

2001 poinsettia trials

Best of the Best:

2001 poinsettia trials

The following are the cultivars that we judged to be the best of the 2001 trials. In most cases, they are newer cultivars that offer a new characteristic, an improvement over current cultivars or fill a void in availabilities. A few are older cultivars that continue to be outstanding. Between the two of us, we saw 11 different trials this year and visited numerous production operations in various parts of the country. To some extent, these selections are based on how the cultivars performed in a variety of trials as well as how the cultivar performed in commercial settings.

By Jim Barrett
and Allen Hammer



'Eternity Red'

RED CULTIVARS

'Eternity Red'. Eternity has attractive red bracts that are held up above the foliage, giving a very distinctive bract appearance. It is a little vigorous and should make a good cultivar for larger formats. The public liked it in the University of Florida consumer trials. It was new this year, and we need to learn more about it under varied production conditions. — *Dummen*.

'Prestige Red'. Prestige has the strongest branch structure of the cultivars currently available. Consumers like the appearance and rated it higher than 'Freedom Red' in the University of Florida trials. It finishes 7-14 days after Freedom; the cooler the temperature, the further apart they finish. Prestige can be used in a wide range of formats and in all geo-



'V-07B'

graphical regions. Bract size is much smaller than Freedom but has a brighter color. — *Ecke*.

'Red Elf'. Timing is slightly earlier than 'Orion'. It is less vigorous than Orion and should be easier to produce at close spacing. It is a cultivar that is probably best in 4- to 5-inch pots and baskets in cool climates. — *Fischer*.

'V-07B'. This cultivar offers a distinctive new look for red plants and will be best utilized as an upscale plant. It has nice contrast between the large yellow centers and the narrow, bright red bracts. In surveys, it had strong consumer appeal. The leaves and bracts are smaller than average, and the bracts are more open in the center than most other cultivars. It is slightly more vigorous than Freedom but does not stretch at the



'Early Joy Pink'

end. V-07B is not being introduced currently; it will be evaluated another year. — *Ecke*.

PINK CULTIVARS

'Early Joy Pink'. This cultivar is important because it adds a good pink color in a dark-green leaf cultivar for timing with Orion Red and Freedom Red. Bract color is very good among the available pink cultivars. — *Oglevee*.

'Success Light Pink'. This should get the award for the most underutilized cultivar. It is a very nice, soft "true" pink for high-end markets. The pink bracts look better under artificial light than they do under natural sunlight. — *Ecke*.

WHITE CULTIVARS

'White Christmas'. This plant often produces the best white color



'Success Light Pink'

of the white cultivars. Timing is late midseason. Bracts are smaller than average and should not be finished cool. Bracts are also whiter when finished under lower light levels (2,000 ft candles). — *Selecta*.

JINGLE BELL CULTIVARS

'Jingle Bells 4.0'. This is an early-flowering cultivar that is a distinct



'White Christmas'

2001 poinsettia trials



'Jingle Bells 4.0'



'Sonora White Glitter'



'Santa Claus Marble'

improvement over 'Freedom Jingle Bells' in terms of appearance and reduced amount of reversion to solid pink or red bracts. It is slightly less vigorous than Freedom Red. — *Ecke*.

'**Sonora White Glitter**'. With clear, white spots on red bracts, this has a very distinctive appearance among the jingle bell types and had very strong appeal with consumers. Because of the nature of this cultivar, it frequently sports to a marble, but most consumers do not complain about the sporting. — *Fischer*.

MARBLE CULTIVARS

'**Santa Claus Marble**'. This cultivar adds to an important form. It is more vigorous than 'Marblestar', with large, showy bracts. Timing is midseason. — *Selecta*.

PEPPERMINT CULTIVARS

'**Christmas Candy**'. Candy is a very attractive peppermint type that adds a needed color option for the late market. Bracts are smooth, held up and smaller than average. This is a very vigorous cultivar. It was the highest-rated candy type in the University of Florida consumer evaluations. — *Selecta*.

'**Da Vinci**'. This is a nice peppermint type for early flowering. It

should be easy to produce in most climates and is an improvement over other early peppermint cultivars. It has great bract color with contrasting dark green leaves and much less vigor than the other peppermint types. (Not pictured.) — *Fischer*.

'**Monet Twilight**'. This cultivar continues to be a big favorite with consumers even with the introduction of newer novelty types. It is very vigorous, and if stressed, leaf yellowing is a problem. Bract color development is much quicker than the older 'Monet' cultivar. — *Ecke*.

NOVELTY RED CULTIVARS

'**Freedom Fireworks**'. Fireworks adds diversity to the early red cultivars. It has the leaf and bract color of Freedom Red; however, the bracts are long and narrow, which creates a different appearance. It is slightly less vigorous than Freedom and is probably best-suited for markets where something different is desired. — *Ecke*.

'**32-2000**'. 32-2000 is a novelty red that scored higher than Winter Rose Dark Red in some trials. It has very dark red bracts and very dark green leaves. The bracts and leaves are deeply lobed, but the shape is not exactly like the oak leaf ♦



'Christmas Candy'



'Monet Twilight'



'Freedom Fireworks'




types. The cyathia also add to the unique appearance: they are large with prominent, bright orange edges and do not develop pollen. This is a low-vigor cultivar that will make a 6-inch plant if given extra crop time. The best plants in several trials were ones not treated with growth regulators. (Not pictured.) — *Ecke*.

NOVELTY CULTIVARS

'Cortez Burgundy'. This may be the most important new cultivar for 2002, as the public really likes the burgundy color. It can be finished with other midseason cultivars and will develop nice color. The bract color looks best when displayed with natural light. Bract color does fade as the plant ages. Do not grow stock of this cultivar unless you are familiar with growing stock of 'Cortez Red' and can produce cuttings with good branching. — *Fischer*.


'Plum Pudding'. There was very strong demand for this cultivar at retail this year. It is not easy to grow and must be finished under conditions different from other cultivars. Best conditions seem to be finishing at 65° F or higher night temperature to get bract expansion and at light levels below 2,000 ft. candles for best color. We continue to work on better understanding of how to best grow this cultivar. It has excellent postharvest performance. — *Ecke*.

'Strawberries 'N Cream'. This is a very different poinsettia cultivar. It has strawberry pink transition bracts with the true bracts developing as a cream color with strawberry color running along the mid-vein. The true bracts do not expand very much and look "distorted." The cultivar has very low vigor and will best be used as small 5- to 6-inch containers, pans, short tubs and baskets but will still require extra growing time. This should be used as a novelty for mid-level and high-end markets. — *Ecke*.

'Winter Rose, Dark Red, Jingle Bells and Deep Pink'. The Winter Rose type is becoming established as a distinctive poinsettia form that still has great appeal to many consumers. The Jingle Bells and Deep Pink cultivars add nice color options to this family. The vigor of Deep Pink is similar to Dark Red, while Jingle Bells is less vigorous. These cultivars have the very best postharvest performance of the available poinsettia cultivars. — *Ecke*. 



James Barrett is professor of floriculture at University of Florida and GPN's consulting editor; he can be reached at jbarrett@mail.ifas.ufl.edu. Allen Hammer is professor of floriculture at Purdue University; he can be reached at pah@hort.purdue.edu.



LearnMore!
For more information related to this article, go to www.onhort.com/LM.CFM/gp020203