

New Releases for 2005

Get the lowdown on the 23 new introductions trialed in 2004.

By John Dole, Allen Hammer and Jim Barrett

In 2004, 23 new cultivars were in the National Poinsettia Trials for the first time, and they should be available in 2005. The following descriptions of these cultivars are based on how the cultivars performed in our trials. 'Shimmer Surprise' and 'Visions of Grandeur' performed so well that they were selected for the Best of the Trials list, which can be found on page 35.

RED CULTIVARS

'Christmas Star' (Selecta First Class, formerly SK38). In the increasingly crowded red category, this cultivar stood out. The tight clusters of dark-red small- to medium-sized bracts faced upward, producing a very uniform floral display. Axillary shoot development is excellent, and plants are very uniform. The branches appear quite sturdy, and plants should be easy to sleeve. The leaves are dark green. 'Christmas Star' should perform well in a wide range of sizes, but the small bract size may be an issue at retail when grown in 6½-inch pots. Plants flower midseason. Unfortunately, under stressful

postharvest situations leaf drop is greater than average.

'Independence Red' (Ecke Ranch, formerly 1056). This cultivar is distinguished by the large primary dark-red bracts that face upward. The transition bracts are especially dark, and the leaves are dark green. While flowering occurs midseason, the plants appear to finish early because the large transition bracts color quickly. The cyathia clusters are relatively small. Shoot development is good, and plants are upright. 'Independence Red' has medium vigor and responds well to PGRs. It can be grown in a range of pot sizes and will work well at close spacing for mass market production.

'Kris Krinkle' (Ecke Ranch, formerly 51-02). This medium-vigor plant was notable for its ruffled bracts and symmetrical bract arrangement. The ruffling is more pronounced when PGRs are used. The transition bracts have little texture; the later forming bracts are more ruffled. Thus, while 'Kris Krinkle' flowers early, the plants look better when more mature. In addition, shipping too early may cause cyathia drop and

prevent the smaller bracts from developing properly. The small- to medium-sized rounded bracts are medium red, and leaves are medium green. Axillary shoot development is excellent, and plants are very uniform. 'Kris Krinkle' is best grown in pots of 6½ inches or smaller. It will grow well in larger pot sizes if given more vegetative time before the start of short days. 'Kris Krinkle' will be part of a special marketing program.

'Novia' (Fischer USA). 'Novia' has bright-red bracts and large primary bracts that are held flat to upright. With its uniform branching and plant habit and good bract presentation, 'Novia' may become an important midseason red cultivar. It has medium vigor and is easy to grow. A good cultivar for 6½-inch or larger pots, it can also be grown in smaller pot sizes with PGRs.

PINK CULTIVARS

'Christmas Dream Pink' (Selecta First Class). 'Christmas Dream Pink' has flat to slightly droopy bracts that are medium pink with darker pink veins. The young bracts are a darker pink,

and the older ones are paler, almost salmon colored. This cultivar matches the growth habit and timing of 'Christmas Dream Red', with dark-green leaves, excellent lateral shoot development and midseason flowering. It will probably be most useful to growers who are producing 'Christmas Dream Red'.

'Christmas Feelings Pink' (Selecta First Class). This is one of the more uniformly colored pinks available. The young bracts are a darker rosy pink, and the older ones have a salmon cast. While this cultivar has paler older bracts, the bracts do not have the grayish tinge found on many other dark-green-leaved cultivars. Growth habit and timing match 'Christmas Feelings Red'. The Christmas Feelings series is emerging as a good early midseason series, and this color is a great addition.

WHITE CULTIVARS

'Arctic White' (Dummen USA, formerly 10423-RF6925). This cultivar had the brightest white bracts in the 2004 trials. The small- to medium-sized bracts are greenish when young and brighten to white as they age. Bracts are held upright



'Christmas Star'



'Independence Red'



'Kris Krinkle'



'Novia'



'Christmas Dream Pink'

poinsettia trials **2004**

on plants with light-green leaves. The low- to moderate-vigor plants have an upright shape and excellent axillary shoot development, though we noted some variability in size among plants. This cultivar flowered quite late — one of the latest flowering cultivars in the trials this year, which may limit its market. Additionally, the small bracts may be a problem for customers.

'Christmas Dream Vanilla' (Selecta First Class). As with many dark-leaved cultivars, the bracts of 'Christmas Dream Vanilla' are creamy white instead of clear white. This is a useful addition to the Christmas Dream series, though

it appears to be a little less vigorous than 'Christmas Dream Red'.

'Christmas Feelings White' (Selecta First Class). This creamy white cultivar has upright-facing bracts and dark-green leaves. Its color is brighter white than 'Christmas Dream Vanilla' but not as bright as light-green-leaf cultivars such as 'White Christmas' or 'Whitestar'. 'Christmas Feelings White' is similar in growth habit and timing to 'Christmas Feelings Red' and is a good addition to the series.

'Gala White' (Oglevee Ltd.). Very large, creamy white bracts make this cultivar stand out. Cyathia clusters are small, and

the bracts lay flat over dark-green leaves. Plants flower early to midseason. Axillary shoot development is excellent, and plants are uniform. The growth habit and timing fit well with 'Gala Red'.

'Premium White' (Dummen USA). 'Premium White' has creamy white bracts, and interestingly, some of the plants showed a very pale apricot cast as the bracts aged. 'Premium White' has the growth habit and timing of 'Premium Red'.

JINGLE BELL CULTIVARS

'Christmas Dream White Sparkle' (Selecta First Class). This

cultivar is distinctly different than other jingle types. It has small white spots that are uniformly distributed over its bracts, in contrast to the large pink flecks found on most cultivars. The subtle jingle pattern may be a problem with some buyers, and one grower commented that they would not be able to sell it as a jingle. While there was some variation in the pattern — certain plants had more spots than others — it had a very low incidence of sporting to non-jingle bell types. The growth characteristics are similar to 'Christmas Dream Pink' described above.

'Christmas Feelings Jingle' (Selecta First Class). 'Christmas



'Christmas Feelings Pink'



'Arctic White'



'Christmas Dream Vanilla'



'Christmas Feelings White'

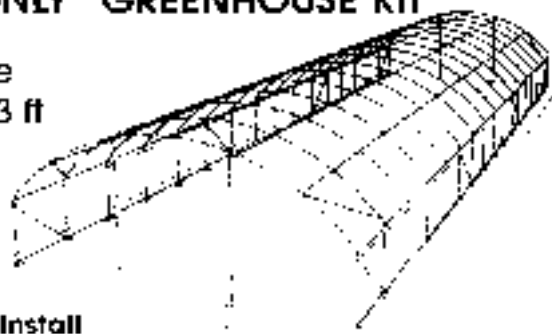


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midseason. The medium-vigor plants were quite uniform with strong stems and sleeved easily. This cultivar could be grown in a range of container sizes and makes excellent trees. While 'Jester Red' has not become as popular in the United States as it is in Europe, 'Taffy' may be a useful novelty. 'Taffy' is a Ball Seed Co. exclusive through at least 2005.

OTHER NOVELTY CULTIVARS

'Premium Miro' (Dummen USA). This is a new color in the developing Premium series, which is early flowering and well suited for high-density production. Its

medium-sized bracts are apricot colored with pink edges. The plants in the trials were quite variable in color — with some plants a solid pink. Leaves are dark green. Axillary shoot development is excellent, and vigor is low. 'Premium Miro' can be grown in pot sizes up to 6 inches, especially for tight mass market production. An extra two weeks of long days after the pinch will be needed for 6½-inch pots, especially in the North. Can be grown in larger pots if given more vegetative time before the start of short days.

'Premium Picasso' (Dummen USA). 'Monet Twilight' is a favorite novelty of consumers and

growers, and 'Premium Picasso' is potentially important because it has a similar color pattern. It has very low vigor, dark-green leaves and early to midseason flowering. The pink spotting also tends to be darker than 'Monet Twilight'. 'Premium Picasso' seems much more likely to sport to all rose pink, with some instances of 90-percent off-types occurring. The growth habit and timing of 'Premium Picasso' fits well with 'Premium Red' and the other colors in this series. It may have a market as a low-vigor, early flowering 'Monet Twilight' companion if the sporting can be reduced.

'Cinnamon Star' (Fischer USA).

This new cultivar presents a unique and different color. The bright orange/peach-colored bracts are flecked with pink, especially at the edges, and have a variable amount of pink on them. From a distance, this plant appears golden — a "designer" color to complement the reds and burgundies. As with 'Da Vinci', 'Cinnamon Star' has upright bracts, dark-green leaves, early flowering and low to medium vigor. An extra week or two of long days after the pinch would be needed for 6½-inch pots. 'Cinnamon Star' should perform well in a wide array of pot sizes. Shoot development was uniform



'Holly Berry'



'Taffy'



'Premium Miro'



'Premium Picasso'



'Cinnamon Star'

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within the plant, but branching was variable on the trial plants.

'Visions of Grandeur' (Ecke Ranch, formerly 975). A big name for a big plant. This unique 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. The bracts are held flat to upright, and the leaves are light green. While flowering is early to midseason, additional time in the greenhouse may produce more attractive plants, depending on the color desired. This is one of the most vigorous poinsettia cultivars and will require higher rates of plant growth regulators, especially prior to or soon after pinching to prevent early rapid shoot elongation. Excessive shoot elongation and large bracts can produce a weak plant, especially in warm climates. Rings or stacking should be used with pot sizes 6½ inches and larger. Axillary shoot development is excellent, and plants are very uniform. While this cultivar produces interesting small pots, the unique bracts display better in larger formats. 'Visions of Grandeur' received high consumer ratings and is in the same special marketing program as 'Kris Krinkle'.

'Winter Rose Early Pink' (Ecke Ranch, formerly 19-04). A good addition to the new Winter Rose Early series, 'Winter Rose Early Pink' has medium-pink bracts that curl under in typical Winter Rose fashion. The older bracts fade to pale pink, and the pink/green transition bracts are rather prominent. As with 'Winter Rose Early Red', lateral shoot development is excellent, and plants are very uniform. 'Winter Rose Early Pink', like others in the Winter Rose Early series, tends to be shorter than 'Winter Rose Dark Red' and requires less growth regulator. For 6½-inch pots add one (South) to three (North) weeks of long days after the pinch to your normal schedule. This cultivar will probably be most useful for growers producing 'Winter Rose Early Red'.



'Visions of Grandeur'



'Winter Rose Early Pink'



'Winter Rose Early Marble'

'Winter Rose Early Marble' (Ecke Ranch, formerly 20-04). Another cultivar in the new Winter Rose Early series, this one has a light pink center and creamy pink edge. Older bracts tend to show a lot of green in the creamy edge. The growth characteristics are similar to 'Winter Rose Early Pink' described above. GPN

John Dole is professor of floriculture at North Carolina State University. Allen Hammer is professor of floriculture at Purdue University. Jim Barrett is professor of floriculture at University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla. They can be reached by E-mail at john_dole@ncsu.edu, pah@hort.purdue.edu and jbarrett@mail.ifas.ufl.edu, respectively.