

Features

6/27/2014

Color Supply

Story and photos Chris Beytes, Ellen C. Wells and Jennifer Zurko

Feeding the Hunger

Gardeners are hungry for anything edible in the garden. From squash to berries to flavorings for smoothies and cocktails, this category's menu keeps expanding, thanks to some great new introductions such as these.



PanAmerican Seed

They are touting their HandPicked Vegetables line of veggies as good tasting, early maturing and high producing, with varieties that are good for home gardeners and fresh market farmers alike. New this year is the Patio Baby eggplant with a compact habit (perfect for container growing) and small fruits. HandPicked also includes Heirloom Marriage tomatoes, three varieties that are crosses between two different heirlooms; e.g. Big Brandy is a cross of Big Dwarf and Brandywine.

Syngenta Flowers

Syngenta pulls from their large stock of commercial vegetable seed varieties to supply the home gardener market, as well. This year they are introducing two bean varieties—Prevail for fresh eating and Huntington, best for canning and preserving. Brice is their new round zucchini-like squash with soft grey skin and silver-spotted leaves.

Thompson & Morgan

As their names imply, the Rainbow Beetroot and Rainbow Radish Mixes are a mix of colors. The outer flesh does vary in color, and when sliced open the inner flesh shows an interesting ring pattern.



Burpee Home Gardens

The goal with these introductions is to accommodate the small-space gardening restrictions that many in the Gen X/Gen Y demographic face. Fresh Pickles is a cuke that grows to just 4 ft. yet produces up to 400 pickling-type fruit from one plant. Two new easily trellised cherry tomatoes appear in the Indigo tomato collection—Fireball and Kumquat. And the new basil's Emerald Frills and Ruby Frills are flavorful while also giving the small-space garden a coleus-like ornamental quality.

Histil

Upgrade your mojito or lemonade with Thai Mint. The deep purple stem makes a visually interesting swizzle stick!

Vegetalis

The edibles arm of Floranova introduced several wow items this year. Among them the Rapunzel cherry tomato (check out the photo to see what inspired the name) with extra long trusses and a high (12) brix level. Cherry tomato Sugar Gloss has “pigtail” trusses slightly shorter than Rapunzel but with a higher (12.5) brix level. Their short-vine/bush-type cucumbers Petipikel and Peticue are meant for easy patio growing, with the Petipikel being the pickling type.



Pacific Plug & Liner

The Hulaberry is a white-fleshed, red-seeded strawberry with a slight pineapple taste. Gardeners will love it for the novelty. Hulaberry does need a red-fleshed strawberry plant for pollination purposes, and these will be packaged together for sale at retail.

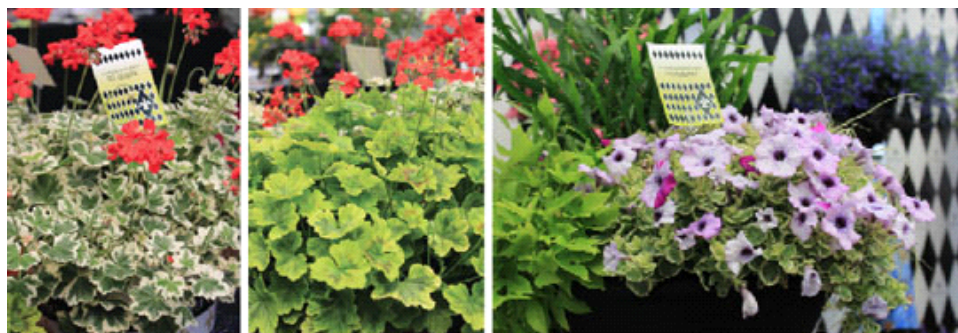
Sakata

Collards are the new kale, they say, so Sakata is breeding to produce varieties with smaller stems and bigger leaves, such as the new intro called Tiger. Also new from Sakata is a tall-growing, highly productive spicy pablano pepper called Mosquetero that produces fruits 6 to 8 in. long; a determinant, compact but productive Roma-type tomato called Surpremo; and a small-growing pumpkin called Kandy Korn that has a bush-type habit.

Ideal for IGCs

Distinctive. Different. Not your run-of-the-mill varieties. This is the arena in which the independent garden center excels. Sure, it takes a little more finesse. But what can be done with displays featuring the distinctive and different can cause these plants to fly off benches. Here are some of the latest distinctive and different

plants to work your IGC magic on.



Geranium Glitterati (Hort Couture)

In the vein of the interspecific hybrid crosses like Calliope and Caliente, the Glitterati geranium hybrid features the ivy plant habit with the fancy leaves of a zonal. Best yet, it is a workhorse in baskets and containers. Ice Queen has the white foliage, while Gold Digger has greenish-limey leaves.

Petunia Glamoflage Blueberry (Hort Couture)

Hort Couture made a splash last year with the introduction of the variegated-leaved Glamoflage Grape. This year Blueberry joins in. Great for that “wow!” container designers are always hunting for.



Coleus Hipsters Series (Terra Nova)

The Hipster series (Zooey and Piper) form low mounds, just enough to spill over the side of a container. Narrow leaves make a statement without taking over the conversation.

Lavender Platinum Blonde (Bartels)

Familiar fragrance with a somewhat unfamiliar variegated plant, Platinum Blonde will keep folks guessing as to the variety's identity. Slow to flower but oh so pretty.

Viola Magnifi Scent Series (PlantHaven)

The name should give you a clue about this plant's distinction. That's right—it's a fragrant viola. In addition to its lovely fragrance, Magnifi Scent is bred with a compact, rounded habit and long interest in the garden. Four varieties include Amy, Bonnie, Sweetheart and Sunny Jim.

Coleus Under the Sea Sea Weed and Sunfish (Hort Couture)

Not just more random coleus. These have distinctive leaf shapes, edges and colorings, providing that much-needed foliar-textural interest in beds and premium mixed containers.



Helichrysum Silverstar (Westhoff)

This delicate-looking component plant works wonders as a foliar foil in containers. And as designers will love, it's practically indestructible, all while not overtaking a mix. Lots of branching early on helps give this plant its

character.

Bracteanthus Cottage Series (Westhoff)

First, the flower colors are amazing on these four varieties. Second, its leaves are a bit more narrow than other varieties, contributing to this plant's ability to stay mildew free. And lastly, uniform timing and flower size will make this a favorite of anyone looking for something special in a combo.



Salvia microphylla (Cultivaris)

Here we have two out-of-the-ordinary salvias with the cutest flowers on a small-leaved plant. The pillows of color are perfect for mixing in containers.

Viola hederacea (Histil)

An under-used item in the U.S., this ivy-like

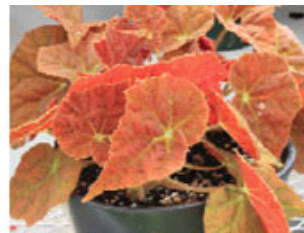
viola fills baskets either alone or mixed with friends.

Nasturtium Double Delight Cream (Thompson and Morgan)

Nasturiums are beautiful, but give them a double or semi-double flower and wow factor is turned way up. Again, another distinctive spiller item for mixed combos.

Give 'Em an Endcap!

Whether it is a breeding company's one-off variety or a "Wow!" within a series, some plants are just so spectacular that they deserve prime real estate in the garden center. That is what we call an endcap item. Spring Trials had several this year.



Osteospermum Blue Eyed Beauty (Ball FloraPlant)

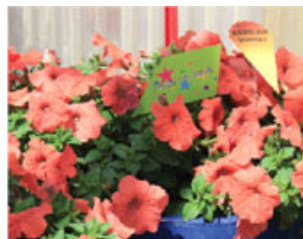
Eye-catching!

Petunia Perfectunia Pink Sugar (Westhoff)

Sweet!

Petunia African Sunset (American Takii)

The first orange petunia from seed and an AAS winner.



Petunia Salmon Ray (Danziger)

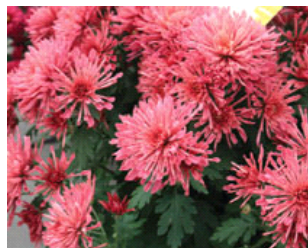
Day neutral and fast.

Cuphea Vermillionaire (Proven Winners)

A spectacular landscape basket item for the South and a hummingbird magnet.

Begonia Autumn Ember (Cultivaris)

A Martha Stewart selection from Logee's Greenhouse.



Garden mum Susan Coral (Syngenta)

A garden mum that looks like a pot mum!

Ageratum Planet Blue (Hem Genetics)

An older variety but reintroduced as a container item.

Names That Are Noteworthy

What's in a name? Anyone who's a parent of a child or pet knows that just the right name can make a person (or pooch) memorable. Here's a few that stuck in our heads this year.

Jurassic Rex (Rex begonia from Ball Ingenuity)

Shady Ladies Marlene, Heidy and Mae (Nematanthus from EuroAmerican Propagators)

Lycianthes Great Clorox Disaster, *Pseuderanthemum Stainless Steel* (Hort Couture)

Easter Bonnet (Nemesia from PlantHaven)

Lobularia YOLO (Dümmen)

Snoozy (Freesia from Flamingo Holland)

Color Galore

If the saying is “Location, location, location” for real estate, then for the horticulture industry it’s “Color, color, color.” Flowers with multiple colors add that extra boost of visual wow, whether it’s in the landscape or in a container. Here are a few we spotted this year.



Sweetunia Moonlight Bay and Purple Touch

Superbena Royale Cherry Burst (Proven Winners)

Pansy Karma Blue Sun (Syngenta)