

# The Power of Color: 2018 Introductions at the Costa Trial Garden

*This is Part 1 of my overview of the trial performance at Costa, the first trial of the season.*

I visited the Costa Trial Garden in its early stages in week 4, and I followed up with a later visit in week 12 when the varieties were mature and at their peak. The trial by this time had received eight weeks of high temperatures, humidity and rain. What I saw in terms of plant performance in Florida is reflected later in summer trials.

I titled this article "The Power of Color" because the world's flower breeders strive to introduce and promote new plant varieties that provide eye-catching colors, and ultimately residential and commercial performance, resulting in consumer success in whatever application they choose: beds, baskets or containers.

The plant choices today are innumerable and the industry is looking for game changers that will set their varieties apart, capture market share and leave a lasting positive impression on the consumer.

As discussed in earlier articles, I look at the following attributes in the selection process: uniformity, floriferousness, foliage quality, architecture, flower

brightness and saturation.

These varieties were in the field trial. I will discuss the basket trial in a later article including additional summer trials.

## **ARMERIA 'DREAMERIA DAYDREAM' (DARWIN PERENNIALS)**

We are familiar with many seed and vegetative armeria varieties for early spring and fall sales. Darwin has introduced the Dreameria series comprised of two colors, Sweet Dreams and Daydream. The pink variety, Daydream, created much excitement in the January open house because of its presentation in the field trial, and it was just as impressive in late March on my second visit.

This is a new class of armeria with a long blooming window, large flower ball head, excellent basal branching and compact habit with an excellent flower canopy. I was impressed with the number of flowers on each plant compared to other armeria in the market. This is a Zone 6a series with application in



Armeria 'Dreameria Daydream'



Begonia 'Chloe'



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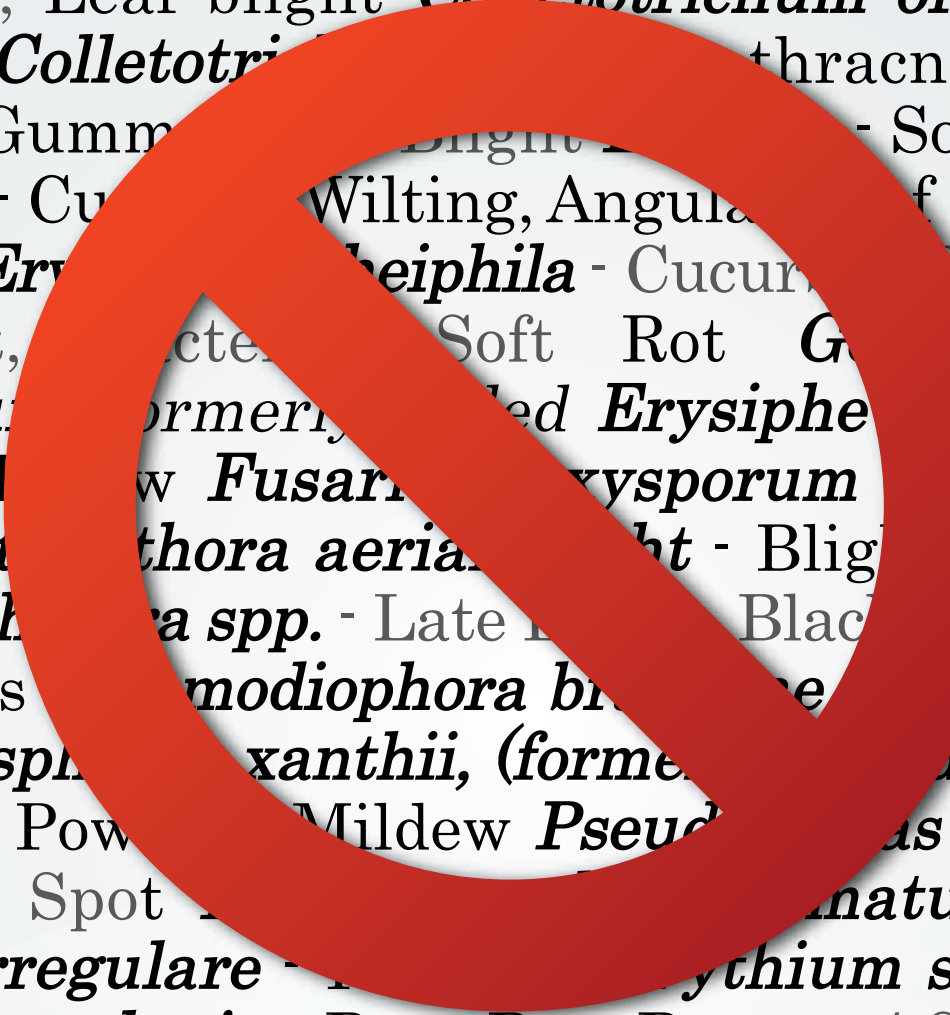
## BEGONIA 'CHLOE' (BEEKENKAMP)

**CALIBRACHOA  
BLOOMTASTIC SERIES  
(DÜMMEN ORANGE)**

## GERANIUM 'TANGO BICOLOR CHERRY' (SYNGENTA FLOWERS)

## GERBERA 'GARVINEA SWEET SURPRISE' (FLORIST HOLLAND)

garden gerbera. This series is totally different from any gerbera series on the market. The plants continue to produce new buds throughout the season and flower continually. The flowers are smaller than standard gerberas, but



*ternaria spp.* - Black Root Rot, Early Blight *Aspergillus*  
*Botrytis cinerea* - Crown Rot, Damping-off Fungus  
ay Mold, Leaf blight *Colletotrichum orbiculare*  
racnose *Colletotrichum* - Anthracnose *Didymaspis*  
*voniae* - Gummosis *Erwinia* - Soft Rot *Erwinia*  
*rotovora* - Cucurbit Wilt, Wilting, Angular Leaf Spot, Bacterial  
ft Rot *Erwinia* *heipphila* - Cucurbit Wilt, Wilting, Angular  
af Spot, Bacterial Soft Rot *Gymnosporangium*  
*oracearum* - formerly called *Erysiphe* *oracearum*  
wdery Mildew *Fusarium* *rysporum* *Fusarium*  
*ani* *Phytophthora* *aerialis* - Blight - Leafspot  
*Phytophthora* *a* spp. - Late Blight - Black / Buckeye  
Tomatoes *modiophora* *br* *modiophora* *br* *modiophora* *br*  
ot *Podospira* *xanthii*, (formerly *Sphaerotheca* *Sphaerotheca*  
*iginea*) - Powdery Mildew *Pseudoperonospora* *syringae*  
lar Leaf Spot *Phoma* *inatum* - Root  
*thium irregulare* - *Phytophthora* spp. - Root  
*izoctonia solani* - Root Rot, Bottom / Stem Rot  
*spora graminicola* - Downy Mildew *Sclerotinia* *m*

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## VAUGHN'S VIEW



Calibrachoa 'Bloomtastic Serenity'



Geranium 'Tango Bicolor Cherry'



Gerbera 'Garvinea Sweet Spice'



Osteospermum '4D Sunburst'



Petchoa 'SuperCal Buttercream'



Petunia 'Cascadias Purple Gem'

flower velocity and quantity is extensive. Many classes of plants in this series produce a wide selection of flower colors. The plants are used in gallon production and mixed containers. They have been entered in multiple trials from south to north for the past few years and have manifested excellent performance through the summer. This is a premium product that requires a premium price.

### 'OSTEOSPERMUM 4D SUNBURST' (SELECTA)

This was the most impressive osteospermum in the trial in late March. This two-tone yellow double layered variety was brilliant and intense in the field trial with an excellent flower canopy. This is the next generation of double osteospermum with improved branching, uniformity and floriferousness.



Petunia 'ColorBlitz Pinkceptional'



Snapdragon 'CandyTop Orange'

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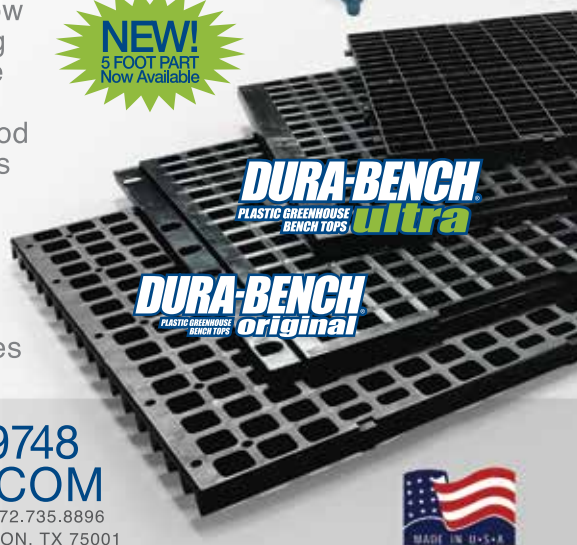
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Verbena 'Empress Sun Red'

There are three new varieties for 2018 including Purple and Yellow in addition to Sunburst.

### **PETCHOA 'SUPERCAL BUTTERCREAM' AND 'SUPERCAL RED CRIMSON' (SAKATA)**

Sakata continues to add new colors to strengthen the range of the Petchoa series, and for 2018 they have added Butter Crème

and Red Crimson. I have visited trials across the country for many years and have observed that this all-weather series continues to perform in all conditions. Obviously, the habit is vigorous, and well-branched and growth habits differ among the series so select the colors that work for your program. Both varieties were semi-upright in the trial. The flower canopy

was powerful, bold and extremely floriferous and prolific.

### **'PETUNIA CASCADIAS PURPLE GEM' (DANZIGER)**

The Cascadias comprises a large assortment of colors including rim, single and bicolors. This new novelty star-shaped variety for 2018 was impressive for many reasons including vigor, flower pattern consistency and stability. It appeared to have excellent weather tolerance and a full flower canopy. The industry has used this series for many years in multiple applications, and this new color accentuates the diversity of the line.

### **'PETUNIA COLORBLITZ PINKCEPTIONAL' (BALL FLORAPLANT)**

This is a new series introduction for 2018 and twelve varieties were in the trial. It is a medium vigor series with early flowering, touted for low light and temperature production and application in gallon, mixed containers, baskets and landscapes. Based on this trial, the series is much too aggressive for quart production. Pinkceptional was the most eye-catching variety in the trial with non-fading color and a bold, bright white center.

### **SNAPDRAGON CANDY TOPS SERIES (SAKATA)**

This new dwarf series was impressive in the trial. After weeks of heat, humidity and rain, the plants were floriferous and well branched. The attributes of this series include strong stems, fragrance and flowers above the foliage canopy creating a colorful presentation. It will be available in five colors and a mix for 2018. Plant height is 7 to 8 inches, and production programs include packs, and 4- and 6-inch production.

### **VERBENA EMPRESS SUN SERIES (DÜMMEN ORANGE)**

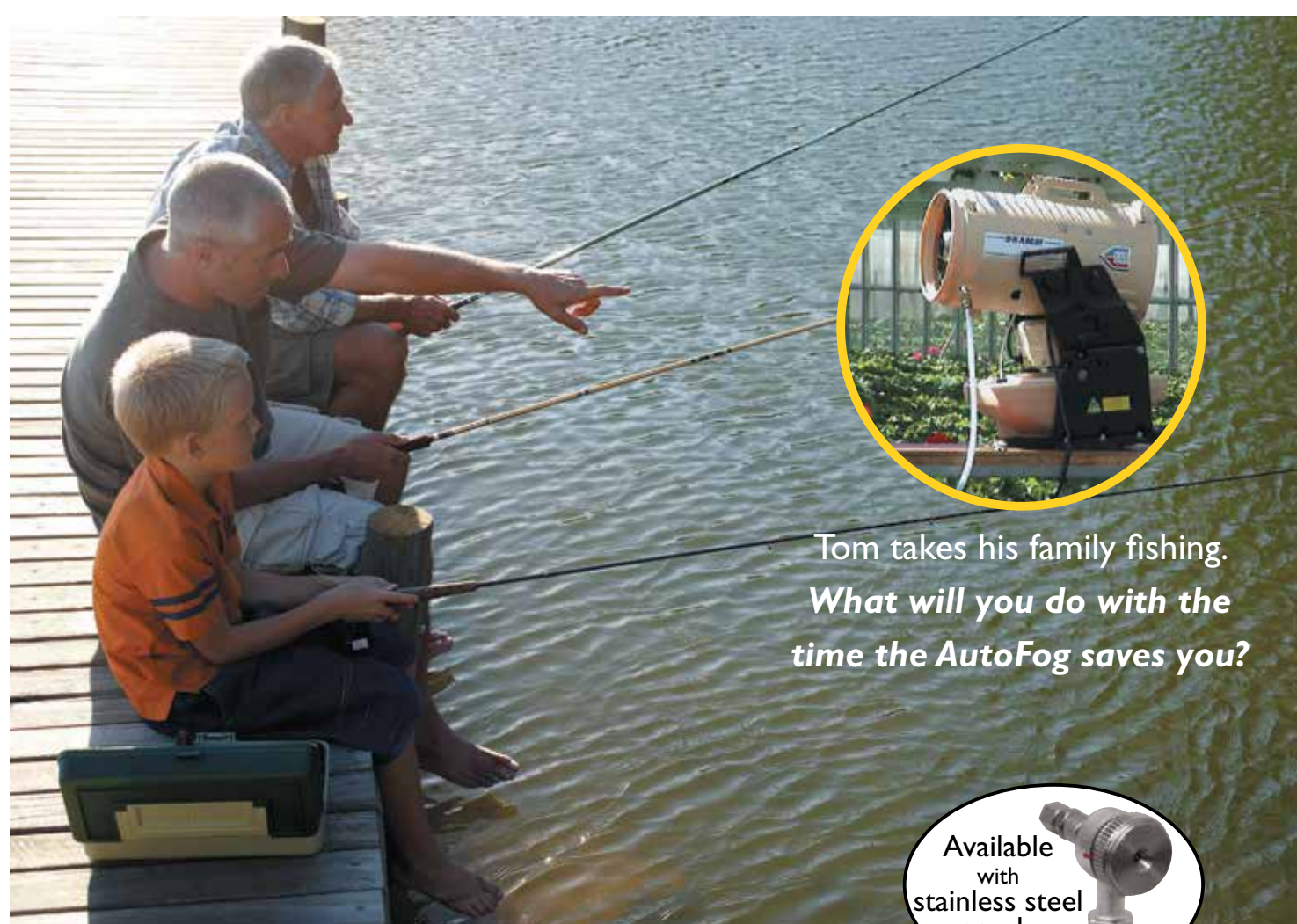
This is Dümme Orange's verbena entry into the landscape arena as well as the retail sector. This series was trialed throughout the country last year, and I

evaluated it in multiple trials in North Carolina, Texas and Alabama. The performance was consistent in every location. This series has excellent heat tolerance, minimal cycling and a floriferous uniform canopy. It definitely was

the most impressive verbena series in the Costa trial. Red was the most powerful color in this trial and the series is available in five colors.

My views are based on an evaluation one day in late March

in Florida. Stay tuned next month where I will share the remainder of my evaluations from this trial. I will also evaluate these new introductions in additional trials as the season progresses and report later this summer and fall. [gpn](#)



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