

MORE Trends FROM CAST



Houseplants, herbs, edibles and petunias were some hot categories among the new varieties at California Spring Trials in April. This is the second article from that event.

BY STEPHEN KLOOSTERMAN

California Spring Trials can be like Thanksgiving at Grandma's house — you want a bit of everything, but it won't all fit on your plate at once. The best you can do is to go back for seconds.

So, here's a second plateful of helpings from CAST. Last month, I covered begonias, salvia, dianthus and a resurgence in cut flowers as trends that we noticed among the many new varieties that were presented.

There were some brilliant stand-alone plants, and even new series — such as Sakata's celosia Flamma or delphinium Delgenius from Pacific Plug & Liner — that stood on their own and were well worth consideration. But here are some broader trends from CAST that ran through several of the stops on the road trip. This month, I want to go back to sample the petunias, herbs and edibles, and houseplants that we saw on the West Coast.



Petunia
RIMarkable
Danziger

ALL THE PRETTY PETUNIAS

Distributors maintained robust petunia programs at CAST. The long flowering periods and adaptability of petunias to many different containers and liners make them attractive to many growers.

Sakata's SuperCal program, which had four new colors last year and performed well in 2021 trials per GPN's Vaughn Fletcher, was back in full force with a new marketing program, a dedicated website and social media accounts.

Here are some of the newer introductions:

Silver Blotch is a new color for **Takii Seed's** popular collection of compact, mounding petunias, named the Trilogy Series because it was developed to satisfy growers, retailers and consumers alike. For growers, the Trilogy plants feature good branching habits that require less demand for a regimented growth regulation protocol. They can eventually spread to 36 inches, but reach that size gradually, allowing the grower to keep a "pot tight" production format for finishing. Silver Blotch features a dark purple throat with subtle veining.

A new color of **Danziger's** Red Carpet Collection, RIMarkable has deep violet blooms with a large, distinctive white rim that is really eye-catching. RIMarkable features a mounding and trailing habit that makes it perfect for larger premium

baskets and combinations. It also blooms early enough for any market.

Benary added a new pink to its F1 Success! 360° series, which is for their most uniform petunia/grandiflora hybrid — the plants are supposed to look good from every angle because they are so full and have a uniform habit. Benary also added two new colors to its F1 Success! HD series — Salmon and White.

Syngenta's new Sanguna Mega Series features mega-sized petunia flowers for building baskets, with the most popular containers being 1.5-gallon hanging baskets. The plants have a vigorous mounding and trailing habit. Colors in the series are Purple, Purple Vein and Pink Vein.

At CAST, Syngenta also introduced a novelty color, Shortcake Raspberry, and several other colors of petunias in existing series. Amethyst Sunshine, Papaya and Peach Melba are new colors in its Fun House series of novelty colors. Its Sanguna series got a coral color, and its Sanguna Patio series also got two new colors, 'Sanguna Patio Melon Morn' and 'Sanguna Patio Radiant Violet'.

Ball FloraPlant's new petunia SureShot series has a seven-day flowering time and matching habit, so all colors can be shipped to retail



Petunia 'Sanguna Mega Purple Vein'
Syngenta Flowers



Petunia 'SureShot Blueberries & Cream'
Ball FloraPlant

Petunia F1 Success! 360°
Benary



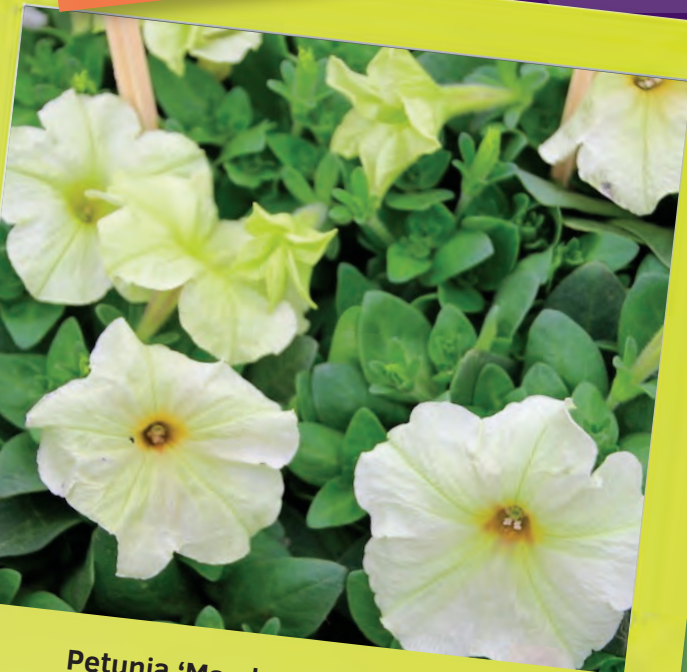
Petunia 'Suntory Surfinia XXL
Watermelon Jazz'
Suntory Flowers



Petunia 'Surfinia XXL Salmon Vein'
Suntory Flowers



Petunia 'Surfinia Heavenly Amethyst Burst'
Suntory Flowers



Petunia 'Mambo GP Yellow Lime'
Hem Genetics



Tomato 'Sun Dipper'
PanAmerican Seed



Peppers from Heaven
Pure Line Seeds/Prudac

at the same time. All varieties mix well together to create a range of color combinations. It's ideal for all pot sizes and hanging baskets and is available in six colors: Blueberries & Cream (shown), Blue Vein, Dark Blue, Dark Red, Magenta and White.

Other new petunia offerings from Ball FloraPlant include novelty colors Burgundy Star in its CannonBall Series of compact petunias, and Pink Star in its ColorRush series of vigorous petunias. FloraPlant's sister company, Selecta One, also debuted four new colors in its early-flowering Headliner Series petunias (Blackberry Vein, Light Pink Sky, Strawberry Sky and upgraded Pink Sky 23).

Suntory Flowers introduced a number of new petunia colors. Its Surfinia Heavenly Group — which has medium vigor and a semi-trailing growth habit — got a new color: Heavenly Amethyst Burst. Its Surfinia XXL series, which features jumbo-sized flowers that are day-neutral for early sales, got two new colors, XXL Salmon Vein and XXL Watermelon Jazz.

A new color in the series, **Hem Genetics'** petunia 'Mambo GP Yellow Lime' is light yellow with a prominent lime-green overtone ideal to bring a sunny color to the landscape or in mixes with other colors. Genetically dwarf, it doesn't require PGRs. Plants stay compact in the garden and cover themselves with prolific flowers.

EDIBLES TO ENJOY

Breeders showed off various and sundry edibles — from the kitchen table to the garden — at CAST. Here are a few that caught our attention.

Ball's **PanAmerican Seed** released its 'Sun Dipper' tomato. Part of the HandPicked Vegetables collection, 'Sun Dipper' has elongated fruit that can be held between your fingers for easy use with dips and sauces. The orange fruit looks great on a vegetable platter and tastes delicious. The durable plant has great resistance to in-ground diseases. Differentiate your vegetable program with this foodie option. The plant is indeterminate and has resistance to fusarium, nematodes and Tobacco Mosaic Virus.

'Peppers from Heaven Orange' from **Pure Line Seeds/Prudac** is a compact basket-type pepper that produces an impressive number of fleshy, sweet fruits. The small basket sweet peppers will grow to approximately six to eight inches. The green fruits (shown) will turn to a glossy



Welcome to the Jungle



Miscanthus PlantHaven



Season Me Herb Collection Benary+



Tradescantia Nanouk Dümmen Orange



Kalanchoe Bongo Beekenkamp

orange. Suitable to finish indoors on the kitchen table and grown outdoors.

Benary+'s Season Me Herb Collection of vegetative herbs has a wide assortment of product offerings, including all of the consumer favorites. These savory seasonings are easy to grow, offer fresh flavors and smell amazing. They work well when planted together in combos and go straight from the garden to the table.

TROPICAL HOUSEPLANTS ARE HERE

Houseplants, and specifically tropical-type houseplants, showed up a few different stops at CAST. Consumers are lavishing more care

and effort on their domestic surroundings post-pandemic, and entering the category seems to be timely.

Dümmen Orange recently entered the tropical plants category with its Welcome to the Jungle program. Welcome to the Jungle, which was teased at California Spring Trials, is being marketed as a sustainable product line that will sell fast. The new indoor foliage houseplant program has 50 varieties of popular houseplant categories currently available, according to a news release from the company. The plants can be grown anywhere and are suitable for any grower

located throughout the U.S. and Canada. The houseplants can be started from plugs or direct stick. All varieties can be grown in 10 to 14 weeks in 4- to 6-inch pots.

PlantHaven had a numerous selection of great houseplants and tropical varieties, but for sheer uniqueness, what caught our eye was some miscanthus in custom clay planters.

Customers will be drawn to **Beekenkamp's** unique variegated Bongo that is perfect for indoor use and succulent garden bowls. Easy, year-round production and no need for short-day treatments make it a win for growers too. [gpn](#)