

Best of the Trials

The cultivars that really stood out, to growers as well as consumers.

By Allen Hammer, John Dole and Jim Barrett

The following cultivars performed best in the 2004 National Poinsettia Trials. To select these plants, we evaluated appearance, growth habit and consumer evaluations. Additionally, we considered whether or not each cultivar filled an important niche in the marketplace. Only the cultivars selected at two sites made the list.

'Christmas Feelings Red' (Selecta First Class). A nice low- to medium-vigor cultivar that finishes early mid-season. Large, bright-red bracts on an upright, stocky plant make this a great cultivar that will find a place in the market. There are also colors being introduced to go with the red.

'Cortez Burgundy' (Fischer USA). This cultivar was excellent in 2004 and continues to be one of the most popular plants in consumer surveys. Plants were much more true to type this year than in 2003, with significantly less sporting. This cultivar's

burgundy color makes it unique with strong consumer appeal.

'Cortez Electric Fire' (Fischer USA). The bright orange-red colored bracts of this cultivar make it unique and different. Bract size and plant form is outstanding. It can be grown as a large specimen plant, which will sell well if consumers like the color.

'Enduring Pink' (Ecke Ranch). This is a very good pink for the South. True pink bracts, dark-green leaves and early flowering make this an excellent pink to replace 'Freedom Pink' and 'Maren'. The low vigor will require some adjustments in scheduling if it is grown as a 6½-inch or in the North.

'Gala Red' (Oglevee Ltd.). This is a great midseason red for upscale markets. It has medium-sized bracts that are brighter red than many dark-red cultivars. The smooth bracts are held in a flat plane, and its upright branches and medium to

low vigor make it very appealing. A white cultivar is also available.

'Infinity' (Dummen USA). This cultivar has large dark-red bracts and good vigor. It can easily be grown for the upscale markets that require large, showy bracts on larger plants.

'Monet Twilight' (Ecke Ranch). This cultivar continues to be a favorite of consumers and is, therefore, important. It is unique and fills an important niche in the novelty market. It is very vigorous and requires higher fertilization than many other cultivars, so it is losing its appeal for mass-market growers.

'Premium Red' (Dummen USA). The strong upright branches on this cultivar make it outstanding. It can be grown without rings and will lose no branches during shipping and handling. It is a low-vigor cultivar that requires a much different approach than the Freedom types. There are several additional colors.

'Prestige Red' (Ecke Ranch). This

is an outstanding cultivar. It is the strongest plant available, with sturdy upright branches that can withstand the rigors of shipping. 'Prestige Red' is also one of the best cultivars in post-production trials; however, it is temperature sensitive, and growers have experienced flowering delay, particularly in the South. Prestige does not replace Freedom, as it does not have large transition bracts and is 1-2 weeks later.

'Santa Claus Pink' (Selecta First Class). This is an outstanding pink cultivar for the upscale market. It has large, showy bracts with a uniformly clean pink color. It is vigorous, making great large containers.

'Shimmer Surprise' (Ecke Ranch). This new cultivar has a very different look, with exceptionally variable large splotches of white on a red background. See page 28 for a full description.

'Silent Night' (Selecta First Class). The outstanding characteristic of



'Christmas Feelings Red'



'Cortez Burgundy'



'Cortez Electric Fire'



'Enduring Pink'



'Gala Red'



'Infinity'



'Monet Twilight'



'Premium Red'



'Prestige Red'



'Santa Claus Pink'

poinsettia trials **2004**

this cultivar is its plant form. It has bright-red, medium-sized bracts displayed uniformly over the top of the plant. 'Silent Night' is midseason with medium vigor; however, it can be grown as an 8- to 10-inch plant with additional long days.

'*Sonora White Glitter*' (Fischer USA). The breeder did an outstanding job of stock selection in 2004, as the reversion rate was minimal. While this cultivar has been on the market for a number of years, it has retained excellent consumer appeal.

Plant form is good, and the bracts have prominent white flecks with a red background.

'*Visions of Grandeur*' (Ecke Ranch). This new cultivar has large, showy, soft pink to apricot bracts on a very vigorous plant that give it a

classy look. See page 32 for a full description. **GPN**

Allen Hammer is professor of floriculture at Purdue University. 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 by E-mail at pah@hort.purdue.edu, john_dole@ncsu.edu and jbarrett@mail.ifas.ufl.edu, respectively.



Danziger's extensive bedding plant collection is available from licensed propagators throughout North America.

Call your broker for details.

Petunia **CASCADIAS** Cascadias

- Certified by Dutch N.A.K.B
- Flower early and abundantly
- Fast growing, easy to maintain
- Ideal for patio pots, window boxes and ground covering
- Wide range of varieties in numerous shapes, colors and sizes



Cascadias Yellow®



Cascadias Rim Purple®



Cascadias Deep Red®



Danziger - "Dan" Flower Farm
Moshav Mishmar Hashiva 50297. P.O.Box 24, Beit-Dagan, Israel
Tel: 972-3-9602525, Fax: 972-3-9605896, E-mail: danziger@danziger.co.il. www.danziger.co.il



'*Shimmer Surprise*'



'*Silent Night*'



'*Sonora White Glitter*'



'*Visions of Grandeur*'

Write in 716