

# RESILIENT Summer Designer Combinations

*Few segments of the home gardening industry have seen the growth and success of designer mixes. Breeders have and continue to work to introduce recipes featuring vivid colors, strong flower coverage, weather tolerance and component balance.*



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**T**he introduction of breeder recipes in 2010 was a revolutionary, innovative and timely moment for the horticultural industry. Advancements in genetics in many classes created a plethora of varieties with matched vigor, uniform timing and, most importantly, component balance to provide professionally designed recipes for consumers in all regions of the country.

The impact of these combinations in the marketplace has been staggering, and they now are a ubiquitous and significant production element in wholesale and retail programs. We must also note the immeasurable contribution of global flower breeders to formulate the idea, create recipes, and test and introduce them on a consistent basis.

I have promoted designer combinations as a salesman, evaluated them in summer trials since their inception, and followed the production and retail sales of various programs. Unquestionably, the sell through due to the creativity and performance of the recipes is immense. I visit multiple trial sites in all regions in mid to late August to evaluate and select the designer mixes that stand the test of time throughout the summer and manifest the attributes of flower coverage, balance, and the resilience to withstand heat, humidity and rain throughout the summer and early fall. I selected many current and 2020 top-performing introductions from Southern and Northern trials. Based on their summer performance, these creative recipes deserve your consideration in future spring programs

## 1. 'MIXMASTER SPRINKLES ON TOP'

Ball FloraPlant

This was one of the top-performing combination baskets in the Mast Young Plants trial in late August. It is one of the mono species sun combinations in the MixMaster portfolio. This MixMaster, with the primary colors of Cabaret Bright Red, Deep Blue and Deep Yellow, was eye catching and vibrant.

It was introduced in 2014 and continues to be a top selling recipe. The Cabarets are characterized by a uniform rounded habit, consistent flower size, garden performance and, most impressively, stacked branching with closely spaced flowers creating a floriferous canopy. There are 22 Cabaret varieties including solids, bicolors and stars. This includes four new and four improved for 2020. The Cabarets are a significant component in many MixMaster Sun combos.

## 2. 'KWIK KOMBO BLUE LIGHTNING MIX IMPROVED'

Syngenta Flowers

This new late season designer mix was in multiple trials and manifested uniformity, component balance, exceptional heat tolerance and floriferousness. This is a duo mix of lantana 'Bandana Gold' and scaevola 'Bombay Dark Blue'. This





combination of complementary colors creates vibrancy and will flourish throughout the summer and early fall. There are eight new late season Kwik Kombos, which brings the total to 15. The four classes in these recipes includes different combinations of lantana Bandana, lantana Landscape Bandana, angelonia Carita and scaevola Bombay.

### 3. 'TRIXI OLD GLORY 20'

*Selecta One*

Selecta One introduced 13 new mono combinations for 2020 including Old Glory 20. This energetic recipe comprised of 'MiniFamous Neo Dark Blue', 'Neo Vampire' and 'Neo White' was extremely well balanced through the late summer season with vigor, excellent color saturation with stacked internodes and a tight, dense canopy. The colors were vibrant, floriferous and non fading. 'Neo Dark Blue' is new for 2020 and 'Neo Vampire Red' was one of the darkest red calibrachoas in multiple trials last summer.

### 4. 'PLUG+PLAY SEASIDE DELIGHT'

*PanAmerican Seed*

PanAmerican Seed entered many summer Plug+Play combinations in the trials last summer. This seed combination of vinca 'Valiant Orchid' and angelonia 'Serena Blue' demonstrated outstanding heat tolerance, balance and continuous color. This combination manifested the vigor, branching and floriferousness of the vinca and the durability, upright architecture and enduring summer color of the angelonia. It created a tone on tone recipe that was eye catching through late summer and early fall. PanAmerican Seed offers Plug+Play combinations for multiple seasons including early spring, spring/summer, summer and summer/fall combining seed annuals, vegetables and perennials.

### 5. 'CONFETTI GARDEN PURPLE HALO MIX'

*Dümmen Orange*

This designer mix was a top performer in late summer for its rounded habit and bright, yet subtle, palette of petunia 'Potunia Purple



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## VAUGHN'S VIEW

Halo', verbena 'Empress Flair Blue Charme' and calibrachoa 'Aloha Royal White'. This is an early-flowering classic combination with purple and blue tone on tone of the petunia and verbena. The reflective white margin and violet/purple blue center of the petunia and the striking light purple florets and bright white eye of the verbena was eye catching. The calibrachoa with the yellow center added a nice complementary component. The three elements were well balanced and positioned beautifully on top of the canopy.

### 6. 'KWIK KOMBO LIFE IS A HIGHWAY MIX'

*Syngenta Flowers*

This single species combination includes calibrachoa 'Cabrio Amethyst', calibrachoa 'Eclipse Lilac' and calibrachoa 'Cabrio Grape'. This is one of five new Cabrio Kwik Kombos for 2020. They were entered in multiple sites last summer and demonstrated impressive uniformity and late season flowering. This compact, day length neutral series was introduced in 2018. This multi colored early season Kwik Kombo demonstrated a controlled yet trailing growth habit, uniform timing, excellent flower size, minimal fading and superior heat tolerance in late season trials in the South. It has multiple applications in quarts, baskets and combinations. The Cabrio series is a significant introduction to the Syngenta portfolio and additional colors are coming in the near future.

### 7. 'KWIK KOMBO ROYAL DUCHESS MIX'

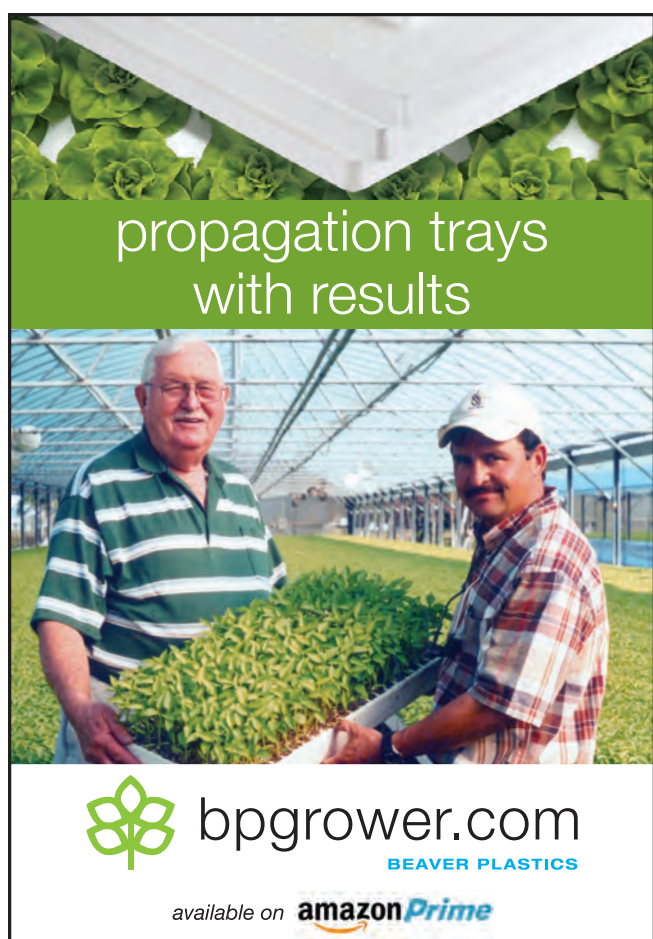
*Syngenta Flowers*

This mix is one of 34 Kwik Kombo midseason combinations available for 2020. It is a new introduction combining petunia 'Sanguna Mega Purple', verbena 'Lanai White' and petunia 'Sanguna Rose Vein'. The flower timing, component balance, heat tolerance and flower coverage were impressive in late August.

### 8. 'SUNGLASSES'

*Proven Winners*

I attended the Four Star trial in late August to evaluate the new and current Proven Winner annuals



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in containers and landscape beds. This trial is outstanding, colorful, and offers the customer the opportunity to see varieties utilized in many applications. There are five national recipes for 2020: 'Gloria Rose', 'Storm Shadow', 'Neptune', 'Fruit Salad' and 'Sunglasses'. My favorite was the 'Sunglasses' recipe comprised of calibrachoa 'Superbells Yellow', petunia 'Supertunia Mini Vista Hot Pink' and petunia 'Supertunia Lovie Dovie'. All three varieties have been high performers for many years, and in this recipe provided a prolific flower count, vibrant color and exceptional summer performance through early fall. The Proven Winner national marketing program for these recipes is incomparable.

### 9. 'MIXMASTER RUSH HOUR'

*Ball FloraPlant*

This 2020 monochromatic combination of petunias 'ColorRush Pink Vein' and 'ColorRush Pink' demonstrated exceptional heat and humidity tolerance, flower stability, vigor and floriferousness in the Southern and Northern trials in late August and September. This is the most vigorous petunia series in the Ball FloraPlant portfolio and has multiple applications in 12-inch or larger containers and landscape sites. Since its introduction in 2017, this has been one of the most durable and resilient petunia series in all regional trials. The series now comprises seven varieties including four new colors: Merlot Star, Purple, Watermelon Red and White. The new introductions matched the series in vigor, flower size, color saturation and summer performance.

### 10. 'MIXMASTER BLOOMS OF ALLEGIANCE'

*Ball FloraPlant*

I saw this multiliner designer mix in multiple trials, and it demonstrated considerable balance, floriferousness and heat tolerance. This is one of the many heat-loving combos in the MixMaster palette. This recipe combines angelonia 'Angelmist Spreading White', lantana 'Lucky Red' and scaevola 'Brilliant'. All three components are proven performers in monocultural programs and in

multiliner recipes. The angelonia is used in many of the heat-loving combinations because it provides a unique profile, exceptional summer color and five assorted colors to mix and match. The Lucky series is an integral part of many spring lantana programs and the

scaevola is medium vigorous with exceptional branching.

### 11. 'CONFETTI WATER WHEEL MIX IMPROVED'

*Dümmen Orange*

This designer mix was colorful, durable, and stunning in the Lucas

trial in late August. The recipe includes the components lobelia 'Bella Marie', calibrachoa 'Aloha Kona Mango' and calibrachoa 'Aloha Kona Hot Pink'. The varieties were floriferous and well balanced, and manifested outstanding heat tolerance. This is one of seven



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Confetti Garden mixes that include lobelia Bellas. This is listed as an early season mix, but it flourished throughout the summer.

## 12. 'TRIXI GEISHA GIRL 20'

*Selecta One*

This multi-species recipe is new for 2020 and is one of six in the pink toned Trixi collection. This

was a top performer in the Mast Young Plants combination trial. It comprises dynamic varieties from three classes: calibrachoa 'MiniFamous Neo Salmon Pink+ Eye', petunia 'Headliner Red' and verbena 'Lascar Red Rose'. This mix manifested balance, timing, heat tolerance, texture, and color stability. This is an eye-

catching recipe with long lasting performance.

## 13. 'LADY LIBERTY'

*Proven Winners*

This is a new combination for 2020 and was one of the best late summer performers in the Metrolina trial. It is a mix of the classic scaevola 'Whirlwind White',

petunia 'Supertunia Royal Velvet' and calibrachoa 'Superbells Double Ruby'. The saturated colors of red, white and blue were vivid and vibrant, creating a well-balanced and dramatic combination. I highlighted the stunning durability and color retention of 'Superbells Double Ruby' in an article last year, and 'Supertunia Royal Velvet' is one of the top sellers in the Proven Winners petunia portfolio.

## 14. 'PLUG+PLAY CORAL LIGHTS'

*PanAmerican Seed*

PanAmerican offers 80 Plug+Play annual, perennial and herb combinations for 2020, and 10 of the annual selections were in the Raker-Roberta's trial. Coral Lights is listed as a spring combination but continued to perform through late August in this trial. The components include petunias 'Easy Wave Yellow' and 'Shock Wave Coral Crush' and euphorbia 'Glitz'. The contrasting color of the Coral Crush with the Yellow was dramatic and bold and the euphorbia displayed sufficient vigor and heat tolerance to match the petunias. The Plug+Play combinations are rigorously tested before introduction to the industry. They are programmable and available as seeded plugs.

## 15. 'TRIXI DOUBLE DATE 20'

*Selecta One*

I visited the Penn State trial the last week of August to evaluate late season plant performance. The trial consisted of over 100 combinations from multiple breeders. This new Trixi mono combination for 2020 demonstrated the strength of a single class. The components include calibrachoa 'MiniFamous Neo Double Amethyst', 'Uno Double Lemon' and the new 'Uno Double Red' (which replaced Double Magenta) to create a vibrant and colorful combination of primary colors. The color saturation, balance, uniformity, heat tolerance and floriferousness were exceptional. [gpn](#)

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