



SUMMER SURVIVORS in the Southern Plant Trials

These distinctive and resilient new annual introductions for 2020 were trial standouts in the South.



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In early June, I attended the Southern Plant Trials in Alabama, Georgia and North Carolina, and I returned in mid-August to evaluate the top new performers following two months of continued high temperatures and humidity.

What am I looking for in a plant in late summer? The plants I have highlighted consistently demonstrated the following attributes in multiple trials: uniformity, durability, flower stability, color vibrancy, color uniqueness and floriferousness.

It is imperative to select varieties that manifest the qualities listed above and provide the consumer with relatively maintenance-free, colorful plants that fulfill their gardening needs. Breeder advancements and

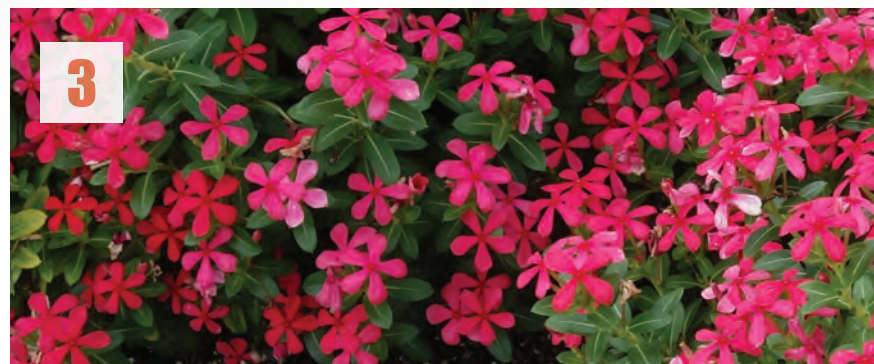
improvements for the grower, retailer and consumer are moving in the direction of low maintenance and prolonged flowering.

Due to the proliferation of new introductions in all plant classes, it is crucial to choose a series or variety that is programmable in production and provides season-long performance for the consumer. It is a very exciting time for the horticultural industry with a plethora of outstanding plant choices available.

1. CALIBRACHOA 'MINIFAMOUS NEO DOUBLE ORANGETASTIC'

Selecta One

Last year Selecta One introduced Uno Double PinkTastic, which was a FleuroStar winner and one of the top performers in the 2018 summer trials and grower programs this spring. Neo OrangeTastic for 2020 has a more semi-trailing habit, similar flower pattern, more vigor with larger flowers, and the same outstanding garden performance. The double flowers are unique with a red center and creamy yellow margins unlike any bicolor calibrachoa in the market and, most importantly, will maintain the double-flowering development and maturity under extremely high temperatures throughout the summer. This variety will have excellent application in mixed containers and baskets.



2. CALIBRACHOA 'CANDY SHOP CANDY BOUQUET IMPROVED'

Westhoff

Candy Bouquet was the first introduction in the Candy Shop series in 2015 and was followed by five additional colors. The improvements of Candy Bouquet include a more compact growth habit, more floriferousness and greater flower stability. This was a standout in the landscape beds with the bicolor light yellow and red starburst flower pattern. This is a unique and eye-catching series with bright fluorescent bicolor flowers, semi trailing habit, early flowering and excellent summer performance throughout the country. It is outstanding in mixed baskets and combination containers.

3. CATHARANTHUS 'SOIRÉE KAWAII RED SHADES'

Suntory

This series was introduced in 2015 and is slowly increasing market share as growers learn how to grow and time these five varieties. Consumers and landscapers appreciate the long season performance in containers and beds. The landscape industry, particularly in the South, is seeing the benefits of low maintenance, extreme heat and drought tolerance, and carefree flowering through early fall. What the series may lack in flower size, it more than makes up for with a prodigious flower canopy. This series continues to maintain a mounded habit with prolific flowering late in the summer and early fall. Five colors are available for 2020, including Red Shades, which did not make the new catalog. Grower information is available on the Suntory website, and Four Star has added the series to the Proven Select program for 2020.

4. CUPHEA 'FLORIGLORY CORAZON'

Westhoff

The FloriGlory series debuted in 2016 with seven varieties, which included two types: the compacts, and the vigorous, larger flowering varieties. Corazon was introduced for 2020 as more compact with stacked flowers and extremely free flowering, and this was evident in the trials. The light violet flowers were positioned

above the foliage to create a colorful canopy. This will be a late spring, early summer variety in the northern regions due to the high temperature and light requirements for bulking and flowering, and it was trialed in the south this spring and summer with outstanding results.

5. GAILLARDIA HEAT IT UP SERIES

Proven Winners

I saw this new vegetative annual gaillardia series comprised of Scarlet and Yellow in multiple trial sites before visiting Metrolina in mid-August. In every location

the plants were consistently free flowering and vigorous. The two varieties are extremely heat tolerant, and flower production is so heavy that deadheading is unnecessary. Scarlet is a more traditional gaillardia color, and Yellow is bright and vibrant. Yellow



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was more floriferous in every trial but the multitude of flowers on each was impressive. This series will have application in beds and large containers. The plants mature at 24 inches with a spread of 36 inches and will provide season-long color.

6. GERANIUM 'CALLIOPE LARGE ORANGE SPLASH'

Syngenta Flowers

Syngenta Flowers continues to add new colors to the Calliope Large series and for 2020 has added Coral and Orange. The plants were durable and vigorous as expected from this series, and the new colors manifested a richness and brightness that differentiated them in the trial. I was particularly impressed with Orange Splash because the saturation and vitality of the color was distinctive and garden performance was incomparable. This variety should be in every spring geranium program.

7. PETUNIA 'DEKKO BLUE IMPROVED'

Syngenta Flowers

This series has been in multiple trials every year since its introduction, and it continues to impress with improved uniformity, weather tolerance and a multitude of medium-sized flowers. This series has been under the radar with so much petunia competition, but it is gaining traction in the industry for its versatility in containers, baskets, and landscape beds and, most importantly, its summer performance throughout the country. There are three new colors for 2020: Deep Lavender Vein, White Improved and Blue Improved, which was one of the most floriferous petunias in Alabama and North Carolina. The bright blue flowers were impactful and striking. There are 10 colors in the series, including bicolors and solids. Syngenta is gradually moving more Dekkos into the Kwik Kombos recipes because of compatibility and performance.

8. PETUNIA 'SUPERTUNIA MINI VISTA INDIGO IMPROVED'

Proven Winners

The petunia Supertunia Charms have been renamed Mini Vistas, which is fitting for such an outstanding

series. The Vistas are always at the top of the list when it comes to summer performance and the now renamed Mini Vistas have matched them in every location since their introduction many years ago. There are seven colors in the series, and Indigo Improved is the new introduction for 2020. In bed and container trials the prolific flower quantity, short internodes, and the indigo flowers transitioning to purple were stunning. In addition, this is the earliest flowering variety in the Mini Vista series. All the varieties have outstanding applicability in baskets, mixed container and landscape beds.

9. PETUNIA 'WAVE CARMINE VELOUR'

PanAmerican Seed

This new spreading Wave petunia is an All-America Selections winner for 2019. The flower color is a hot carmine-cherry, and it manifested that color in the large 20-inch basket trial at Young's Plant Farm in Alabama. Only a few basket varieties demonstrated the vigor, heat tolerance, flower stability and colorful canopy of this new variety. The original spreading series is comprised of six colors and continues to be utilized in landscapes, large baskets and containers.

10. IMPATIENS SUNSTANDING JAZZY SERIES

Dümmen Orange

This new sub series for 2020 offers two vivacious variegated varieties, Coral and Hot Pink. There are numerous adjectives to describe these new plants including exuberant, tropical, vivid, striking and bold. They were in multiple trials in beds and containers and maintained non-fading two-toned foliage and intense flower color. They will have outstanding application in large combination baskets, containers, and landscape beds in sun or shade.

11. IMPATIENS 'SUNPATIENS COMPACT ORCHID BLUSH'

Sakata

This series needs no introduction, and Sakata has expanded the compact color palette for 2020 with Orchid Blush.

The brightness of the two-toned flowers and the prodigious flower canopy were eye-popping in multiple trials in beds or containers. This variety will have tremendous application in mixed combinations and landscape beds in sun or shade.

12. ZINNIA 'ZESTY PURPLE'

PanAmerican Seed

This new midsized seed series of five colors exhibited multiple attributes in the southern trials. The plants were durable, upright and vigorous. The flowers were completely double, vibrant and

nonfading. The color saturation was impressive. Purple was my favorite because of the unique intense deep color, and it was also the highest rated zinnia in the trial. The series will mature at 18 to 24 inches. *gpn*



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