



NATIONAL POINSETTIA TRIALS

Through the combined support of five poinsettia breeders, one commercial greenhouse and two universities, the 2006 National Poinsettia Trials provide poinsettia growers with independent evaluations of and a thorough body of research for many of the new cultivars introduced each year.

The trial sites would not be possible without the support and cooperation of the many participants and sponsors. The Trials are conducted at two university sites (North Carolina State University and University of

Florida) and by Joe Stroffregen and Denise Ethridge at Homewood Nursery, Raleigh, N.C. Of course, these trials also need the help of several poinsettia breeders. Thank you to Dümme USA, Ecke Ranch, Fischer USA, Florema and Selecta First Class. Additionally, we would like to thank our dedicated staff, including lead technical staffers Ingram McCall, North Carolina State University, and Carolyn Bartuska, University of Florida.

— John Dole and Jim Barrett

New Releases For 2007

2007 has a lot to offer when it comes to new poinsettia varieties. See what some of the breeder/marketer companies have to offer for this holiday-season plant.

By John Dole and Jim Barrett

The class of 2007 was a large one, with 26 new cultivars in the National Trials for the first time. These cultivars should be available in 2007; however, not all new cultivars are listed in the catalogs yet. Contact your supplier if you see one you want to try but it is not listed. The descriptions are based on how the cultivars performed in our trials.

Red Cultivars

'Advent Red' (Ecke Ranch). The smooth, bright-red bracts were elongated with a flat to droopy orientation. The elongated leaves were dark green. Branching and uniformity were good. Plants showed first color by Oct. 2 and flowering by Nov. 3, making it and 'Autumn Red' the earliest cul-

tivars in the trials. Plants were medium vigor, and growth habit was upright. Postharvest performance was very good. This is an excellent candidate for warm regions where poinsettias can be used in the landscape.

'Alreddy Red' (Florema). This attractive cultivar had bright-red, medium-size, lobed bracts and darker red young bracts. Bracts were held flat to slightly droopy, contributing to a slightly rounded presentation. The dark-green leaves had some lobes also. Uniformity was good. Plants flowered early to midseason and were medium vigor.

'Christmas Angel' (Selecta First Class). Medium-red bracts were held flat to upright. The dark-green leaves were a bit elongated. Cyathia were larger than

average and grouped close together. Plants were uniform with excellent branching and strong laterals. Plants flowered midseason and were medium to high vigor. The upright, strong growth habit makes this cultivar, potentially, a good choice for larger containers.

'Christmas Star Bright Red' (Selecta First Class). This cultivar had tight clusters of dark-red, small- to medium-sized bracts that faced upward, producing a very uniform floral display. There were only small differences in color and display between 'Christmas Star Red' and Bright Red, and both cultivars had the same first color dates and flowering. Axillary shoot development was excellent, and plants were very uniform. The foliage was

dark green. These cultivars work well in 6½-inch or larger pots but also can be grown in smaller pot sizes with PGRs.

'Earlyglory Red' (Dümme USA). This cultivar had large, dark-red bracts with darker red young bracts; bracts were smooth edged and rounded in shape. The leaves were dark green. Branching was uniform. Although listed as an early flowering cultivar, plants flowered midseason for us. (Not pictured.)

'Eclipse Red' (Florema). This cultivar had medium-red bracts that were uniformly colored from old to young bracts and held flat. The leaves were dark green. Plants flowered midseason and had medium vigor.

'Estrella Red' (Florema). The medium-red, medium-sized bracts



'Advent Red'



'Alreddy Red'



'Christmas Angel'



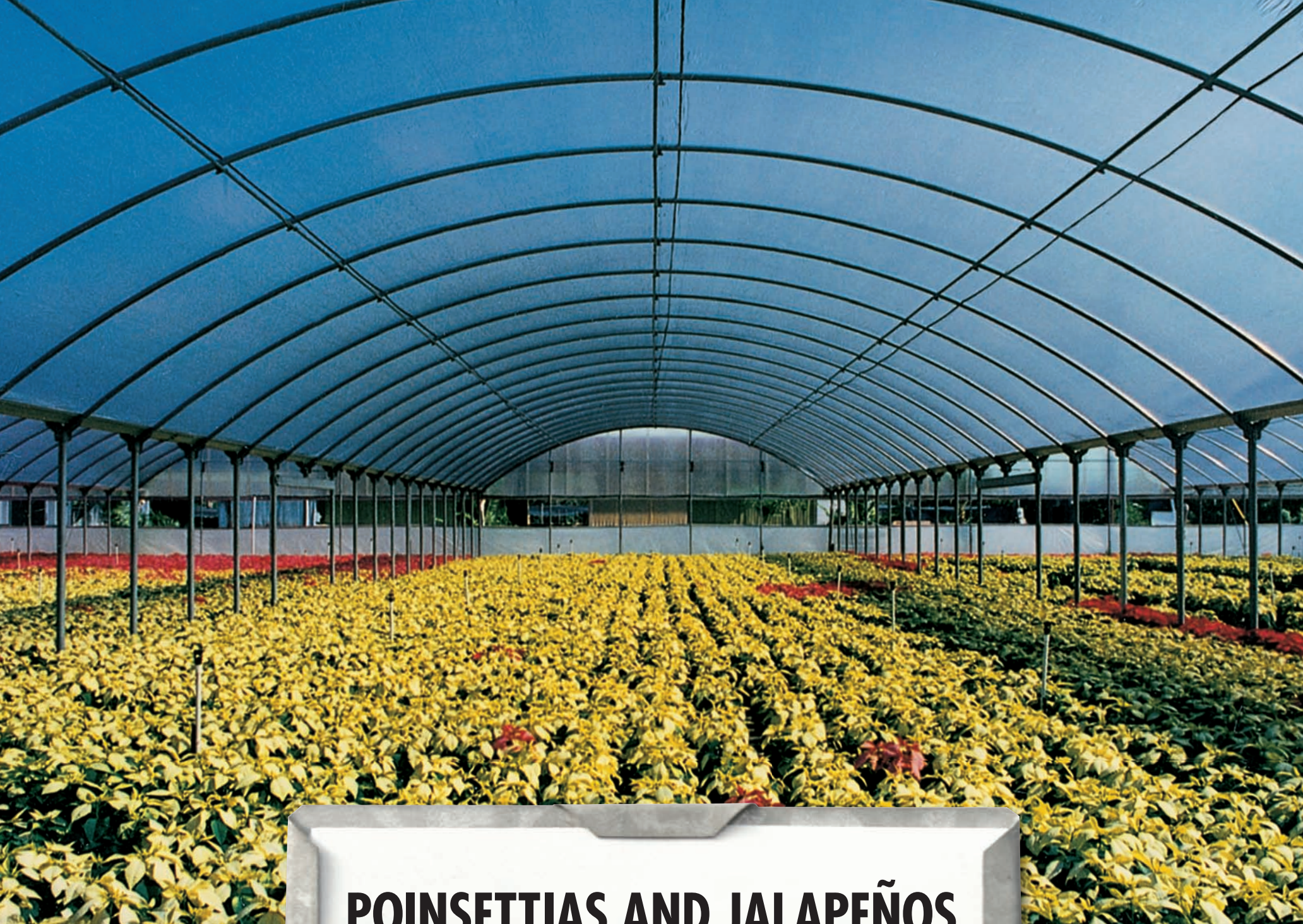
'Christmas Star Bright Red'



'Eclipse Red'



'Estrella Red'



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NATIONAL POINSETTIA TRIALS



'Prestige Early Red'



'Christmas Carol White'



'Christmas Feelings White'



'Mars White'



'Stargazer White'



'Christmas Carol Pink'

had a slight pink cast and were held flat to slightly droopy. Centers had an open appearance because bracts had long petioles and there were few small bracts formed. Growth habit was round to spreading, and uniformity among plants was good. Plants flowered early to midseason and had medium vigor.

'Euroglory Black Beauty' (Dümmen USA). The dark-red bracts made this cultivar distinctive. The bracts were upward facing. Plants flowered midseason and were uniform and compact with good branching. This plant will be excellent for tight spacing. (Not pictured.)

'Prestige Early Red' (Ecke Ranch). 'Prestige Early Red' is the latest addition to the Prestige series, and it lived up to its name,

flowering 10-14 days before 'Prestige Red' during trials. Otherwise it had the same growth habit and general appearance as 'Prestige Red'. It will need to be planted 1-2 weeks earlier than 'Prestige Red' because it appears to initiate earlier and is slightly less vigorous. A 'Freedom Red' schedule is a good starting point for learning this cultivar, but it will require less growth regulator. University of Florida heat delay studies indicate 'Prestige Early Red' will perform similar to 'Freedom Red' in cool and warm growing conditions and will not heat delay like 'Prestige Red'.

White Cultivars

'Christmas Carol White' (Selecta First Class). This cultivar had large, creamy-white, droopy bracts. Leaves were dark green

and oak-leaf shaped. Plants were uniform, and branching was excellent. Plants flowered midseason and had medium vigor.

'Christmas Feelings White' (Selecta First Class). These plants had large, creamy-white bracts. The bracts had a ruffled look and were held flat to slightly droopy. Plants were uniform, and branching was excellent. Plants flowered midseason and had medium vigor. This variety is an improvement on the original 'Christmas Feelings White'.

'Mars White' (Fischer USA). Another cultivar in the well-matched midseason Mars series, 'Mars White' had cream-colored, flat bracts. The leaves were very dark green. Plants had medium vigor.

'Stargazer White' (Florema). 'Stargazer White' had creamy-

white, flat to droopy bracts atop very dark green foliage. While there was some variation among plants, branching was excellent. Plants flowered midseason and had medium vigor. There is a companion cultivar, 'Stargazer Red', but only one of our locations, Homewood Nursery and Garden Center, Raleigh, N.C., received it.

Pink Cultivars

'Christmas Carol Pink' (Selecta First Class). This plant had large, medium-pink bracts with faded older bracts and darker pink young bracts. Older bracts had a grayish cast and the veins were darker pink. Leaves were dark green and oak-leaf shaped. Plants were uniform, and branching was excellent. Plants flowered midseason and had medium vigor.



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NATIONAL POINSETTIA TRIALS



'Christmas Feelings Pink'



'Mars Lipstick Pink'



'Pink Cadillac'



'Polly's Pink'



'Mars Marble'



'Amazing Pink'

'Christmas Feelings Pink' (Selecta First Class). The bright-pink bracts were slightly ruffled. The older bracts did not appear as faded as with most dark-leaf poinsettias. The leaves were medium green. Plants were uniform, and branching was excellent. Plants flowered midseason and had medium vigor. This variety is an improvement on the original 'Christmas Feelings Pink'.

'Mars Lipstick Pink' (Fischer USA). This cultivar is very similar to 'Mars Pink', so much so that there may have been a mistake in the cuttings. The bract color ranged from dark reddish-pink young bracts to pale-pink older bracts with darker veins. The grayish cast common on the older bracts of many other cultivars was evident but not as pronounced. The some-

what-rounded bracts had a smooth edge and a flat presentation. Plants were uniform and well branched. Plants had medium to low vigor.

'Pink Cadillac' (Dümmen USA). With a great new name, this cultivar had large, bright-pink bracts. The young bracts were darker pink and the older bracts faded to a lighter pink. The flat to droopy bracts covered the very dark green foliage. The plants were uniform, and branching was good. Plants flowered midseason with medium to high vigor. This cultivar is not a part of a series.

'Polly's Pink' (Ecke Ranch). The bright, fluorescent-pink bracts were mildly ruffled and slightly upright facing. The bracts looked tight and cramped in 6½-inch or smaller pots. We tried a few in larger pots, and the bract display

was nicer. Both the young and old bracts were a similar color compared to many pinks in which the older bracts tend to fade and show a gray cast. Plants were uniform with excellent breaking. The leaves were medium green. Plants flowered midseason and had medium vigor.

Marble Cultivars

'Mars Marble' (Fischer USA). 'Mars Marble' had creamy-white bracts and a pale-pink blaze down the center of each bract. Like other dark-leaf types, the marble color was not as good as some of the cultivars with medium-green foliage. Plants were uniform with excellent branching. Plants flowered mid to late season, two days after 'Mars Red', and had medium to low vigor.

Novelty Cultivars

'Amazing Pink' (Selecta First Class). This cultivar had rich, medium-pink bracts with tiny white flecks. A few bracts on a few plants were boldly marked with white splotches. The upright- to flat-facing bracts were elongated with a smooth edge. The elongated leaves were dark green with smooth edges. Plants had uniform breaking. Plants flowered mid to late season and had medium vigor.

'Apricot Candy' (Selecta First Class). As the name states, the bracts were a pale pink/apricot color with darker pink flecks. There was some variation in color, with about half of the plants having darker pink bracts. The smooth-edged bracts were upright to flat facing. Plants flowered the middle of November and had medium vigor. ♦

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'Apricot Candy'



'Cinnamon Candy'



'Crazy Christmas Red'



'Carousel Dark Red'



'Ice Punch'



'Peppermint Twist'

'Cinnamon Candy' (Selecta First Class). This was a slightly darker version of 'Apricot Candy', but the bracts seemed to be thicker, feeling more substantial. The bracts were also larger, more elongated and smoother edged than 'Apricot Candy'. Bract presentation was upright to flat. Leaves were very dark green, and plants had medium vigor. Plants flowered midseason.

'Crazy Christmas Red' (Selecta First Class). The cultivar is one of the novel varieties with small, dark-red, contorted bracts and a large number of distinctive cyathia. Leaves were also contorted with pale-green centers and darker green edges similar to a couple of other unique varieties introduced recently. Bract pattern was not always stable as several plants reverted back to full-size, normal-appearing

bracts. Plants flowered midseason and had medium vigor.

'Carousel Dark Red' (Fischer USA). This is a very dark red version of 'Carousel Red' but more compact. The bracts were small with wavy edges. While plants flowered close to the same time as 'Carousel Red' in late November, Dark Red plants were well colored much earlier. The leaves were dark green with a smooth margin. Branching was excellent, and plants were very uniform. Whether it was the darker red color or the earlier coloring, we liked this cultivar more than the original 'Carousel Red'. This one should be easy to sleeve and ship. 'Carousel Dark Red' worked well in pot sizes up to 6 inches but would need more long days after pinch for larger sizes.

'Ice Punch' (Ecke Ranch). The bright, rosy-red bracts had a blaze

of white down the middle of each bract — sort of a reverse marble pattern. When the bracts first started to change color, we wondered if there had been a mistake as the white was not evident until late in the crop cycle. Plants flowered relatively early (Nov. 14), and the bract arrangement was mostly droopy. The leaves were dark green and heavily pointed. Plants were uniform and had medium vigor with excellent breaking. We found this cultivar to be easy to grow, and we produced it in various sizes from 4½- to 12-inch tubs.

'Peppermint Twist' (Ecke Ranch). This large-headed, curled-leaf type had bracts of medium pink and peach flecked with rosy red. The dark-green leaves were curly. Branching was excellent and uniformity good. It is too bad interest in the curly bracted culti-

vars appears to be dropping, as this is quite a nice cultivar. Plants flowered midseason and had medium vigor. **GPN**

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.

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