

# BOLD AND BRIGHT

## 2021 ANNUAL INTRODUCTIONS

*These new introductions capture the summer magic at high altitude.*



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I attended the Colorado State University flower trial the last week of July this year. This was the 26th year of the summer trial, and 22 international breeding companies participated with over 1,000 plant varieties in the sun and shade beds and containers. I have visited this trial for many years and always look forward to walking and evaluating plants in such a beautiful setting on the university campus.

This trial site is unique because of high altitude, intense solar radiation, low humidity levels, and wide day and night temperature fluctuations. These climate conditions impact the hue, value and chroma of flowers resulting in intense colors.

I have focused many previous articles on color saturation in plants, specifically vivid and bright primary and secondary colors that have an impact in the trial and on emotions. The varieties I chose for this article manifested exceptional vigor, floriferousness, color dynamics and vibrancy. They attracted the eye as soon as you entered the trial.

The new introductions I highlight here were in beds and containers. I returned to the trial in mid-September before the first frost to evaluate genera that were immature in the July visit and to judge the entire trial on summer performance. Many of the top selections will be in future articles.

### 1. BRACTEANTHA 'GRANVIA GOLD'

*Suntory Flowers*

This is the first time I have written about a stand alone bracteantha, but 'Granvia Gold' deserves consideration in spring and fall programs. It was available this year on a trial basis and was an exceptional performer in 2019 summer trials. The literature focuses on this supersized variety, and it lives up to the hype. This plant is an attention grabber in any setting with large, bright yellow, papery inflorescences on strong, upright stems maturing at 18 to 36 inches. Production application includes 6-, 8-, 10- and 12-inch containers and as a thriller in combinations. It is extremely heat tolerant and was a top performer in the Young's Plant Farm trial in Alabama last year, the top performer in the Plantpeddler trial this year, and maintained its floriferous habit in multiple trials I visited in mid-August in Michigan and the East Coast. 'Granvia Gold' will garner many awards for excellence in containers and beds.

### 2. CALIBRACHOA 'CHA-CHA FROSTY LEMON'

*Ball FloraPlant*

This new series is more vigorous than the Cabaret series and comprises five colors including two multicolored varieties, Diva Hot Pink and Diva Apricot, as well as Tangerine, Deep Blue and Frosty Lemon, which was one of the most striking calibrachos in the trial. This variety has

deep yellow centers with pure white petals, which give it the brightness that will accent other varieties in mixed containers. The series is vigorous, uniform and mounded with large flowers. Application will include large mixed and mono containers and hanging baskets.

### 3. CALIBRACHOA 'CALITASTIC RASPBERRY'

*Westhoff*

Calitastic may be the most underutilized calibrachoa series in the extensive Westhoff portfolio, which includes Calibasket, Candy Shop, Chameleon, Celebration and Caliplosion. The Calitastic series, comprising 20 varieties, has been in summer trials and in spring production programs the past few years and offers a wide range of colors including stars, solids and bicolors. Five colors were added for 2021: Aubergine Star, Blood Orange, Golden Sun, Orange Improved and Raspberry, which I highlight because of its unique, saturated raspberry color and controlled growth habit. I have been impressed with the uniformity, earliness and tight internodes of the entire series. Production application includes quarts, mixed containers and hanging basket combinations.

### 4. COLEUS 'COLORBLAZE ROYALE PINEAPPLE BRANDY'

*Proven Winners*

The coleus world continues to expand each year with new forms, vibrant hues



and undertones, and distinctive textures. Proven Winners has introduced Royale Pineapple Brandy to the Royale collection. This variety demonstrated outstanding performance in field and container trials this summer. What sets it apart

from many coleus varieties is the upright architecture, short internodes and layered foliage. These attributes were on display in the Colorado trial and other regional trials. I had the opportunity to grow this variety in my suburban trial in 18-inch

containers. I used it as a thriller because of its compactness and tight branching. It retained the chartreuse foliage with burgundy bronze stems and margins with no flower development. This is one of the most well-branched coleus varieties in the market and



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will have production application in quart and mixed containers in 2021. For the consumer, it will be a versatile coleus for sun or shade in large patio containers and landscape beds.

## 5. DAHLIA 'DALAYA RASPBERRY'

*Selecta One*

My selection of 'Dalaya Raspberry' was based on the uniformity, flower size, colorful canopy and, most importantly, the raspberry flower color, which was unique in the dahlia trial. This midsize Dalaya series consists of 14 varieties with dark green foliage, large flowers and a diverse color range of bicolors, solids and white-tipped varieties. Grower production programs focus on a particular series for specific programs, and my emphasis in this article and many others where I have highlighted dahlias, is first and foremost dynamic flower colors that have retail appeal. The Selecta One dahlia program offers four distinct series based on mature size: the compact Dahlietta, midsize City Lights and Dalaya and the large Venti.

## 6. DAHLIA 'LABELLA GRANDE PURPLE IMPROVED'

*Beekenkamp*

Colorado State has one of the most extensive regional dahlia trials, and this year over 60 varieties represented by five international flower breeders were on display in trial beds. The environment provides ideal growing conditions for foliage quality and specifically flower development and coloration. The attributes we are looking for in a dahlia are flower presentation (above the foliage canopy), habit, durability, flower stability, uniqueness and weather tolerance. The Labella Grande series comprises 11 varieties with large formal decorative flowers. Grande Purple was one of the most colorful dahlias in the trial, with large true purple flowers, strong stems, excellent branching and no flower flecking or fading.

## 7. PETUNIA 'CRAZYTUNIA BLACKBERRY JAM'

*Westhoff*

Blackberry Jam was one of the most distinctive Crazytunias in the trial, as well as Cosmic Pink, which I have also highlighted in this article. The Blackberry subseries includes Blackberry Cheesecake, Blackberry Mojito and now Blackberry Jam for 2021. They have similar colors and growth habits with different multicolored petals. One characteristic of the Crazytunias in general is transitional color patterns. This is predicated on genetics and environmental conditions. What impressed me about Blackberry Jam is the striking dark magenta (almost black) center transitioning to a light magenta and cream margin. This is the latest generation of Crazytunias with a more controlled and mounded growth habit and prolific flowering covering the foliage canopy. This variety will have outstanding application in designer mixes and hanging baskets with superb retail appeal.

## 8. PETUNIA 'CRAZYTUNIA COSMIC PINK'

*Westhoff*

There are over 50 varieties in the Crazytunia collection, and 15 were entered in the Colorado State trial this year. There were many varieties I could have selected for this article, but one variety that caught my attention and will have excellent retail appeal is Cosmic Pink, with its striking and eye-catching deep burgundy petals and deep pink margins transitioning as the flowers matures to lighter tones. Petunia 'Crazytunia Cosmic Purple' was introduced last year and performed exceptionally in spring and summer trials, and the new Cosmic Pink has replicated this performance in trials this spring and summer. The Cosmic petunias are mutations of Black Mamba, which is the most popular petunia and one of the best garden performers for heat tolerance in the Crazytunia collection. We have



an incredible range of colors and patterns to choose from, and it is impractical to offer all the colors in a spring program, but this subseries offers a diverse range of patterns for consideration in assorted spring programs including quarts, mixed containers and baskets.

## 9. PETUNIA 'SURFINIA PURPLE STARSHINE'

*Suntory Flowers*

Suntory introduced two new novelty petunias for 2021, 'Surfinia Heartbeat Improved' and 'Surfinia Purple Starshine'. Both varieties were in trial beds flowering prolifically with colorful canopies. Heartbeat has been improved for habit and flower stability. Purple Starshine was

particularly colorful and vivacious with a well-defined and striking bicolor pattern. This variety offers the heat tolerance of the Surfinia series with vigor, a mounded but spreading habit, and a prolific flower canopy. This will make an outstanding component in mixed containers and baskets.

## 10. LANTANA 'GEM COMPACT PINK OPAL'

*Danziger*

Danziger has made swift and significant introductions in lantana beginning with the Santana basket series in 2014, and last year with the introduction of the Gem and Gem Compact series. There are three new Gem Compact



introductions for 2021: Rose Quartz, White Sapphire and Pink Opal. This series is characterized by earliness, compactness, excellent color retention, minimal cycling and vibrant colors. Pink Opal was one of the most recognizable in the lantana trial, with a striking inflorescence of rich yellow inner umbels and dark pink or magenta outer umbels. Production application includes quarts and mixed combinations.

### 11. PETUNIA 'DURABLOOM HOT PINK'

*Dümmen Orange*

It is remarkable for a series to perform so consistently in regional trials throughout the



summer; however, the interspecific DuraBloom petunia series has invariably demonstrated outstanding attributes including heat tolerance, durability, large flowers, and a prolific flower canopy in multiple trials including Costa Farms, Young's Plant Farm and Colorado State University. This is a vigorous, early blooming series with striking and highly saturated flowers. There were over 70 assorted petunia varieties in the trial beds, and 'DuraBloom Hot Pink' was immediately recognizable with its vivid and lustrous hot pink flowers. This vigorous interspecific series was developed for landscape application, large baskets and patio containers. There are seven colors

for 2021, and the new introductions for 2022 are Red, Yellow and White.

### 12. SALVIA FARINACEA 'WHITE FLAME'

*Ball FloraPlant*

The plethora of new salvia introductions in the last five years is impressive. The gene pool is diverse, and within the ornamental industry we have a minimum of 10 species of salvia and scores of diverse varieties available. The versatility of this genus has created multiple spring production and consumer applications. This genus is eco friendly, and many varieties are long blooming, heat tolerant and durable. They are available in many sizes, flower forms and colors, and are a magnet for bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Ball FloraPlant offers an extensive assortment of salvia including 'Mysty', 'Mystic Spires', 'Black & Bloom', 'Black & Blue', 'Purple & Bloom', 'Roman Red' and 'White Flame' for 2021. This is the first white in their assortment, and it has manifested outstanding color, vigor and upright architecture. The white inflorescence rising above the foliage canopy creates eye-catching appeal and long distance color. This variety will have tremendous application in large patio containers and landscape beds.

### 13. PETCHOA 'SUPERCAL ROYAL RED'

*Sakata*

Sakata introduced two standard varieties for 2021, Rose and Royal Red. I highlighted Rose in my spring article on top performing annuals in the Costa Farms trial in Florida, and the new Royal Red — which replaces Crimson Red — is a true red and manifested the most intense and highly saturated red flowers in the Colorado State trial. There are now 15 varieties in the standard assortment, and this new Royal Red augments the series. This interspecific series provides superior performance in containers and beds with strong rain recovery, self cleaning, heat tolerance, flower stability and floriferousness. This variety, like the series, can be grown in quart production in addition to

mixed containers and baskets. When I visit trial sites in late August every year the SuperCals are consistently one of the only series that continues to maintain color retention and flower profusely. That is why it is promoted as the all-weather series.

### 14. VERBENA 'CADET RED IMPROVED'

*Ball FloraPlant*

There were 25 varieties of verbena in the bed trial represented by three international breeding companies. The seed and vegetative Verbena were immature so my plant evaluation and selection were based solely on early color, vibrancy, brightness and flower count. The variety that caught my attention was 'Cadet Red Improved'. The color has been improved for 2021 and, combined with a strong white eye, was a standout in the beds. There are now eight colors in the series, including the improved Hot Pink Wink, Lavender Blue and Red. The attributes of this series include earliness, an upright growth habit, uniformity, mildew resistance and heat tolerance. This series is grown in high-density quart production programs and is also utilized in mixed containers and baskets. *gpn*

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