

National Poinsettia Trials: Consumers' Poinsettia Picks

The results of the National Poinsettia Trials consumer surveys help shed light on which cultivars are popular among consumers.

By John Dole and Jim Barrett

In addition to evaluating poinsettia cultivars, the National Poinsettia trials, with trial locations at the University of Florida, North Carolina State University and Homewood Nursery, Raleigh, N.C., surveys consumers regarding their favorite poinsettias.

University of Florida. At the University of Florida, evaluations were conducted in the production greenhouses. Participants were asked to select their 10 favorite cultivars from all cultivars, which were labeled (see Figure 1, right). In addition, selected cultivars were arranged in groups of five or six and participants were asked to select the one cultivar they would purchase (see Figure 2, page 21). Plants were numbered and not labeled by cultivar name. Results were based on 237-379 responses.

Homewood Nursery. At Homewood, the public voted for their five favorite poinsettias from a group of 45, each identified by a number (see Figure 3, page 22). Customers were asked to select their five favorites without ranking them. The survey was conducted from Nov. 18 to Dec. 10, 2006, and 660 people voted.

North Carolina State University. At North Carolina State University, an open house took place just for consumers. All 104 cultivars were presented, with two plants of each cultivar on display. Of the 200 attendees at the open house, 115 completed surveys. It was not an easy task because there were so many cultivars from which to choose. To make the job easier, cultivars were organized into six groups: red, pink, white, jingle, marble and novelties. Consumers were asked to select their three favorite cultivars within each group (see Figure 4, page 23). They also were asked to select their three overall favorite cultivars from all of the cultivars on display (see Figure 4, page 23).

High Scorers

The star of the trials was 'Ice Punch' from Paul Ecke Ranch. This cultivar had a striking new color pattern with a blaze of pinkish white in the center of each bright, rosy-red bract. 'Ice Punch' topped the consumer surveys at the three trial locations. Consumers are notoriously fickle on preferences, so it is rare to have consumers in all three locations pick the same cultivar as the favorite. More than 50 percent of participants at the University of Florida and Homewood trials picked it as one of their favorites, and around one-third of those at the NC State Open House selected it as well.

Two other cultivars were also among the top favorites in all three locations. 'Sonora White Glitter' ranked fourth at the University of Florida and Homewood trials and fifth at North Carolina State University. Consumers said they loved the bold combination of bright red, white and green that 'White Glitter' presents. This well-established cultivar has often been among the top favorites at these trials.

A newer cultivar, 'Visions of Grandeur', ranked third at the University of Florida and ninth at Homewood and NC State. This vigorous plant has large, slightly ruffled bracts that make quite a show. The color starts as a pale golden pink, darkening to a light peachy pink as the plant ages.

Among cultivars that ranked in the top 10 in at least two locations were 'Cortez Burgundy' and 'Premium Picasso'. 'Cortez Burgundy' is another perennial favorite for its rich burgundy-red bracts. It ranked second at the University of Florida and sixth at Homewood. A more recent introduction, 'Premium Picasso', has a striking



Top: 'Ice Punch'. Bottom: 'Shimmer Surprise' (Photos: Jim Barrett)

Top 10 Favorite Cultivars

| Rank | Cultivar | Percent who included the cultivar in their ten favorites |
|---------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 | 'Ice Punch' | 54.7 |
| 2 | 'Cortez Burgundy' | 37.4 |
| 3 | 'Visions of Grandeur' | 28.6 |
| 4 (tie) | 'Sonora White Glitter' | 26.8 |
| 4 (tie) | 'Premium Picasso' | 26.8 |
| 6 | 'Premium Red' | 26.1 |
| 7 | 'Christmas Feelings Marble 2' | 25.8 |
| 8 | 'Shimmer Surprise' | 25.1 |
| 9 | 'Christmas Feelings' | 24.7 |
| 10 | 'Polly's Pink' | 24.3 |

Figure 1. These are the top 10 cultivars from the University of Florida open house. Each participant was asked to select 10 favorite cultivars from all cultivars. No incentives were offered for voting, and cultivars were labeled by name. Results are based on 379 responses.



NATIONAL POINSETTIA TRIALS

pattern similar to 'Monet Twilight' but is more compact with dark-green leaves and a longer post-harvest life. Picasso's bracts are apricot pink and heavily marked with rose-pink flecks coalescing into a rose-pink margin. This color pattern has proven exceptionally popular over the years. It received much notice and publicity when 'Monet'

was released many years ago, and consumers have ranked either it or its replacement, 'Monet Twilight', very high every year since then.

Reds

It is in the red category that opinions differ quite a bit among consumers at the various tri-

als. 'Premium Red' and 'Christmas Feelings' were the top-ranked reds at the University of Florida. At Homewood, the favorites were 'Enduring Red', 'Estrella Red' and Ecke 1090. A different set, 'Metro Red', 'Christmas Carol' and 'Christmas Star', topped the surveys at North Carolina State University.



Left: University of Florida consumer open house. Middle: 'Premium Picasso'. (Photos: Jim Barrett) Right: Homewood Nursery & Garden Center, Raleigh, N.C., consumer trial. (Photo: John Dole)



**We Create Demand.
You Create Supply.SM**





| Favorite Cultivars | | | |
|---|------------|--|------------|
| Group 1: Compared red, white, pink, jingle, marble and peppermint color patterns. | | Group 4: Compared important novelty cultivars. | |
| Cultivar | Percentage | Cultivar | Percentage |
| 'Shimmer Surprise' | 37 | 'Ice Punch' | 35 |
| 'Prestige Red' | 32 | 'Cortez Burgundy' | 30 |
| 'Marblestar' | 13 | 'Monet Twilight' | 16 |
| 'Enduring Pink' | 10 | 'Shimmer Surprise' | 14 |
| 'Da Vinci' | 6 | 'Marblestar' | 4 |
| 'Whitestar' | 5 | 'Visions of Grandeur' | 3 |
| Group 2: Compared several shades of red. | | Group 5: Compared several pink poinsettias. | |
| Cultivar | Percentage | Cultivar | Percentage |
| 'Christmas Feelings Red' | 52 | 'Polly's Pink' | 36 |
| 'Prestige Red' | 15 | 'Enduring Pink' | 27 |
| 'Christmas Star Red' | 12 | 'Maren' | 20 |
| 'Freedom Red' | 10 | 'Christmas Feelings Pink' | 7 |
| 'Prestige Maroon' | 9 | 'Premium Lipstick Pink' | 6 |
| 'Red Dragon' | 4 | Ecke 8-04 | 5 |
| Group 3: Compared several red novelty poinsettias. | | Group 6: Compared 'Monet Twilight' with other cultivars that have a similar color/pattern. | |
| Cultivar | Percentage | Cultivar | Percentage |
| 'Avantgarde Red' | 36 | 'Monet Twilight' | 44 |
| 'Winter Rose Dark Red' | 32 | 'Premium Picasso' | 21 |
| 'Carousel Dark Red' | 19 | 'Premium Apricot' | 11 |
| 'Carousel Red' | 8 | 'Premium Van Gogh' | 9 |
| 'Crazy Christmas Red' | 7 | 'Premium Miro' | 8 |
| | | 'Da Vinci' | 8 |
| Group 7: Compared various painted poinsettias. | | | |
| Cultivar | Percentage | | |
| 'Monet Twilight' with neon orange | 33 | | |
| 'Snowcap' with brown and glitter | 21 | | |
| 'Snowcap' with orange and glitter | 15 | | |
| 'Snowcap' with blue | 13 | | |
| 'Snowcap' with multicolor blotch | 13 | | |
| 'Snowcap' with purple | 7 | | |

Figure 2. These are the favorite cultivars from the University of Florida trials out of various groups of five or six plants. Plants were numbered and not labeled by cultivar name. Participants were asked to select the single plant they would purchase. Results are based on 237-379 responses.

The difficulty with studying red is there are so many cultivars with very similar shades of red from which the consumers have to choose. University of Florida tried to shed some light on the question with a focused comparison of several shades of red (see Figure 2). The brighter red of 'Christmas Feelings' was preferred by a little more than 50 percent of the respondents. Complicating matters is that reds look very different under the natural sunlight in a greenhouse, the fluorescent lights of grocery stores or the HID lights of some home improvement stores. ▀

All-America Selections—so much more than just great seed.

The only way to take the guesswork out of choosing varieties, is to make sure every one is a consistent performer. And the only way to do that is to test them using unpaid judges in real-life conditions—in more than 50 proving grounds from coast-to-coast.

Those exacting standards, along with our consumer publicity campaign that reaches an audience of more than 400 million, create a pre-sold market. Gardeners look for the AAS Winners in garden centers across the U.S. All you have to do is keep growing to keep up with that demand.

To make your All-America Selections choices, visit our website: www.aaswinners.com. You'll see the most in-demand AAS Winners... and, learn how AAS supports you.



Celebrating the 75th Anniversary

Tested Nationally & Proven Locally®





NATIONAL POINSETTIA TRIALS

Whites

White poinsettia cultivars are especially important these days due to the popularity of painted

poinsettias. 'White Christmas' with its bright white bracts ranked first among whites at both Homewood and NC State Univer-

sity. Florida tackled the painted poinsettia issue with a focused comparison of various colors (see Figure 2, page 21). The favorite

was actually 'Monet Twilight' colored with neon orange. 'Snowcap' decorated with brown and glitter ranked second.

Customer Survey Results

| Ranking | Variety | Total Votes | Female | Male | DTS | Ranking | Variety | Total Votes | Female | Male | DTS |
|----------|----------------------------|-------------|--------|------|-----|----------|---------------------------|-------------|--------|------|-----|
| 1 | 'Ice Punch' | 342 | 260 | 75 | 7 | 24 | 'Cinnamon Star' | 52 | 40 | 11 | 1 |
| 2 | 'Shimmer Surprise' | 256 | 200 | 50 | 6 | 25 | 'Polly's Pink' | 51 | 41 | 9 | 1 |
| 3 | 'Prestige Maroon' | 214 | 170 | 41 | 3 | 26 | 'Premium Red' | 46 | 35 | 10 | 1 |
| 4 | 'Sonora White Glitter' | 163 | 104 | 56 | 3 | 27 (tie) | 'Red Dragon' | 42 | 33 | 9 | 0 |
| 5 | 'Carousel Dark Red' | 140 | 113 | 23 | 4 | 27 (tie) | 'Avantgarde Red' | 42 | 25 | 17 | 0 |
| 6 (tie) | 'Mars Pink' | 127 | 103 | 20 | 4 | 29 (tie) | 'Christmas Feelings Pink' | 41 | 34 | 6 | 1 |
| 6 (tie) | 'Cortez Burgundy' | 127 | 93 | 32 | 2 | 29 (tie) | 'Enduring Marble' | 41 | 32 | 7 | 2 |
| 8 | Ecke 1090 (red) | 112 | 84 | 23 | 5 | 29 (tie) | 'Cortez Red' | 41 | 32 | 6 | 3 |
| 9 | 'Visions of Grandeur' | 105 | 87 | 16 | 2 | 32 | 'Da Vinci' | 40 | 33 | 6 | 1 |
| 10 (tie) | 'Winter Rose Early Pink' | 94 | 72 | 20 | 2 | 33 (tie) | 'Arctic White' | 38 | 31 | 6 | 1 |
| 10 (tie) | 'Enduring Red' | 94 | 68 | 20 | 6 | 33 (tie) | 'Premium Miro' | 38 | 31 | 6 | 1 |
| 12 | 'Estrella Red' | 88 | 57 | 30 | 1 | 35 (tie) | 'Pink Cadillac' | 32 | 26 | 5 | 1 |
| 13 | 'Monet Twilight' | 87 | 65 | 20 | 2 | 35 (tie) | 'Silverstar Red' | 32 | 24 | 7 | 1 |
| 14 | 'White Christmas' | 83 | 66 | 15 | 2 | 35 (tie) | 'Cortez Electric Fire' | 32 | 20 | 12 | 0 |
| 15 | Dümmen 10600 (red) | 80 | 57 | 20 | 3 | 38 | 'Premium Hot Pink' | 20 | 12 | 6 | 2 |
| 16 | 'Christmas Feelings Crazy' | 79 | 60 | 17 | 2 | 39 (tie) | 'Mars White' | 14 | 11 | 2 | 1 |
| 17 | 'Winter Rose Early Red' | 73 | 58 | 15 | 0 | 39 (tie) | 'Enduring White' | 14 | 9 | 5 | 0 |
| 18 | 'Mars Marble' | 71 | 52 | 16 | 3 | 41 (tie) | 'Christmas Angel' | 9 | 8 | 1 | 0 |
| 19 | 'Early Orion' | 70 | 53 | 15 | 2 | 41 (tie) | 'Silverstar White' | 9 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| 20 | 'Silverstar Marble' | 66 | 58 | 6 | 2 | 43 (tie) | 'Nutcracker Red' | 7 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| 21 (tie) | 'Crazy Christmas' | 55 | 44 | 9 | 2 | 43 (tie) | 'Stargazer White' | 7 | 4 | 3 | 0 |
| 21 (tie) | 'Earlyglory Red' | 55 | 43 | 8 | 4 | 45 | 'Premium White' | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 23 | 'Stargazer Red' | 53 | 35 | 16 | 2 | | | | | | |

Figure 3. Retail customer survey of select cultivars at Homewood Nursery & Garden Center, Raleigh, N.C., conducted from Nov. 18 to Dec. 10, 2006. Results were based on 660 completed surveys: 76-percent women and 21-percent men (3 percent declined to state gender). Forty-five poinsettia cultivars were displayed, each identified by a number. Customers were asked to select their five favorites without ranking them; not all customers chose five varieties. No incentives were offered for voting. The 'Shimmer Surprise' plant was removed from the table by a customer and was not noticed and replaced for approximately 3 days, so the count for this popular poinsettia may have been affected.



United Greenhouse Systems, Inc.
1-800-433-6834
 P.O. Box 249
 Edgerton, WI 53534
info@unitedgreenhouse.com
www.unitedgreenhouse.com

Quality & Value for your Growing Needs







Write in 727



Better trays.
Better plugs.



propagation tray manufacturer
1.888.453.5961
www.beaverplastics.com

Write in 760



NATIONAL POINSETTIA TRIALS

Other Cultivars

'Polly's Pink' was a standout due to its very bright, almost fluorescent-pink color. It was the favorite pink at University of Florida and ranked second among pinks at Homewood. 'Mars Pink', which was released just last year to complement 'Mars Red', was the favorite pink at Homewood and the second-favorite pink at North Carolina State University.

'Enduring Pink' with its perky, upright-facing bracts ranked first at NC State.

In the jingle category, besides the previously discussed 'Sonora White Glitter', 'Shimmer Surprise' received the most votes at Homewood for three years in a row now and was the second-ranked jingle at University of Florida. This striking cultivar is a bold jingle bell pattern with large

white and pink patches and spots on bright-red bracts.

Finally, three other novelty reds should be discussed in addition to 'Ice Punch'. 'Carousel Dark Red', a very dark red version of 'Carousel Red' made a great impact. It was one of the top five cultivars with consumers in Homewood's trials and one of the top five novelty cultivars at NC State. As with the original culti-

var, the bracts were small with wavy edges but much darker. 'Prestige Maroon' was the third overall cultivar at Home-wood and fifth among reds at NC State. This dark, brick-red version of 'Prestige Red' has the same strong branching and uniformity as the popular 'Prestige Red'. 'Avantgarde Red' was the favorite among six novelty reds in Florida and among the top 10 overall at NC State. This quirky red has distinctively irregular red bracts. **GPN**

Top Favorite Cultivars

Overall Favorite

| Cultivar | Rank |
|-------------------------|---------|
| 'Ice Punch' | 1 |
| 'Metro Red' | 2 |
| 'Premium Picasso' | 3 |
| 'White Christmas' | 4 |
| 'Christmas Carol' | 5 (tie) |
| 'Sonora White Glitter' | 5 (tie) |
| 'Winter Rose Early Red' | 5 (tie) |
| 'Avantgarde Red' | 5 (tie) |
| 'Visions of Grandeur' | 9 |
| 'Carousel Pink' | 10 |

Favorite Red

| Cultivar | Rank |
|------------------------|---------|
| 'Metro Red' | 1 |
| 'Christmas Carol' | 2 |
| 'Christmas Star' | 3 |
| 'Cortez Electric Fire' | 4 |
| 'Red Dragon' | 5 (tie) |
| 'Prestige Maroon' | 5 (tie) |

Favorite Pink

| Cultivar | Rank |
|-------------------------|---------|
| 'Early Glory' | 7 (tie) |
| Dümmen 10390 | 7 (tie) |
| 'Nutcracker Red' | 9 |
| Dümmen 10380 | 10 |
| 'Enduring Pink' | 1 |
| 'Mars Pink' | 2 |
| Ecke 8-04 | 3 |
| 'Premium Lipstick Pink' | 4 |
| 'Christmas Carol Pink' | 5 |

Favorite White

| Cultivar | Rank |
|----------------------------|------|
| 'White Christmas' | 1 |
| 'Arctic White' | 2 |
| 'Christmas Feelings White' | 3 |
| 'Enduring White' | 4 |
| 'Whitestar' | 5 |

Favorite Marble

| Cultivar | Rank |
|-----------------------------|------|
| 'Marblestar' | 1 |
| 'Christmas Feelings Marble' | 2 |
| 'Silverstar Marble' | 3 |

Favorite Jingle

| Cultivar | Rank |
|-----------------------------|------|
| 'Sonora White Glitter' | 1 |
| 'Sonora Jingle' | 2 |
| 'Christmas Feelings Jingle' | 3 |

Favorite Novelty

| Cultivar | Rank |
|-----------------------|------|
| 'Ice Punch' | 1 |
| 'Premium Picasso' | 2 |
| 'Visions of Grandeur' | 3 |
| 'Carousel Dark Red' | 4 |
| 'Crazy Christmas Red' | 5 |

John Dole is professor of floriculture at North Carolina State University. Jim Barrett is professor of floriculture at University of Florida. They can be reached at john_dole@ncsu.edu and jbarrett@mail.ifas.ufl.edu, respectively.

LearnMore

For more information related to this article, go to www.gpnmag.com/lm.cfm/gp030401

Reader Interest Review

Please write in the appropriate number on the Reader Service Card to indicate your level of interest in this article.

High 1500 Medium 1501 Low 1502

Figure 4. These are the top favorite cultivars from the NC State open house. Responses were either for all cultivars (overall) or for specific cultivar groups (by color). No incentives were offered for voting, and cultivars were labeled by name. Results are based on 221-344 responses.



ORGANIC Fertilizer
(800) 259-4769

Call for a FREE CATALOG on all of our ORGANIC PRODUCTS

"Here is a picture of my latest and greatest cabbage. This one weighed 16-1/4 lbs., a new record for me! Neptune's Harvest once again did the trick! Thank you!"

— Bob Cody • Wampum, PA

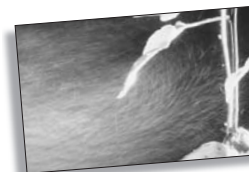
Call for FREE SAMPLE and catalog.

(800) 259-4769

www.neptunesharvest.com

Insect & Disease Problems? Maybe It's Your Sprayer.

- ESS Electrostatic sprayers provide **4 x greater coverage**, including under-leaf & stem coverage, and **8 x less overspray** on the ground
- Up to **60% savings** in chemicals
- Growers report up to 50% savings in application time
- Hand-held, cart-mounted & tractor-mounted models match your needs



Micro-photo of ESS 35 micron spray attracted to leaf with a charged force that is 75 times greater than gravity. Charged spray is driven into the plant by air and charged droplets attract to all plant surfaces. The result is a uniform coat on all hidden areas.
(Photo: University of Georgia)



Free Report: "What Growers Should Know About Electrostatic Spraying." Call Today.

www.maxcharge.com

For more information call ESS today: 800-213-0518

