

# Meet The Stars

## From Agastache To Zinnia, Part I

Learn about some of the interesting crops we saw at Pack Trials that may spark an interest for your company.

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Pack Trials offers attendees a chance to learn all about the new and exciting varieties each breeder/marketer company is introducing.

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**Next month:** Results from the varieties' first landscape trial, breeding breakthroughs, site snapshots and many more varieties.

It seems like forever ago that we were traveling through the pouring California rains looking at all of the new varieties at Pack Trials. Despite getting wet shoes and socks, we made the trek and studied each company's new varieties to see which ones were the most exciting for you. There were a lot of new varieties and a few new series additions this year.

What we really noticed was the amount of improvements being made on crops. Improving existing varieties and creating better differentiated series was definitely one of the major trends this year. And even though improved varieties are not considered the most exciting part of Pack Trials, and we typically do not cover them in *GPN*, they are the only way to ensure favorite varieties will remain viable.

In the way of new introductions, we have a few recommendations on some of the more interesting varieties that caught our eyes. Keep in mind: There were hundreds of plants to choose from, and this is just a handful of many great varieties presented this year. Read on to learn about some of our favorites, and if you would like to see a complete listing from each company, their Web sites are listed starting on page 48.

To make it easier on you and not deliver too much information at once, we split this article into two parts. For this issue, you will read about the varieties from agastache to lobelia. In the July issue, you will get more variety information from nemesia to zinnia.

### Agastache

**Summer Party series (Hishtil Nurseries).** Introduced at Pack Trials as Bee Trapper, Hishtil recently changed the name of this series to Summer Party. The series is interesting because of the great habit (upright and compact) and colors it presents. Benary bred this delicate-looking tender perennial. The series is comprised of three compact and uniform varieties — Pink, Peach and Orange — that have vividly colored flowers. Agastache Summer Party is also a medicinal and fragrant herb.

- Should finish in 10 weeks in a 1-gal. container.
- Excellent heat and drought tolerance.
- Will flower until first frost.



Agastache 'Summer Party Orange'

### Argyranthemum

**'Fireball Red' (Ecke Ranch).** Argyranthemum 'Fireball Red' has an unusual double flower form with tubular-shaped petals (spider form). The

other exciting thing about this unique variety is the color — a really nice, deep red that is not a typical argy color and should not fade. 'Fireball Red' is very compact for ease of use in smaller pots but still reaches to full size in the landscape.

- Habit means less PGRs may be needed.
- Good light levels and cooler temperatures should promote the compact habit.
- Needs less moisture than more vigorous varieties.



*Argyranthemum 'Fireball Red'*

### Bacopa

#### Copia and Britney series

**(Danziger "Dan" Flower Farm).** This was the year of bacopas at Danziger. The company added a number of varieties to its Copia series and a new jamesbrittenia series as well.

In the Copia series, Danziger added six new varieties: Two (Gulliver Snow and Gulliver Lilac) have extremely large flowers for a bacopa, and four have large flowers (Great Rose, Great Violet, Great Blue Lake and Great Purple). The new jamesbrittenia Britney series has five interesting, bright colors that really stand out among bacopas



*Bacopa 'Copia Great Blue Lake'*

(Purple, Lilac, Coral, Orange and Maroon). Since jamesbrittenia types are not as widely used any more, these are a great new item to bring to the market.

- Copia has very good heat tolerance and durability.
- Britney is early and compact; the series flowers continuously and loves the heat.
- Britney can be tricky to root; watch moisture.

### Begonia

**'BabyWing White' (Pan-American Seed).** The Dragon Wing and BabyWing series have really been a hit for PanAmerican, and this new addition to the group continues that tradition. 'BabyWing White' is a new pure-white-flowered F1 begonia that joins the popular 'BabyWing Pink'. Like the original, 'BabyWing White' is maintenance free and features early flowering and continuous color. This variety is extremely heat tolerant and handles stressful conditions well.



*Begonia 'BabyWing White'*

- About 2-3 weeks earlier than Dragon Wing.
- Has an upright, mounded, somewhat controlled habit.
- Works in 4- to 10-inch containers.

**'Bonfire' (Selecta First Class).** *Begonia boliviensis* 'Bonfire' really caught our eyes this year at Pack Trials. This tuberous begonia, bred in New Zealand, has interesting bright-red-orange, long, bell-shaped flowers that cover the plant from late spring to late summer. The foliage was the other thing that really struck us because it is angel-wing shaped with serrated edges highlighted by a red margin. It is definitely not your typical begonia and will make consumers turn their heads. 'Bonfire' has been on the market a few years but is newly represented in the United States by Selecta.

- In full sun, the foliage cups up, losing the full angel-winged effect. ▶

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## pack trials

- The habit is vigorous and upright with slight trailing.

- Shade causes longer stems and fewer flowers.

**Nonstop Mocca series (Ernst Benary of America Benary).** Nonstop has been a great seller from Benary for a long time, and the company really stepped it up this year by adding a dark-leaf variation to the series. Dark, chocolate-colored leaves combined with large (4-inch), vibrant, double-flower colors set the new Nonstop Mocca series apart from most other tuberous begonias. Benary reports that Mocca is 7-10 days earlier to flower than regular Nonstops. There are five colors in the series — Deep Orange, Yellow, Orange, Scarlet and White.

- It has a mounding, upright habit.

- Uniform across the series.

- High seed quality should increase germination rate.



*Begonia 'Bonfire'*



*Begonia 'Nonstop Mocca White'*

### Calla Lily

**'Lemon Drop' (Golden State Bulb Growers/Callifornia Callas).** 'Lemon Drop' is one of only two compact yellow varieties offered by Golden State Bulb Growers (GSBG). Though it is a vigorous grower,

'Lemon Drop' makes a full and compact plant when grown properly and can be used in sizes from 4-inch to 1-gal. It is the most disease resistant and determinant yellow in the GSBG program. And despite the yellow flower color, 'Lemon Drop' has good maculation and a high flower count. Due to current availability, it can only be 5 percent of the total order in 2007.

- Requires a moderate amount of paclobutrazol.

- Culture is consistent with other Callifornia Calla varieties.

- Somewhat salt sensitive, so leach with clear water every week.



*Calla lily 'Lemon Drop'*

### Chrysocephalum

**Flambé series (Proven Winners).** The Flambé series represents an impressive innovation in breeding on this helichrysum relative. This unique crop is not available in mass quantities in the market, making Proven Winners one of the few companies to carry this plant type. 'Flambé Orange' begins flowering immediately, while 'Flambé Yellow', which has neat silver foliage, flowers about one week later. Both provide a lot of interest with their



*Chrysocephalum 'Flambé Orange'*

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unique flower form. Plants can be sold as drought-tolerant once established and offer continuous blooming through the summer.

- Grow like a helichrysum.
- Plants love bright light.
- Crop times: Orange is 3-5 weeks in 4-inch pots, and Yellow is 4-6 weeks.

**Cineraria**

**'Jester Pure Light Yellow' (Goldsmith Seeds).**

One of the reasons we chose 'Jester Pure Light Yellow' in our Pack Trials coverage is because of its great color; typically, cineraria has deeper, more vibrant colors. With the renewed interest in cool-season crops, cineraria is getting a lot of attention, and this soft-yellow color really stands out from the rest. Jester was bred for a compact, rounded plant habit and smaller leaves.



Cineraria 'Jester Pure Light Yellow'

- Can be used in fall, winter and early spring.
- Uniform with the rest of the series.
- Smaller leaves should make shipping easier.

**Coreopsis**

**Sunshine series (Ball FloraPlant).** The foliage is the interesting feature with this new series: Leaves develop an eye-catching chartreuse color when exposed to high light. Intense flower colors in Cherry, Pink and Strawberry really complement the bright leaves and produce a great monoculture pot. This series, bred by Terra Nova Nurseries, is not a true perennial but can perform well in cool temperatures. Plants produce large blooms that really stand out against the chartreuse foliage.

- Foliage needs 2-3 weeks in high light to color up.

• Habit is compact, mounded, low growing and well branched.

- Plant should not break apart in the center.

**Dianthus**

**Elation series (S&G Flowers).**

This interspecific dianthus series could be used in packs, but since it has really good branching, it can also fill a 4-inch pot. It has excellent germination across all eight color choices (Coral, Crimson, Pink Bicolor, Red, Rose, Scarlet, Violet and White) and the formula mix. For the most part, the series is pretty compact, but there is a little variability with habit and time to flower. The White is the real standout in this series; it is one of the purest whites on the market. S&G is working on developing some picotee colors as well.

- Good basal branching.
- Compact habit may mean fewer PGR applications.
- Cool, dry conditions produce best results.

**'Noverna Clown' (Kieft Seeds).**

*Dianthus barbatus* 'Noverna Clown' was one of the more interesting varieties we saw at Pack Trials simply because the color was so neat. This new F1 hybrid is like a bouquet of flowers all in one: Each umbel has a range of light and dark pink, coral, salmon, red and white flowers held together in one. Flowers are white



Coreopsis 'Sunshine Pink'



Dianthus 'Elation White'

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## pack trials

upon opening then turn pink and salmon with age. This multi-color effect is visible on every umbel.

- Summer-long flowering season.

- No vernalization required, first-year flowering perennial.

- Crop time is 12-14 weeks depending on pot size.

**Polar series (American Takii).** Polar is an early blooming dianthus under cool conditions. It is compared to Takii's Telstar, with the same disease resistance, but can flower 7-10 days earlier. The flower size is slightly larger than Telstar, but the height and spread are about the same. There were seven colors introduced this year, and Takii said one of the comments they received during Pack Trials about Polar was that the colors on Crimson and Blush Pink were particularly vibrant. Other colors include Coral, Purple, Purple Picotee, Red Picotee and Rose.

- Nice, uniform branching habit.
- Can work well in packs to gallons.
- Has good Phytophthora resistance.

### Geranium

**Baringo series (Selecta First Class).** The Baringo series is an interspecific hybrid between a zonal and ivy geranium. The series



*Dianthus 'Noverna Clown'*



*Dianthus 'Polar Crimson'*

is comparable to the Caliente series, but according to Selecta, Baringo has a longer life. The look of Baringo is more on the zonal side of the cross, but the hybridization makes it hardier than a zonal. The series has three colors: Violet Kiss, Lilac Kiss and Lavender Kiss. All of the varieties have double, bicolored flowers and very dark foliage.

- Outstanding heat tolerance.

- More colors to come.

- Culture is like other zonals.

**Fidelity L and XL series (S&G Flowers).** S&G Flowers made a pretty hard push this year with the introduction of a complete new geranium series called Fidelity. Fidelity contains small, medium, vigorous and ivy types, making an impressive show for a first-year introduction. Fidelity zonals feature a well-branched, vigorous growth habit and large flower heads with multiple flowers at first bloom. Ivies come in standard colors, with more bicolors coming.

- Good branching and high flower count reduces Florel (Monterey Chemical) use.

- Using a well-balanced fertilizer can improve the end quality of the crop.



*Geranium 'Baringo Lavender Kiss'*



*Geranium Fidelity series*

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- Uniform flowering time should allow for a “bench-run.”

### Impatiens

**Envoy series (Bodger Seed).** The Envoy impatiens series is a new generation of *Impatiens walleriana*. A contrast to last year’s compact introduction, Bodger bred this series for vigor and landscape performance. They are large flowered and full in habit, making them good for premium hanging baskets and patio containers. There are 15 colors and three mixes in the series.

- Culture is the same as other seed impatiens.
- Limit irrigation or use Bonzi (Syngenta Professional Products) for height control.
- Well suited for use in the landscape.



*Impatiens 'Envoy Pink'*

### Lobelia


**'Techno Heat Upright Blue' (Fischer USA).** 'Techno Heat Upright Blue' has a unique upright, mounding growth habit that is unlike most lobelia on the market. The plant has been bred for good heat tolerance and continuous flowering throughout the summer. The flowers are a light-blue color with white eyes and a hint of green in the middle. Heat Upright Blue can



*Lobelia 'Techno Heat Upright Blue'*

fill out a basket or planter nicely alone or in mixed plantings.

- Relatively fast grower that fills containers quickly.
- Pinch 2-3 times for 6-inch or larger containers.

- Long days will hasten and improve flowering. 

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