

Echinacea, Coleus and More from Terra Nova Nurseries

From striking echinacea to remarkable coleus, these trialed genetics showed exceptional performance across the country.



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I have had the opportunity to visit trial sites south to north for many years to evaluate new introductions for sales organizations and growers. The trials are very important for new variety evaluation, promotion and future sales. The trial site organizers and plant breeders are committed to the trial program and an incredible amount of organization and effort is required to create, grow and display the hundreds of varieties we see as we walk the trials. Performance information is used by growers and retailers to select the best varieties for their specific programs.

In its infancy, the trials consisted of primarily seed and vegetative introductions, but in the past few years we have seen an explosion of new perennial varieties and many are incorporated into the trial sites for evaluation.

GPN has asked me to write a monthly column on specific breeders' introductions and top-performing plants in trial sites around the country. My first article will focus on Terra Nova Nurseries. As one of the premier perennial breeding companies in the world, Terra Nova has been committed to the entry of new

perennial varieties and with the introduction of many new coleus series in the past two years we are seeing many new and exciting varieties with unique foliage and leaf shapes.

I attended trials at Costa Farms, Young's Plant Farm, Metrolina, Ohio State University, Colorado State University and C. Raker & Sons in order to evaluate each of these plants' performance.

I evaluate new introductions at the end of the Costa spring trial for heat tolerance, and this gives me perspective on what I see at the California Spring Trials display. What is my goal in visiting the trial? The purpose of the trial for me is four fold: Observation, Evaluation, Selection and Application.

The plant selection criteria include the following attributes: plant vigor, uniformity, floriferousness, flower vibrancy and saturation, foliage quality and heat tolerance.

Terra Nova introduced an extensive and exciting coleus program in 2014 with many series, collections, and stand-alone varieties with very unique leaf shapes, sizes and colors.

I will now focus on specific varieties that were outstanding in the multiple trials this summer, and in order to be a top performer they must demonstrate eye-catching qualities in many zones and different summer conditions.

Coleus 'Electric Slide'. A naturally self branching, compact,



Coleus 'Electric Slide'



Coleus 'Color Clouds Spicy'

non-fading variety. Ruffled green with striking red venation with a chartreuse background. This variety was striking in multiple trial sites.

Coleus 'Color Clouds Spicy'. This is the newest hanging basket type from Terra Nova. The series is characterized by a vigorous growth habit and larger leaves. This variety



Heucherella 'Plum Cascade'



Kniphofia 'Poco Red'



Echinacea 'Kismet Raspberry'



Brunnera macrophylla 'Alexander's Great'

demonstrated a harvest-gold pattern with magenta and hot pink splotches. This series has application in landscape beds as well with a superb spreading branching habit. 'Color Clouds Spicy' was trialed in beds and containers in full sun and shade with great adaptability.

Heucherella 'Plum Cascade'. New for 2017, the first purple-silver foliage heucherella has excellent dark purple, lobed leaves with an excellent trailing habit and non-fading foliage in the trials. This will be an excellent component variety for mixed containers.

Kniphofia Poco Series. Terra Nova introduced this new day length, dwarf series to complement the larger Popsicle series introduced in 2013. There are four colors in the series and the trials focused on red and yellow with outstanding results. In the trials, the plants demonstrated summer-long flowering and compact, vertical habit with large and vibrant flowers. The plants were extremely uniform with excellent dark foliage. The series is hardy to Zone 6 with application in containers and mass plantings. We have other series in the

industry, but this is the most uniform series I have seen; this was demonstrated in the Costa and Raker trials.

Echinacea Kismet series. The most impressive varieties in summer trials were definitely 'Kismet Raspberry' and intense 'Kismet Orange'. Terra Nova has undoubtedly the largest selection of echinacea in the industry and these two new introductions following years of breeding and trialing were so good! The plants are compact and uniform with dark green foliage. The flower canopy, flower count and presentation were

outstanding, and plants were floriferous with vibrant colors. Kismet is hardy to Zone 4 with exceptional bloom time and floriferousness at Colorado State University and Raker until late August.

Echinacea 'Cara Mia Rose'. This new variety was exceptional at Raker in late August. This plant had a tremendous crown count with dramatic floriferous anemone-shaped, raspberry pink flowers. It blooms early and continues until frost. This variety is hardy to Zone 4 and demands attention.

Brunnera macrophylla 'Alexander's Great'. Terra Nova devoted a full page to this variety in the 2017 catalog and this is for good reason. This was a very dramatic, vigorous variety with well-defined silver variegation in the Colorado State trial in early September. This plant is stunning and hardy to Zone 4. Excellent in mass planting and compared to 'Jack Frost', it has larger leaves and plant size.

Scropularia macrantha 'Cardinale Red'. I saw this genus for the first time at the Ohio State trial and later in the summer at the Raker trial. The common name is 'Red Birds in a Tree' and it originates from a wildflower in the mountains of New Mexico. This selection has white-lipped, red tubular flowers. This is a penstemon relative with drought, heat and clay tolerance. The mature height is 24 to 30 inches and hardy to Zone 6A. Based on trial performance, this plant has potential in mixed containers and landscapes. Terra Nova will offer liners in summer and fall of 2017.

I cannot finish this article without mentioning three Terra Nova leucanthemum varieties trialed at Raker in 2015. I visit this trial in late August, which gives me the opportunity to do an end-of-season performance evaluation. The three I want to discuss are Macaroon, Luna and Belgian Lace.

Leucanthemum 'Macaroon'. This variety formed a tight, well branched, mounded habit with double bicolor flowers forming a

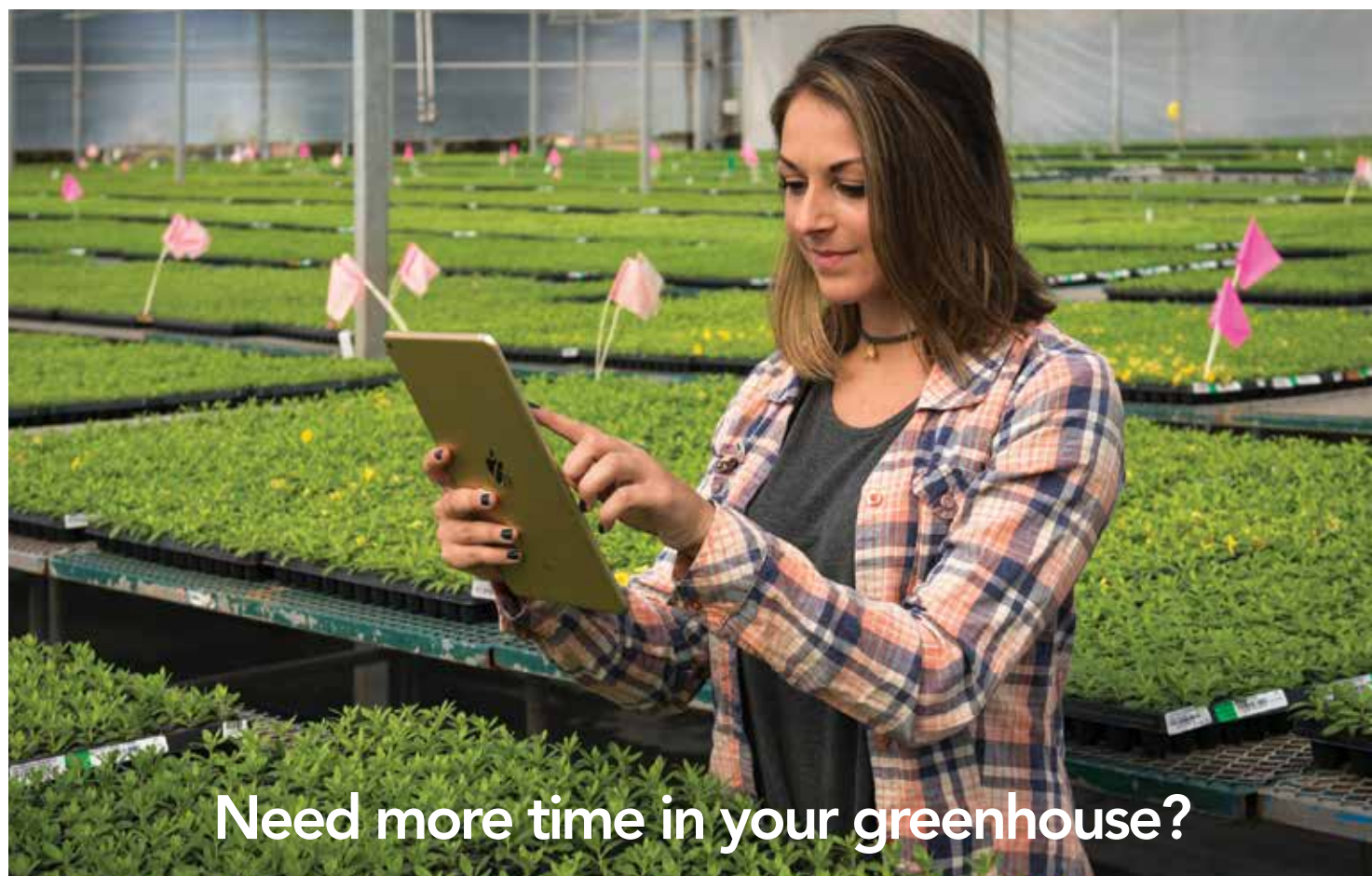
uniform flower canopy. The plant and flower presentation was so impressive, maturing at 18-24 inches and hardy to Zone 5.

Leucanthemum 'Luna'. Pompom-shaped, two-tone, double non-fading yellow flowers on excellent

dense, upright plants. Plants were floriferous this late with very little deadheading required. It is hardy to Zone 5.

Leucanthemum 'Belgian Lace'. This is Terra Nova's most compact Shasta Daisy with double white

flowers and yellow centers and fringed petal tips. This series matures at 12 to 14 inches and is hardy to Zone 5. The plants were extremely uniform with great potential as an edge or mass planting. [gpn](#)



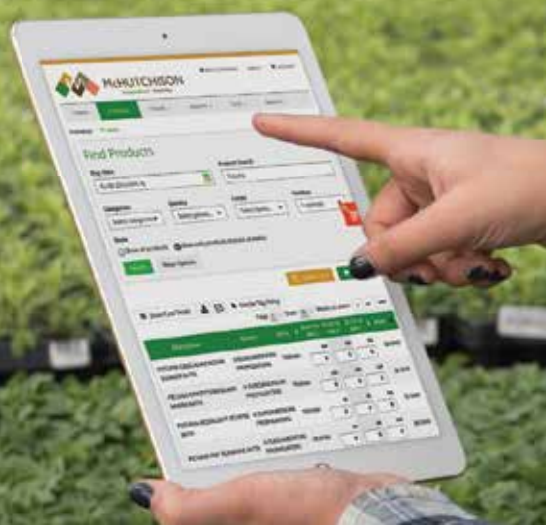
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