

Impressive Bidens, Calendula, Salvia and More from Kientzler

New outstanding genetics have recently been brought to the North American market and are now available as unrooted cuttings.

Kientzler has brought new genetics to the North American horticultural industry, specifically since 2014 when they began offering URC availability through Innova Plants and liners through root and sell producers.

The company has broadened its North American product offering and is participating in many trial sites throughout the United States. My focus this month is on new varieties that I have seen and evaluated from south to north the past two summers. As I explained last month, I begin my trial tours in April in the south and finish in Michigan in late August.

I will evaluate 10 genera of plants including, *Salvia farinacea*, *Salvia splendens*, heliotrope, nemesia, verbena, petunia, calibrachoa, calendula and bidens.

SALVIA FARINACEA CANDLE SERIES

The Candle series is available in four excellent colors: Midnight, Cobalt, White and Light. The most vibrant and eye-catching variety has been 'Midnight Candle'. It wows with its excellent branching, floriferousness and deep midnight blue flowers.

This series has been in numerous trials the past two years, including Metrolina Greenhouses, Young's Plant Farm, C. Raker & Sons and Welby Gardens. Consistency and uniformity have been the hallmark of this series in all trials from June through August.

Characterized by a compact and upright habit, Candle salvia has excellent basal branching and is extremely floriferous. It is a great summer performer — the series maintained its habit and flower vibrancy in both beds and containers as the season progressed. The series is gaining the respect of many growers and its market share is increasing.

SALVIA SPENDENS SAUCY SERIES

This series was introduced through Cultivaris in 2012 and is available from other URC suppliers and liner suppliers. We now have three colors in the series: Red, Purple and, for 2017, Coral. The entire series was on display at the Young's Plant Farm and Raker trials last summer, and the performance in June and in late August was so outstanding.

Saucy salvia has vibrant flowers with a homogenous flower habit. It matures at 2 to 3 feet with a large, sterile flower spike creating vibrant, eye-catching color from near and far. It makes an excellent



Salvia 'Midnight Candle'



Heliotrope 'Midnight Sky'

landscape plant for backgrounds. At retail, it is marketed in 5- to 6-inch containers and is added to mixed containers as a thriller.

I have seen very few splendens varieties match the color explosion of this series, and it has demonstrated this attribute in trials from south to north.

HELIOTROPE 'MIDNIGHT SKY'

This variety was introduced by Kientzler in 2014 and has been in southern trials and at Raker the past two seasons. The plant possesses the summer performance of many other varieties on the market and stands out in field and container trials with its vigor, dense branching habit, vanilla scent and deep violet/purple flower color. The flower color was non-fading in southern trials in June and late August trials in Michigan. Lastly, I was impressed with the dark foliage throughout the summer and the prolific flower canopy.

BIDENS FERULIFOLIA 'POPSTAR'

2016 was the year for new bidens introductions at California Spring Trials and in trial sites throughout the United States. We have many choices today from breeders across the spectrum,



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Bidens 'Popstar'

with attributes including bicolor flowers, flower size, compact habit and availability from assorted URC farms and liner suppliers.

Kientzler has three varieties, but 'Popstar' is the newest introduction bred by Psenner and was therefore entered in many 2016 summer trials. What set this variety apart was its large flower size and tight mounded habit. It was planted in container trials at Metrolina and field trials at Raker, and it demonstrated uniformity and floriferousness consistently. I did not see any difference in summer hardiness and heat tolerance compared to other series, but this variety did maintain its tight habit and large flowers.

CALIBRACHOA UNIQUE SERIES

The Unique series was bred by Birgit Hoffman of Kientzler and introduced in 2015. It was trialed in the Metrolina container trial in 2015



Petunia 'Veranda Magenta'

and in a sponsored Kientzler bed at Raker in 2015 and 2016.

The series consists of 11 colors including two new colors that were added for 2017 — Mango Punch and Blue Velvet. This is a day length neutral series except white.

In container trials at Metrolina and Raker, the plants were characterized by compact growth habit, short internodes and uniformity. The three eye-catching colors at Metrolina were Golden Yellow, White and Lilac. At Raker, Lavender, Golden Yellow and Dark Pink were noteworthy with a profuse flower canopy.

PETUNIA VERANDA SERIES

This series was bred by David Kerley and introduced by Kientzler in 2015. The series consists of 11 colors and was in the container trial at Metrolina in 2015 and Raker in 2015 and 2016.



Verbena 'Vepita Fire Red'

The series is characterized by a compact growth habit, large flower and excellent flower canopy. Only three colors were in the Metrolina trial — Magenta, Hot Pink and White — and all three demonstrated extremely good flower power and compact habit.

Raker trialed eight colors in containers and all colors were extremely uniform, with a tight growth habit. The outstanding colors in this trial were Hot Pink, Dark Blue and White. Based on trial performance in the south and Michigan, the series demonstrated excellent heat tolerance.

VERBENA VEPITA SERIES

This cut-leaf Verbena series was introduced in 2015 and was in Metrolina and Raker trials in 2015 and 2016. The Metrolina trial last June consisted of the largest hanging verbena trial I have ever seen. This included more than



'Trio Mio Tweety Pie'



Calendula 'Power Daisy'



Nemesia 'Nessie Plus Orange'

10 seed and vegetative varieties and plant performance was excellent across many colors.

The Vepita series was bred by Birgit Hoffman and consists of 14 colors. I have seen the varieties the past two trial seasons and notable attributes include uniformity, excellent heat tolerance, attractive mounded flower canopy and even in late August in Michigan very little incidence of mildew.

This homogenous habit and floriferousness was consistent in baskets and containers at both sites. The striking colors were the following:

Metrolina container trial: White, Pink, Hot Pink, Blue Violet, Dark Red and Fire Red.

Metrolina Verbena basket trial: Fire Red, Scarlet and Magenta. The most outstanding color in both trials was Fire Red, an excellent deep vibrant color.

The trial also consisted of hanging basket designer mixes including Ball FloraPlant MixMasters, Syngenta Kwik Kombos, Dümmen Orange's Confetti Garden, Selecta Trixis, Danziger Mixis, Volmary Trios, Sakata and Westflowers combos and Kientzler Trio Mios. I saw many top-performing combinations, which I will discuss in future articles, but the most eye-catching Trio Mios included Tweety Pie, Incense and Zumba.

The Raker trial consisted of a Kientzler bed with containers, baskets and landscape beds. The most floriferous and homogenous colors included Fire Red, White, Magenta and Frosted Pink.



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CALENDULA 'POWER DAISY'

This new variety of calendula was introduced last year at California Spring Trials and was in many trials last summer including Welby, Metrolina and Raker. Many other calendula varieties were introduced at CAST, so this was an important variety to enter the trials to compare and contrast.

We are all familiar with this genus that is used in early-season programs; it is frost and drought tolerant and day length neutral. What sets this new selection apart is its exceptional heat tolerance, tight branching, vibrancy, sterile double flowers and dense flower canopy. It was flowering profusely at Metrolina in June, Welby in early August and Raker in late August.

'Power Daisy' has excellent application for early season sales in baskets or 6-inch containers and for fall planting in landscapes and containers.

NEMESIA BABY CAKES AND NESSIE SERIES

The last two series I would like to discuss are nemesia Baby Cakes and Nessie. Both are not new series but have been in various trials the past two summers. We have many series to choose from in URC and liner form from many different suppliers so it is important to discuss the genera.

Baby Cakes is an excellent compact series with extremely vibrant flowers, available in five colors, four solid colors with yellow eye and Little Orange with orange and yellow bicolor flower. The series demonstrated uniformity and eye catching colors in the container trials and is utilized in quart and mixed container programs.

Nessie Plus is the most vigorous series in Kientzler's nemesia assortment with 11 unique colors. The new Plus series appeared to have slightly better summer performance than Baby Cakes. The most outstanding colors have been Berry Delight, Yellow, Orange and the new Soft Pink. The best application for this series appears to be early season mixed containers and baskets. 

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