red’  
3. ‘Dramatic Red’  
4. ‘Early Mars Red’

bracts, ‘Dramatic Red’ is named to make a statement. Bracts are held up, similar to ‘Enduring Red’. Branching was good with strong stems. Foliage was dark green. Plants flowered midseason and were average to high vigor, making it suitable for early large containers.

**‘Early Mars Red’ (Syngenta).** ‘Early Mars Red’ lived up to its name and flowered about two weeks earlier, in mid November, than ‘Mars Red

1. 'Matinee'
2. 'Overture'
3. 'Pandora Red'
4. 'Premier Red'
5. 'Talitha Red'
6. 'Tikal Red'



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'09'. As with the rest of the Mars series, the bracts are smaller than average and are held very flat. 'Early Mars Red' produces strong, upright plants with a uniform appearance and dark-green leaves. 'Early Mars Red' was similar in height or actually a bit taller, depending on the location, than 'Mars Red '09', which is unusual in that early-flowering versions of a cultivar are usually shorter than their namesakes. The 'Mars Red '09' introduction was selected for a brighter red bract color, but 'Early Mars Red' has the color of the original 'Mars Red'.

**'Matinee' (RF 0618) (Dümmen).** Matinee is a distinctive red. Each shoot has a large number of elongated pointed bracts that cluster tightly around the cyathia producing a starburst effect. Color was similar to Premium and leaves dark green. Branching was excellent, comparable to Prestige, and uniformity was very good. Plants flowered midseason and were medium vigor.

**'Overture' (RF 2815) (Dümmen).** This is another variety with large rounded bracts similar to Premium Red, but bract color is probably a little brighter. Centers of the bracts are tight, the smaller bracts tended to become tucked under the older bracts and did not expand neatly, which produced a slightly unkempt look in more mature plants. Branching was very good, but plant shape was a bit uneven. Leaves were dark green and the compact plants flowered early to midseason.

**'Pandora Red' (Beekenkamp).** This variety is listed as compact, but was medium vigor in the trials. It flowered midseason, producing medium to large bracts, which hung down slightly as they aged. Bracts are dark red and transition bracts have a dark appearance.

**'Portia Red' (Beekenkamp).** 'Portia Red' had small medium-red bracts that were held upright when young and laid down with age. The bract

clusters were open with few secondary bracts highlighting the large cyathia. Plants flowered mid-season and were medium vigor. Plants had good stem strength and an upright habit.

**'Premier Red' (I188) (Ecke).** This is a compact variety with medium to large transition bracts and a distinctive bright red color. It is among the first varieties to show color and plants were well colored by early November. While actual flowering dates were later, mid November in North Carolina, plants could be marketed earlier. It produces medium sized true bracts that are held flat. In Florida trials, there have been some issues with bract injury when mature plants are held in a warm greenhouse, so 'Premier Red' will likely work best in cooler production areas. Plants would be best grown in small size pots and in large pots, if provided with one or two weeks of additional long days after pinching.

**'Talitha Red' (Beekenkamp).** With large bracts that hang down with age, this medium red cultivar produces the classic ball of red presentation. The edges of the bracts curled under slightly as well. The plants had good lateral strength and were upright. Plants flowered midseason and were low to medium vigor.

**'Tikal Red' (I055) (Ecke).** The large medium-red distinctive bracts of Tikal are gently curved under, reminiscent of 'Advent Red'. Plants have dark green foliage and strong upright branching. Like Advent, in warm climates Tikal can be very vigorous, but is sensitive to growth regulators and is relatively easy to control. In warm climates Tikal finishes between 'Orion Red' and 'Freedom Red' with better strength than those standard varieties. Also, Tikal performs better under high temperatures than does Early Prestige. Plants would be suitable for 6½-inch and larger pots and flowered midseason.

**'Titan' (22432) (Syngenta).** With a name

like 'Titan' one would expect a vigorous cultivar. While it was certainly a strong grower, it was not overly vigorous. It had small- to medium-sized bracts that were held flat. Compared to Mars series, 'Titan' produces more and slightly larger bracts and has a less uniform appearance. Bract color is darker than in 'Orion Red' and is closer to Prestige. Leaves are dark green and finish timing is early.

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1. 'Candlelight White'  
2. 'Saturnus White'

### White Cultivars

**'Candlelight White' (SK85) (Selecta/Ball).** This cultivar is intended to match 'Christmas Day Red' and it certainly is. 'Candlelight White' reached first color and flowered within two days of 'Christmas Day Red', midseason, and both were close to the same height. 'Candlelight White' is not a color mutation from Christmas Day, however. While stem strength is very good, it is probably not as strong as is Christmas Day. 'Candlelight White' has medium-sized creamy white bracts with some green veining and would be appropriate for a range of container sizes used along with Christmas Day.

**'Saturnus White' (Beekenkamp).** With small, creamy white bracts and dark-green foliage, this

white matches well the rest of the Saturnus series in flowering time, which is midseason or slightly later. General appearance of Saturnus White is similar to other cultivars in the series; however it was more compact.

### Pink Cultivars

**'Christmas Beauty Pink' (SK86) (Selecta/Ball).** 'Christmas Beauty Pink' nicely fits into the series in terms of vigor, stem strength and general plant form, but was a few days later in flowering



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1. 'Christmas Beauty Pink'  
2. 'Jubilee Pink'  
3. 'Money Early'  
4. 'Saturnus Pink'

time, which was midseason. The medium-sized bracts were a medium pink, aging to a salmon pink. The young bracts were dark pink. Many of the plants showed a few red flecks in the bracts that were distracting, but the breeder should be able to clean up the variety with further selections.

**'Jubilee Pink' (5-10) (Ecke).** 'Jubilee Pink' flowered close to 'Jubilee Red' in midseason. Plant vigor varied with location, from slightly less vigorous than the red in Florida to more vigorous in North Carolina. The medium-pink bracts had darker pink veins and the youngest bracts were darker pink as well. As with most dark-leaf pinks, the older bracts had grayish cast. Plants should work well in variety of container sizes and matches the general appearance and growth habit of 'Jubilee Red'.

**'Saturnus Pink' (Beekenkamp).** The small bracts were medium pink with dark-pink veins. While many pink varieties with dark-green leaves have a grayish cast to the older bracts, this variety was a bit brighter than many. This variety was a few days later than the red, but could be easily marketed together. 'Saturnus Pink' was less vigorous than the red in Florida and more vigorous in North Carolina. 'Saturnus Pink' can be grown in a wide range of pot sizes.

### Novelty Cultivars

**'Early Monet' (Ecke).** As one of the most important novelties for many years, it is great to see an updated version of Monet that is earlier, more compact and sturdier. The bracts retain their classic appearance with peach colored bracts liberally spotted with pink that coalesces into a pink margin. The compact plants flowered midseason with dark green foliage. This compact cultivar would be best grown in small pots up to 6½-inch pots, for the latter provide one to two more weeks of long days. Note that this variety is not a selection from Monet Twilight and is similar only in bract appearance.

**'Hollystar Red' (Beekenkamp).** This variety has distinctive dark-red, slightly contorted bracts, that are held a bit upright. Most notable and attractive are the red cyathia in the center that caught the attention of a number of growers at the open houses. The leaves have a gray-green blaze down the center of the dark leaves. Plants flowered late season. This compact cultivar would be best grown in small pots up to 6½-inch pots, for the latter provide one to two more weeks of long days.

**'Saturnus Marble' (Beekenkamp).** The creamy white bracts have a light-pink blaze down the center. The amount of color contrast is average for a dark-leaf cultivar. This cultivar is nicely matched to 'Saturnus Red' in flowering time (late midseason), but slightly more vigorous. 'Saturnus Marble'

1.

1. 'Hollystar Red'  
2. 'Saturnus Marble'  
3. 'Saturnus Twist'



2.



3.



can be grown in a wide range of pot sizes.

**'Saturnus Twist' (Beekenkamp).** A charming red novelty with moderately twisted bracts that gives it a distinctive appearance. There was some variation in the amount of contortion of the bracts. The dark-green foliage was also slightly twisted. Flowering was late midseason, matching well the rest of the

cultivars in the series. Because of the smaller and moderately twisted leaves, plants do not fill out as much as 'Saturnus Red'. More vegetative time or using two cuttings per pot would probably produce a nicer looking, fuller plant. The amount of twist in leaves and bracts is much less than seen in Winter Rose or Carousel type varieties. [E]

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