



Growing the Newest POINSETTIA CULTIVARS

Novelty varieties will help you differentiate yourself in a market where traditional red is fast becoming a commodity. But before you start growing the "new and unique" varieties, find out which cultivars are ideal for your production schedule and target market.

*By
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and
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Breeders have introduced a large number of potentially important new poinsettia cultivars in the past two years, and this fall many growers will be producing some of them for the first time. Below are short descriptions of several of these new cultivars and, for those who are not familiar with their growth habits, tips on growing them.

We have grown each of these cultivars one or two years as a part of the National Poinsettia Cultivar Trials, and more information on them can be found in our report in the February issue of *GPN* and on the National Cultivar Trial Web site, www.poinsettiatrrial.org.

DUMMEN VARIETIES



'**Champagne**' is a good, bi-colored pink cultivar that replaces 'Pink Peppermint'. For growth guidelines, compare it to 'Amazone Peppermint' from Ecke. Bracts tend to be a deeper color than the other peppermint types. Champagne has dark green leaves. It is vigorous, and branches can be uneven and rangy if grown without adequate growth control.

'**Coco Hot Pink**' has unique, very deep pink bracts and is the best of the hot pink or rose colors. Timing and growth habit are similar to 'Freedom Red'. Coco Hot Pink does have some uneven growth and does not form an even, symmetrical bract display, but these traits may become more uniform as the breeder cleans up the cultivar through reselection.

ECKE RANCH VARIETIES

Amazone Peppermint is another replacement for Pink Peppermint and should be compared to Champagne from Dummen for timing and growth. Amazone Peppermint has more bract color contrast than Pink Peppermint and is lighter pink than Champagne. It is vigorous in growth, but less vigorous than Pink Peppermint. Amazone Peppermint is a medium green leaf cultivar. This is a unique cultivar, particularly for the specialty grower.



'**Freedom Salmon**' is one of the new cultivars in the Freedom family. Its growth habit is similar to 'Freedom Bright Red', which is a little less vigorous than 'Freedom Red', with less late stretch. Because of its smaller bract size, Freedom Salmon finishes a few days later than Freedom Red. A potential problem with Freedom Salmon is that bract color may fade quickly after leaving the greenhouse. ♦

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'Holly Point' is a novelty type poinsettia, with yellow and green variegated leaves and bright red bracts. This cultivar is best in upscale markets and will sell better when displayed with Christmas decorations to bring out the holly look. Holly Point has very low vigor, even less than 'Pepride'. Stems are generally thin, and the plant tends to spread rather than grow upright. Holly Point does best in baskets or low containers where height is not needed. It naturally flowers early but has a better appearance if the bracts are not fully expanded when sold. Thus, it is best to use lights to delay initiation 1-2 weeks. The variegated leaves are more sensitive to marginal necrosis than most other cultivars.



'Jester Jingle' has jingle bell bracts, and there will soon be red and other colors in the Jester series. Jester has strong upright stems, so the leaves and bracts are held more upright, creating a different appearance. Jester is less vigorous than Freedom and does not produce a significant amount of late stretch. It is a dark leaf cultivar and holds up well in postproduction. Timing is early.

'Jingle Bells 4.0' is an easy-to-grow cultivar. It flowers with Freedom Red, and the bract appearance is better than 'Freedom Jingle Bells'. Leaves and bracts are smaller than those of Freedom. It probably does not have the stem strength to be grown in formats larger than a 6.5-inch pot.



'Max Red' is a potentially important mid-season cultivar, finishing about 5-7 days after Freedom Red. It is less vigorous than Freedom Red and performs very well in 4- and 5-inch baskets and 6-inch baskets at close spacing. It has enough stem strength to make a larger plant, if more growth time is provided. The bracts are medium in size, flat and bright red. Max Red is a dark green leaf cultivar with excellent postproduction.

'Pepride Marble', 'Pink' and 'White' are new colors in the Pepride

family. Growth habit and timing on all three are similar to 'Pepride Red'. Bract color on each cultivar is better than Freedom and other dark green leaf cultivars.

'Plum Pudding' is one of the most anticipated cultivars because of the purple bract color and consumer interest. It is a medium green leaf cultivar, and the culture is similar to 'Peterstar Red'. The leaves and bracts on Plum Pudding are smaller than average, thus it has a more open appearance.



It is slightly more vigorous than Peterstar but does not stretch at the end like Freedom. Timing is mid-season. For optimum bract expansion and color development, maintain temperatures to finish, do not stress plants during bract development and finish at a lower light level.

'Prestige' is an important cultivar because of its strong, upright branch structure. Prestige is relatively easy to grow, finishing 3-7 days after Freedom Red. It is slightly less vigorous than Freedom Red and will not stretch as much as Freedom at the end. Use growth regulators similar to those used on Bright Red Freedom, if you are familiar with that cultivar. Leaf and bract size in Prestige are slightly smaller than Freedom Red. Prestige is a dark green leaf cultivar and one of the best in postproduction shipping.



'Winter Rose Jingle Bells' and 'Pink' are new colors in the Winter Rose series; however, the growth habits of the cultivars in the series are not uniform. The Pink has slightly less vigor than does 'Winter Rose Dark Red', and Jingle Bells is considerably less vigorous. In the production of the Winter Rose cultivars, it is important to avoid over-irrigation. Also important is understanding that too



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much growth regulator use or late application will reduce the head or bract size. These two features of Winter Rose culture are even more critical for the Pink and Jingle Bells cultivars.

FISCHER VARIETIES

'Carousel' is a unique cultivar

with red bracts that are curled along the edges, which gives the look of turning like a carousel. It certainly has a place among the novelty group, with strong consumer appeal; however, it can not be scheduled like other cultivars. Carousel has low vigor and requires extra growth time when grown as a 6-inch branched



plant or when used in larger sizes. Natural timing for flowering is late and the bracts must be fully developed for maximum sales appeal. Therefore, the best plants are produced by using black cloth to initiate early flowering.

'Cortez Fire', 'Dark Red', 'Jingle' and 'Marble' are new colors in this popular series. All fit the Cortez family with the same growth habit and timing. Dark Red is similar in color to 'Sonora Dark Red'. Cortez Dark Red is different from 'Cortez Red' in that it forms large centers, but the individual cyathia are small and often do not mature. Fire is a bright orange red, similar in color to 'Sonora Fire'. Cortez Jingle has good definition of color, with red bracts and random flecks of white, and is one of the better jingle bell types in the dark green cultivars. Cortez Marble's color definition is somewhat light, with light pink centers on a yellow-green background.



'Lemon Snow' has light cream-yellow bracts; color is better when plants are finished cool. It has low plant vigor, probably similar to Pepride or 'Silverstar'. Timing for finish is early, similar to Freedom. The leaves are very dark green.



'Pizarro' is an interesting cultivar that produces a plant with strong consumer appeal when given some special culture. Leaves are dark green and bracts are a bright, true red. Leaves and bracts have an oak leaf shape. Pizarro has low vigor, probably similar to Silverstar or



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Pepride, and will perform well in small formats. Pizarro will make a very nice 6.5-inch pot if planted about two weeks earlier than Freedom. Timing under natural days is late. Similar to Sonora, Pizarro has a tendency for the bracts to be stuck down in the foliage.



'Red Elf' is compact (similar to Silverstar), with timing a few days ahead of Freedom. It has dark red bracts and dark green leaves. This is a good cultivar for smaller pot sizes and baskets where a plant that looks similar to 'Orion' or Freedom is desired. Postproduction is very good.

'Sonora Dark Red' is a new color in the Sonora series. Its timing and growth habit fit with other Sonora colors. Some consumers prefer the dark red bracts.



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'Early Joy' and 'Early Joy Pink' are cultivars in a new early series that will flower ahead of Freedom and maybe as early as Orion. Early Joy has large, bright red bracts that are rounded and fit tight together at the cyathia. Branches are somewhat uneven, providing a different finished look. Early Joy Pink is the earliest flowering pink cultivar; we need to evaluate this cultivar further because of the need for better early color in dark-leaf cultivars. The true bracts have better color than 'Freedom Pink'; however, the transition bracts tend to be somewhat muddy and do detract from the overall bract display. Early Joy



cultivars are less vigorous than either Orion or Freedom.

'Red Angel' is very vigorous with large, red bracts. The bracts have smooth edges and are rounded. Cyathia have not been prominent in our trials. It may be excellent as a single-stem plant or in large containers for the specialty



grower. Timing is mid-season, and the leaves are dark green.

SELECTA VARIETIES

'Candle Light' is an excellent, new red cultivar with mid-season timing. It has medium green leaves, and the growth habit is similar to 'Peterstar Red'. Candle Light has

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large bracts that are very upright and pointed to give a different look.

'Christmas Bells' is a good upright red cultivar. It has medium- to small-sized bracts, with numerous prominent cyathia. In last year's trial, Christmas Bells was a much better cultivar in North Carolina and Indiana than in Florida,

thus it may be more suited for the cooler growing areas. It is a low vigor cultivar, requiring little PGR application.

'Christmas Candy' is a very attractive bi-color or peppermint type. It has smaller, more upright bracts than either Amazone Peppermint or Champagne. Christmas Candy is late flowering, so keeping the heat up is important. It could be used along with 'Success Red'. It is a medium green leaf cultivar.



'Christmas Cookie' is somewhat similar to Peterstar Red in growth habit and timing. It has large bracts that are pointed on the end and have a

bright orange-red color. Prominent cyathia give this cultivar character.

'Christmas Time' has large, dark red bracts that tend to droop because of the large size. The bracts are pointed, again giving a unique appearance. It is a very early flowering cultivar, probably 3-4 days ahead of Orion. Christmas Time is less



vigorous than either Orion or Freedom and is probably best for 6.5-inch and smaller pot sizes. Leaves are dark green.

'Santa Claus Red', 'Marble', 'Pink' and 'White' are varieties in a new medium green leaf series. The series' habit is similar to the Peterstar series except that the Santa Clause family is a little more vigorous, finishes a few days later and

has larger bracts. Santa Claus cultivars would be best planted one week after Freedom or Peterstar to reduce the need for growth regulators. Like other medium green leaf cultivars, it needs more fertilizer than the dark green leaf varieties. Pink and White are similar in color to 'Peterstar Pink' and 'White'. Santa Claus Red has a light cherry red color. The color and pattern in the Marble is probably second only to Marblestar.



'White Christmas' has very nice, white bracts on medium green foliage. It is a late-flowering cultivar, and the bracts are not as large as other white cultivars, such as Peterstar White or 'Whitestar'. Therefore, it is best not to lower the temperature before it finishes. White Christmas will do well as a late white in upscale markets and could be grown with Success Red. GPN

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