

## pack trials 2005

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# Best in Show

Here are a few of the greatest introductions from this year's Pack Trials.

By Carrie Burns, Catherine Evans and Bridget White

**A**s you saw in "Breeding Breakthroughs" (page 26), there were only a few real breakthrough introductions at this year's Pack Trials, but there were many, many varieties that will be welcome additions. The following 22 items represent some of the best new vegetative introductions this year. Look for these varieties to be widely marketed for the 2006 growing year and for our seed coverage in next month's issue.

### ANIGOZANTHOS

Two colors have been added to Bodger Botanicals' Kanga series — Burgundy and Red-Green. We took a liking to Red-Green, as it offers great marketing opportunities. Work is still being done on this variety to get the height down to match the others, which grow to 2 or 3 feet high. However, this variety is a good product to market for the Christmas season, with its traditional Christmas colors. A 1-gal. with one plant per pot will finish in 10-12 weeks; a 2-gal. also with one plant per pot will finish in 12-14 weeks.

Kanga requires night temperatures of 60-65° F and day temperatures of 65-75° F. Well-drained soil is a must, but plants require moist conditions during growth and flowering. Feed with 150-200 ppm nitrogen with intermittent clear water irrigation to keep salts from building up. Kanga needs high light and a pH of 5.5-6.5, and it tolerates high temperatures. To prevent spotting on fans during high humidity spray with a copper-based fungicide, and to prevent Pythium drench with a root rot preventative fungicide.

### CLEMATIS

Proven Selections added a clematis line, available only through Pleasant View Gardens, to its offerings this year. The four varieties in the series originate from tissue-culture and vary in size and shape. 'Climador' reaches 3½ feet high and continuously flowers from June to September with 5- to 6-inch, purple-blue flowers and nearly black anthers. 'Marie Louise Jensen' reaches 6-8 feet high and also blooms June through September with double, blue flowers that measure up to 6 inches across and anthers that darken with maturity. 'Pink Climador' reaches 3½-4 feet high and has flowers with pink petals and contrasting dark anthers. 'Ruutel' reaches 5-6 feet high with large 6-inch, red flowers that have dark sepals and nearly black anthers.

The program includes vernalized 4-inch liners that are heavily rooted and

ready for a quick finish. The plants are also packaged with a trellis for easy production. From an 1801, plants will take approximately six weeks to finish.

### DIASCIA

This year, Ball FloraPlant has done a really good job of adding some interesting colors to its diascia series. In recent years, breeder/marketer companies have really been pushing different types of plants, such as diascia, so it's nice to see a company start refining its offerings.

Ball has done exactly that with 'Whisper Pumpkin', a deep orange color that is far darker than other oranges on the market and really pops when you look at it. It definitely drew our attention when we walked by. The second color that really stood out was 'Wink Garnet' a dark pink and purple bicolored flower that is different than most diascia colors. They both fit well within their series and should be grown along with the other colors.

### GERANIUM

**'Pillar Scarlet'.** 'Pillar Scarlet' from Oglevee has huge, bright scarlet-red flowers and medium-green, zoned foliage. Like the rest of the series, 'Pillar Scarlet' is an easy way to provide a large specimen or instant garden for the garden or patio. 'Pillar Scarlet' is extremely vigorous, and its short crop cycle easily produces a 36-inch-high specimen plant.

'Pillar Scarlet' should not be produced in anything smaller than an 8-inch pot. Oglevee recommends five cuttings per 12- to 14-inch pot. Pinch once 2-3 weeks after transplanting into the final pot. Once shoots become long enough to require support, loosely twist tie to a trellis. One tie per foot is sufficient. Sprays of 5 ppm GA at four and eight weeks will increase overall height. Monitor for thrips, whitefly and aphids, and spray accordingly. Note: this plant is best with a trellis, not in hanging baskets.

**'Piccolino Dark Red'.** 'Piccolino Dark Red', from Selecta First Class, is a true dwarf zonal geranium with single flowers and a lot of flower power. These plants have the smallest flowers in the series, with tight umbels of tiny flowers, making them truly unique. No pinch or PGRs are necessary, according to Selecta.

'Piccolino Dark Red' works best for 4-inch pots and will also make nice larger containers if multiple plants are used. This geranium has excellent gar-



'Kanga Red-Green'



'Marie Louise Jensen'



'Wink Garnet'



'Pillar Scarlet'



den performance because you do not have to deadhead; the new flowers ► overgrow the old ones. All of the varieties in the Piccolino series have slightly zoned foliage and a medium-green foliage color. Grow them like regular zonal geraniums (temperature and feeding), but watch water supply as the plants are small and will need less. 'Piccolino Dark Red' will be great as an impulse item in smaller pots.

## HIBISCUS

With the popularity of everything tropical, we couldn't overlook an improvement on a tropical standard. Vintage hardy hibiscus from Yoder Brothers is composed of two series — Splash and Carafe. Splash contains two varieties: Pinot Noir and Pinot Grigio; Carafe is made up of three varieties: Bordeaux, Grenache and Chablis. According to Yoder, the Splash series is the shortest, most compact ever bred. The uniform plants average 2½ feet tall. The Carafe varieties are a bit taller, averaging 3 feet high.

Available as 72 liners, one cutting, pinched; deep 30 liners, two cuttings, pinched; and 4½-inch quick start pots, three cuttings, one pinch including new growth. When you combine the large starting sizes, actively growing plants and superior genetics, Vintage might allow you to add this high-dollar crop to your schedule.

## IMPATIENS, DOUBLE

A whole new series for S&G Flowers, Heartbeat double impatiens is well matched throughout the series. Heartbeat is available in two different habits

— compact and upright. Four colors are available in the upright habit: Appleblossom, Hot Pink, Orange and Pink. Compact is available in Carmine, Orange Bicolor, Pink, Pink Pastel, Red, Red Bicolor and Salmon. Heartbeat compares to Fiesta and Fiesta Olé. While there is some variability in habit, S&G is working to improve the series, and even with the differences, this is an good introduction that is worth evaluating if you are in the market for a new double impatiens series.

One pinch is recommended for best branching. Night temperatures should be maintained around 55-62° F and day temperatures around 65-75° F. Soil pH should be about 5.8-6.2. Recommended for 4- to 12-inch production, Heartbeat's crop time is anywhere from 6-12 weeks.

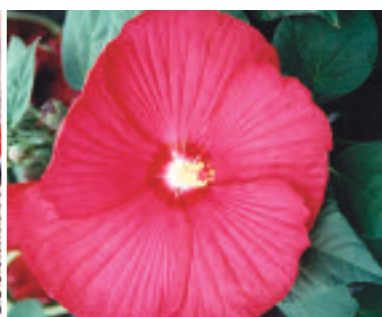
## IMPATIENS, HYBRID

The Butterfly series from Fischer USA is a new interspecific hybrid impatiens that makes a nice hanging basket. Butterfly's consistent trailing habit, no clumpy branches here, is really impressive. There are five colors in the series, Cherry, Deep Pink, Lavender, Lilac and Salmon with Eye (blooms a little earlier). The garden height is about 8-12 inches, with a width of 12-16 inches.

Florel can be used early to improve branching but is usually not needed. Some keys to success are to avoid water and heat stress when the plants are mature. Grow similarly as double impatiens or New Guinea impatiens. This new series generally doesn't need any pinching if the cuttings are compact and well branched. It will trail and cascade very well and not mound up.



'Piccolino Dark Red'



'Carafe Bordeaux'



'Heartbeat Orange'



Butterfly Series



'Kokomo Petite Salmon'





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### IMPATIENS, NEW GUINEA

This year, S&G Flowers made an interesting addition to Kokomo New Guinea impatiens. Complementing Kokomo XL, Kokomo Petite is just what it sounds like, small. It has small flowers and is more compact than the Kokomo, so it can be grown pot tight until one week before finish. Six colors are available: Orange, Rose, Salmon, Scarlet, Velvet Red and White. And with the high number of smaller flowers, the colors really stand out.

Unrooted cuttings, in 4- to 5-inch pots, take about nine weeks to finish. S&G informed us that they are working on even more colors.

### LANTANA

Florida Mound lantanas, from Grolink, are free flowering all summer long with a uniform growth habit and dark green foliage. Best of all, this series has a very nice controlled compact habit. These plants work nicely in the landscape, combination pots and baskets and are non-evasive, according to Grolink. There are three colors in series: Fuchsia, Orange and Red.

For finishing night temperatures should go no lower than 63° F with days at 75° F and above. Plants need to be fed with 20-10-20 at 250 ppm nitrogen, but use clear water every fourth irrigation to flush any salt build-up. One pinch is needed about 10 days after transplanting rooted cuttings, and Florel will promote extra branching but will delay flowering if applied later in the crop cycle. Growth regulator is not recommended by Grolink.

### LOBELIA

*‘Techno Blue’*. This new lobelia variety from Fischer USA really caught

our eyes because of its bright, true-blue flowers that completely covered the plant. When we saw it, it was a solid ball of blue, and Harvey Lang from Fischer said it had been that way for weeks.

*‘Techno Blue’* is very heat tolerant. The blooms will typically start at the end of the branch and move all the way up to the top, creating a flush of color all over the plant. Techno has been engineered for early flowering on a well-branched, compact, trailing plant. Techno has been bred to be a naturally controlled habit, so PGRs are not necessary. Pinching is recommended, by Fischer, to encourage basal branching, pinch 10-14 days after transplanting and for larger containers, pinch as needed to shape the plant. *‘Techno Blue’* is a fast grower that fills containers quickly. Garden height is about 8-10 inches with a trailing habit and a width of about 20-24 inches.

**Hot series.** There are two new color additions to the lobelia Hot series, bred by Westhoff in Germany, brought to the North American market by Cohen Propagation Nurseries. This series has five older colors and two new ones, *‘Hot Blue’* (dark blue) and *‘Hot Blue Eye’* (dark blue with white eye). These colors round out what is already an impressive series and make it one of the most complete and uniform on the market.

The concept of lobelia Hot is that they are very heat tolerant varieties that will not only survive the summer but will be in full bloom throughout the entire summer when in full sun. The plants can be produced in 6-inch pots, containers or baskets. *‘Hot White’*, *‘Hot Waterblue imp.’* and *‘Hot Blue’* are more compact and can also be produced in 4-inch pots.

### LEUCANTHEMUM



*‘Florida Mound Red’*



*‘Techno Blue’*



*‘Hot Blue’*



*‘Broadway Lights’*



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Leucanthemum 'Broadway Lights' from Proven Winners got a lot of talk during Pack Trials. The beautiful flowers start out bright yellow and fade to a nice vanilla color — a great new color for this crop. The flowers are huge, and the plant is sturdy. It is a profuse bloomer, allowing continuous blooms in three different colors at one time.

Timing is for early spring through fall finish. A 4- to 5-inch pot will finish in 6-8 weeks; in a 6-inch or gallon it will finish in 8-10 weeks; an 8-inch will finish in 8-10 weeks; and a 10- to 12-inch will finish in 10-12 weeks. One pinch two weeks after liner planting is recommended, but PGRs are not needed. Photoperiod can be manipulated for early flowering.

### NEMESIA

**Nemo series.** Nemo, a new nemesia series from Bodger Botanicals, may be the closest variety on the market to having a perfect upright mounding habit. Three colors make up the series: Rose, White and Deep Blue. Rose and Deep Blue are very fragrant, while White has no fragrance. Deep Blue also has a more trailing habit than the others.

Nemo works well in 4- and 6-inch production and in mixed containers. A 4-inch will finish in 7-8 weeks, a 6- to 12-inch will finish in 9-10 weeks. Night temperatures should be maintained at 50-55° F with a minimum day temperature of 55° F. Make sure to allow soil to dry out, as the root system will develop problems under continuous damp conditions. A soft pinch once the plant establishes after transplant is recommended.

**Serengeti series.** Serengeti is a new interspecific nemesia series from Selecta First Class. This will be the first unrooted interspecific series on the market. It is available in two growth habit types that include five mounding and six trailing (which are very prostrate) varieties. All of the varieties have large flowers and distinctive colors and are very early flowering. Serengeti works well for mixed baskets, containers and as mono-plantings. For this variety, Selecta will send the grower two cuttings for every one plant due to the small size of the cutting. It is recommended to use the cuttings together for a quicker finish.

There are a number of colors available in the

Serengeti series: Trailing Red, Trailing Yellow, Trailing Yellow with White, Trailing Apricot Pink, Trailing Sunset, Trailing White. The mounding varieties are Red, Cerise Red, Yellow, White and Yellow with White.

### OSTEOSPERMUM

The Astra osteospermum series is a really nice new series introduced to the North American market by Cohen Propagation Nurseries. Currently, there are six colors offered, with more in the works: Rose, Cream, Violet, White Imp., Pink Spoon and Deep Rose.

Astra is a naturally compact osteospermum, great for 4-inch production, which is why we wanted to let you know about it (see page 32 for more information). The flower size is medium, and plants will grow to about 8-12 inches. The varieties need a cold treatment to flower. The stock is from virus free, certified elite material.

### PENTAS

If you're a large grower, take note: The Bahama series (bred by Sakata) is a full bench run pentas. Many colors were bred, but Ecke Ranch opted to release four colors that were matched for timing and habit. Blush, Lavender, Pink and White retain their bright colors in full sun and work well in 4-inch production but also make a nice 1-gal. Bahamas finish quicker than seed varieties, according to Ecke

Bahama in a 4-inch at one per pot will finish in 9-11 weeks; a 6-inch with 1-2 per plants pot will finish in 8-10 weeks; and a 10-inch with 3-4 per plants pot will finish in 12 weeks. Average temperatures at 65-75° F are recommended. Pinch at two weeks and make sure the soil remains dry without letting plants wilt.

### PHYGELIUS RECTUS

The Funfare series of *Phygellus rectus* from Hishtil Nurseries features very compact free-flowering plants that are first-year flowering. There are five colors in the series: Coral, Cream, Orange, Wine and Yellow. Many people don't use this plant because there has not been a lot of breeding done on it, but Hishtil seems to be working hard to bring this plant out to the market, giving it the attention it deserves.

The plants have an abundance of flowers and



'Nemo Rose'



'Serengeti Yellow'



'Astra Cream'



are very compact with a nice green foliage. Plants grow to about 16 inches in height and 12 inches in diameter. Hishtil recommends using 5-inch containers with one plant per pot. Bloom time for Funfare is April until October, while planting time is February to October, making a crop time of 8-13 weeks. Typical growing temperature should be about 46° F for active growth, and only one pinch is required. The bottom line is that this series is a fuchsia-like plant that takes the summer heat.

**SALVIA**

‘Mystic Spires Blue’ salvia (*S. longispicata x farinacea*) from Ball FloraPlant is an ‘Indigo Spires’ type with a dwarf habit. One of the reasons we though it was a good variety is because it is extremely free flowering, with large, true-blue flowers that cover the plant all season.

‘Mystic Spires Blue’ reaches a mature height of 12-14 inches. Its naturally compact habit makes it ideal for 1-gal. perennial programs and requires no vernalization for flowering.

Ball recommends that ‘Mystic Spires Blue’ should be pinched 18-24 days after sticking, when roots are well-developed, to promote early branching and improve habit. Rooted cuttings should be ready for transplanting 24-28 days after sticking. ‘Mystic Spires Blue’ prefers a well-drained soil with as much air space as is practical. This salvia is responsive to B-Nine and Cycocel tank mix (spray) applied 1-3 times 10-14 days apart as needed.

**SCUTELLARIA**

This versatile scutellaria from Jaldety Plant Propagation Nursery will tolerate the heat as well as the cold. In fact, Jaldety states that it will flower from late spring until fall. The flowers are a vivid dark-blue, and plants have dark stems with shiny, dark green foliage.



‘Bahama Pink’



‘Funfare Coral’



‘Mystic Spires Blue’



‘Blue Bird’



This perennial, a small bush, branches well and has showy flowers that create a quality plant. 'Blue Bird' works well in rock gardens, borders, pots (6-10 inches), combinations and mass bedding. It has an upright, branching growth habit. It

has a growing height of about 16 inches with a hardiness of about 45-50° F. This plant should be pinched 1-2 times for shaping, and no PGRs are needed according to Jaldety.

## SNAPDRAGON

Fides North America is venturing into new territory with its Florini Amalia series. Though this snapdragon series is not Fides breeding, it does have an exclusive license. Eight varieties make up the mound-



**Top:** 'Amalia Orange'. **Bottom:** 'Violina Yellow'.

ing and very fragrant series: Pink, White, Cerise, Yellow, Orange, Dark Red, Duo Pink and Duo Purple. The Duos are best matched in habit. Fides recommends the vigorous series for gardens and terraces. The series flowers abundantly until late fall, and during the winter, it resists light frost.

Amalia is recommended for 4- to 6- inch production and combination baskets. It will finish in 8-10 weeks, depending on the light levels and cold induction. Pinching will allow for more branching.

## VIOLA

The Violina series from Jackson & Perkins in the Suntory Collection contains two colors: Blue and White, and Yellow. Blue and White's combination of lavender blue and white petals looks great in mixed containers. Yellow has a combination of medium to light yellow flowers and is slightly more vigorous than Blue and White. Being vegetative, plants are very vigorous, more trailing and contain more flowers than seed types. Plants trail completely over 10-inch basket.

Violina prefers low pH (5.5-6.2). It is not really recommended for 4-inch production but can be done with heavy PGRs. Day temperatures should be maintained at 65-75° F and night temperatures at 45-55° F. Heavy pinching is required: 3-5 pinches for 6-inch and

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