

Meet The Stars

From Agastache To Zinnia, Part II



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

**By Catherine Evans,
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If you're looking for more information about Pack Trials, check out our archived articles from last month's coverage. At www.gpnmag.com, you'll find information about some of the best new marketing programs, more varieties and an evaluation of new lavenders.

Last month, we covered everything from agastache to lobelia, but this month we have even more to tell you about — from nemesia to zinnia. Though Pack Trials are a distant memory, we still have lots more to talk about in the new variety category. As we had mentioned last month, there were a lot of new varieties and a few series additions here and there.

In addition to the newbies, companies really made some strides to work on existing genetics to make them better for the growers as well as more visually appealing for consumers. There were tons of improvements on habits, strengths, disease resistance and more. The breeder/marketer companies are really beefing things up to help ensure that consumers will get quality plants.

The plants listed here and in the June issue are just a select few of this year's Pack Trials introductions. There are many, many more to choose from. Since we know that not everyone can make it to California in April (or want to with the amount of rain we had on our trip this year), we wanted to give you some highlights from our trip to help you plan for next season.

Nemesia
Angelart series
(Fides North America).
Within the past few years, breeder/mar-



Nemesia 'Angelart Orange'

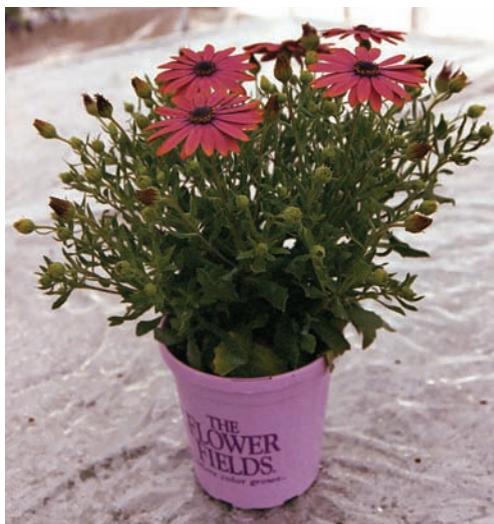
keter companies have really been making a push in the nemesia category, and Fides has joined the ranks with a bang. Angelart is the a nemesia series bred by Kirin. The exciting thing about this series, aside from a plant that does not break apart in the center, is the large, fragrant flowers. Angelart is available in seven colors: Almond, Cherry, Fruit Punch, Melon, Orange, Peach and Pear.

- Mounding habit, high vigor and heat tolerance.
- Suitable for pot sizes starting at 4 inches.
- Cherry is the most upright, Peach is the most compact and Almond has the best color presentation.

Osteospermum

'Cape Daisy Nuanza Copper Purple' (Ecke Ranch).

This year's new trend in osteos was terra cotta-types; they were everywhere, but this new one from Ecke really stood out because of its unusual coppery-purple color (picture does not do it justice). Copper Purple is just one example of the exciting, new colors being developed in osteos, moving away from the traditional white and purple so characteristic of the crop. Copper Purple's color actually comes more alive in the sun, giving it an iridescent spark. It is one of the more defined bicolors of all the new introductions. Even though this variety is a hybrid, it is not recommended for heat.



Osteospermum 'Cape Daisy Nuanza Copper Purple'

- It's taller and may require growth regulating.
- Cool temps and high light produce the best plants.
- Improved branching.

Sunadora Hotspots series (Cohen Propagation Nurseries).

This osteo series is new breeding from England that is being marketed by Cohen. The colors in the series are interesting; the flowers are large and the plants are vigorous. There are five colors in the series within the yellow, orange and peach range.



Osteospermum 'Sunadora Hotspots Palermo'

- Use at least a 6-inch pot.
- Strong habit and good branching.
- Fairly heat resistant.

Phlox

Astoria introductions (Jackson & Perkins). When Astoria phlox was introduced two years ago, growers went wild over how great the plants were. Now the series has gotten even better. With some great color additions (and some even more interesting ones on the way) as well as culture improvement, the new Astoria varieties will be big hits. There are four new colors this year — Blue, Lavender, Hot Pink and Silver — and several improvements over earlier varieties. The new varieties flower more freely; do not require pinching; and have upright, mounding habits. As far as the coloring goes, the shades on the blues are

very unique; there is nothing on the market today comparable to these colors.

- Culture is the same across the series.
- Very heat- and humidity-tolerant.
- Good fading as the season continues.

'Intensia Star Brite' (Proven Winners).

A killer high impact bicolor flower is the signature of this addition to the popular Intensia series. Star Brite is the first bicolor type of these hybrids, and its unique striped flowers are a stand-out in mixed containers or monoculture pots. Make sure to keep the light high and add a little extra feed so plants will perform all through the summer.

- Needs bright light and gentle watering after transplanting.
- Crop timing is 4-6 weeks in 4-inch pots.
- Use a relatively high feed level.

Powerphlox series (Cohen Propagation Nurseries).

The new Powerphlox series, bred by West-off, follows in the footsteps of Intensia and Astoria, presenting a hybrid of *Phlox drummondii* that has heat tolerance and a long flowering window. Powerphlox also continues the trend of being more compact, appearing to be the most compact on the market. There are currently eight colors on the market. Of special note in this series is Purple Star, the first specialty-shaped flower in this grouping.

- Loves high heat and prefers low moisture to start.
- Recommended production in 4-inch containers.
- Can be tricky to root.

Ranunculus

'Magic Mixture' (Goldsmith Seeds). 'Magic Mixture' is a new dwarf ranunculus mixture that has a nice bright and bold mix of colors. The new series is naturally compact, meaning no PGRs should be needed to keep



Phlox 'Astoria Blue'



Phlox 'Intensia Star Brite'



Phlox 'Powerphlox Purple Star'

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them compact enough for 4- to 6-inch production. Currently 'Magic Mixture' is only available as a mix, but we are told Goldsmith is working on separate colors. In North America, Magic seeds are available exclusively through Ball Seed.

- Sow before October and plants will bulk naturally under short days.

- PGR applications will inhibit Magic from sizing up properly.

- Large blooms on short stems make plants easier to ship.



Ranunculus 'Magic Mixture'

Red Mustard

'Brazen Brass' (Sakata Seed America). 'Brazen Brass', from Sakata, is a new red mustard introduction that can be grown for a super-fast turnaround. This crop can be ready in a 4-inch pot about three weeks from sow. It provides an interesting dark foliage color of deep purplish-red and a good texture for use in garden beds and mixed containers where foliage color is needed to accent blooming plants.

- Foliage color holds in high light.
- Ten weeks from sow for gallon production.
- Overwinters in the Sunbelt.



Red mustard 'Brazen Brass'

Salvia

Stampede series (Bodger Botanicals).

The *Salvia greggii* Stampede series has extremely large flowers and a stout habit that Bodger says is resistant to falling over. Stampede includes four vibrant colors: Citron, Punch, Cherry (most vigorous) and Lavender (more compact). Bodger says there are a lot more colors coming. Stampede is from the Floranova breeding program.

- No day-length manipulation needed.
- Soft pinch once after transplanting.
- Six-inch pots require 8-10 weeks to finish.



Salvia greggii 'Stampede Citron'

Streptocarpus

Galaxy series (Oglevee).

Streptocarpus is not a new crop for Oglevee — a few years back the company introduced several varieties. The Galaxy series contains some of those genetics but with improvements and new breeding, and Oglevee assures us all propagation/shipping problems have been solved. The series has been selected to have smaller foliage and multiple flowers



Streptocarpus 'Galaxy Jason'



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Petunia Avalanche[™]



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per flowering stem. Plants come in a range of eight colors including pastels and vibrant colors.

- Best suited for use in 4- to 6-inch production.
- Requires low light regimes to produce good foliage and flower count.
- Should flower all year long.

Thunbergia

'Kingstone' (Jaldety Plant Propagation Nurseries). Jaldety has always impressed us in the past with interesting plant introductions, and this year did not disappoint. The company is well-known for its thunbergia varieties, and 'Kingstone' is a new addition for 2007. It is a small, well-branching variety that is upright and half trailing, not a climber.



Thunbergia 'Kingstone'

'Kingstone' has many big, trumpet-shaped, purple flowers with yellow centers, making it a really eye-catching plant.

- Works best in 6- to 10-inch containers and combinations.
- Flowers from spring to late summer.
- Prefers sunny areas and is a fast grower.

Verbena

Tapien series (Jackson & Perkins). The new Tapien verbenas — specifically 'Tapien Blue' and 'Tapien Pink' — are great improvements in this well-established, great-selling line of verbenas. Besides having new, striking colors, the new Tapien varieties flower about 4-5 weeks earlier than the other Tapien varieties. In addition, the new varieties flower evenly all around the plant, with profuse flowering on the crown.

- Plum Frost is a little earlier with a more upright, slightly trailing habit.
- Purple has better branching and is more compact with a perfectly covered center.

• Works as a ground cover and in pots, hanging baskets and more.

Vinca

Cobra series (Floranova). In the wake of last year's heavy vinca introductions, Floranova is adding to its offering again with the F1 Cobra series. It is a compact, mounding vinca specifically bred for pack production. Cobra keeps the characteristics of other Floranova vinca: short crop times, large flowers, disease tolerance and performance in low light/low temperatures and high light/high heat and humidity. Cobra colors are White, Passion Fruit, Orange, Apricot, Rose, Orchid with Eye, Purple with Eye, Peppermint, Red with Eye and Strawberry Red. Floranova said there is limited seed available for 2007.

- Increased vigor for optimal performance.
- Large, overlapping flowers.
- Ninety-percent germination. ▶



Verbena 'Tapien Purple'



Vinca Cobra series



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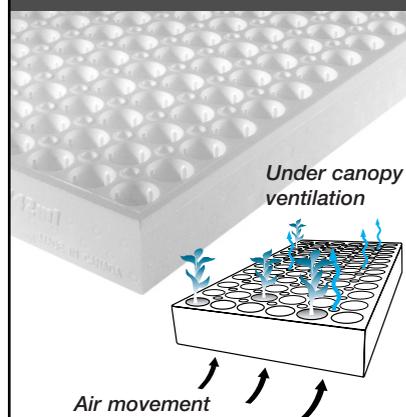
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Nirvana Cascade series (Fischer USA). Adding to last year's exciting introduction of the disease-resistant Nirvana series, Fischer has picked up several cascading varieties from the Goldsmith breeding program. Nirvana Cascade has a great cascading habit and extra-large flowers. The series offers an array of flower colors, from soft lavenders and pinks to bold reds and violets. One of the most interesting is the new Pink Splash, a pink and white bicolor that drew lots of attention at the trials.



Vinca 'Nirvana Cascade Pink Splash'

- Bred for a semi-trailing habit.
- Good heat tolerance.
- Patented resistance to aerial Phytophthora disease.

Zinnia

'Profusion Double Cherry' (Sakata Seed America). 'Profusion Double Cherry' is a new and unique double flower form for the popular Profusion series. The plant is still compact and well branched like the rest of the Profusions, but it is the only



Zinnia 'Profusion Double Cherry'

double variety in the series. Actually, it tends to get more double in the heat. The coloring on Double Cherry is a good dark cherry-pink color that holds up well in high light.

- Same quick and easy crop requirements as other Profusions.
- Dwarf and uniform in both packs and landscape.
- Tolerant of heat and resistant of diseases.

Zesty series (PanAmerican Seed). The big story with the Zesty series is how well the plants fill out a garden bed fast and provide a better show in the landscape. This new series from PanAmerican offers great vigor and large, fully double flowers on plants that thrive in the heat. There are five colors — Lemon, Pink, Scarlet, White and Yellow — and one mixture in the series, with more colors coming.

- Ideal for 4-inch and gallon production.
- Bloom from early spring to late summer.
- PGRs recommended for pack/container production. **GPN**



Zinnia 'Zesty White'

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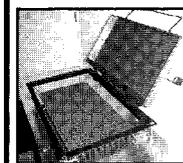
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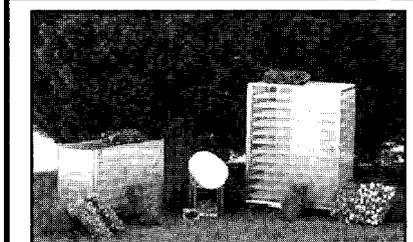
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