All About New Poinsettias (and Then Some)



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

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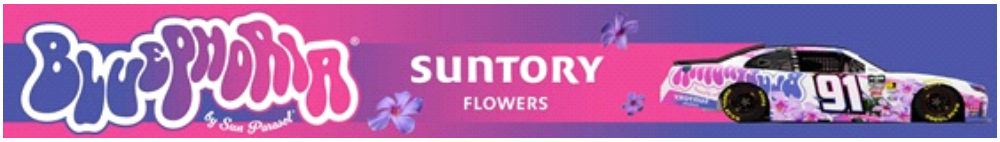


Full disclosure: Jen wrote most of this newsletter





Editor Jen Zurko, videographer Osvaldo Cuevas and hortistician Dr. Marvin Miller made the long drive from Ball HQ in Chicagoland southwest to near St. Louis and the annual N.G. Heimos Poinsettia Open House. I couldn't make the trip this year; it's the first time I've missed one since 2016, I think. But fear not! Jen got the scoop! Here's what she learned during her day in the greenhouse surrounded by everything euphorbia. Oh, and here's A LINK TO THE VIDEO they shot while there—it's excellent! (Stay until the end for some bonus video.)



New varieties and more at Amy's place

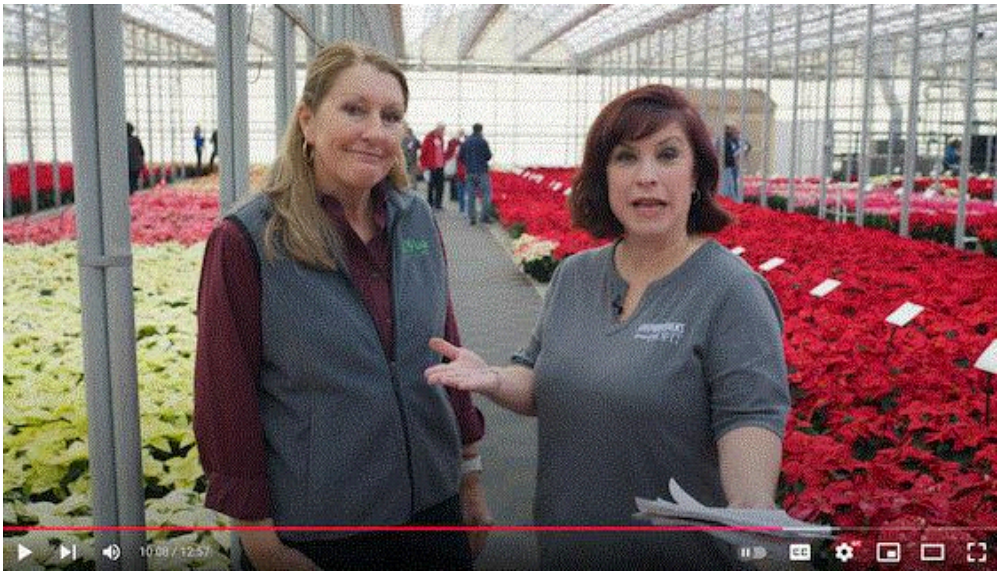
I haven't attended all 17 of N.G. Heimos' poinsettia open houses, but it's pretty close. And it's been fun to see its evolution from a small Midwestern trial to what people say is the largest in North America.

Heimos VP Amy Morris told me that this year they grew 17,000 plants of 209 different varieties representing eight different breeders. They had 37 vendors on hand, too, ranging from suppliers of pot sleeves and containers to pest control and growing media—they even had the Burro Grande automated wagon puller rolling through the greenhouse! (Chris wrote about it in his Cultivate coverage. Amy said she and her brother Bernie saw it there and asked if they wanted to be at their open house.)







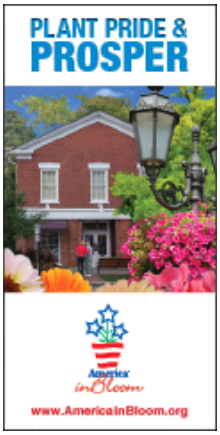


Speaking of Chris—he says you want poinsettias—and new ones! Here are the highlights from the event:



But first, Graff: The new poinsettia breeder on the block





After years working for Benary, Matt Mart has decided to branch out on his own and help breeders bring their plants to the North American market. One of them is Graff Breeding. A third-generation operation based in Denmark, Matt said that Graff is typically known for their line of hibiscus plants called HibisQs. About seven years ago, they started breeding poinsettias. He said that despite their northern location in Denmark, they've carved out a niche for themselves as tropicals breeders—and since poinsettias are technically a tropical (they *are* from Mexico, after all)—it was a natural fit.

At the trial, Matt was showing a small handful of different types and sizes of poinsettias Graff would like to bring into North America—from ones that can fit into minis and small pots to novelties to winter-rose types. They're all bred under the name Qismus, which Matt said sounds like how a toddler pronounces Christmas. (At Graff, they seem to like Qs in their plant names ...)



An array of Graff poinsettia genetics.

“There’s a market for everything,” said Matt.

Vivero in Mexico will be growing the stock and there will be a small volume available with the plan to expand for the 2026 season.

I told Matt he’s got his work cut out for him since the poinsettia market has been pretty well established for decades, but he said he’s optimistic about his chances of getting some people to notice Graff Breeding.

“Their approach is thinking about the application,” Matt said. “What the plant can be used for, thinking like growers do.”



Beekenkamp’s Luna Red

Luna Red





A sport of Astro, which is known for its uniformity, Luna is ideal for high-volume, mass market production. It's got a narrow V shape that grows straight up and dark foliage. Medium vigor with a 7.5-week response time. Luna can go in 2.5 to 6-in. pots with 1 ppp.

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Two from Selecta One

Christmas Chorus Hot Pink



Part of the Christmas Chorus collection and a sport of the original Christmas Chorus, Hot Pink's V-shaped habit works well in high-density production for mass market and they say it has an excellent root system, which will make it more tolerant of high wood fiber mixes. Christmas Chorus has a compact/medium vigor, finishes in 7.5 weeks and is best for 8 in. and smaller pots.

Christmas Beauty Prince



This one of my two favorites of the trial. An “inversion” of Christmas Beauty Princess, Prince has the marbling on the inside of the bracts instead of along the edges. It’s got compact/medium vigor and is what James Doukas calls “one of the Steady Eddies of growing poinsettias as far as vigor is concerned.” Prince times more traditionally with the rest of the Christmas Beauty series, which means a bit later—8.5 to 9 weeks—but in higher light regions, Prince will finish in 8 weeks. Ideal for 10 in. and smaller.



Three from Dümmen Orange

Rapid Red



Dümmen Orange calls this one “Rapid” because it finishes fast—just 6.5 weeks. It’s got medium vigor with large, true red bracts. Rapid Red is ideal for 4-in. pots and up.

Noblesse



This variety has star-shaped bracts held above very dark green foliage and stems. Great uniformity on a variety that finishes in 8 weeks. Noblesse is best for 4- and 6-in. pots.

The Freya Series



Freya is already a best-seller for Dümmen Orange in Europe, but before bringing it here, they wanted to wait until they had a complete series with all four colors to really make a family. All four match in timing and habit, and work well in mixed-color combos or smaller pots. Finishes in 7.5 weeks, with a medium vigor that's easy to control for mass market production.



InBlume and Lazzari from Express Seed

Express didn't have anything to show us that was new-new, per se, but Rebecca Siemonsma said that Steve Rinehart (of Ecke and Rinehart Poinsettias fame) is actively breeding some exciting new stuff. That, coupled with some of the breeding that was already being done by Syngenta before Express acquired the genetics, means there will be a lot coming soon. They're also focusing on making sure they have a reliable supply chain.

Said Rebecca, "We're executing and ready for 2026."

One of the breeders that's part of the InBlume program is the Italian company Lazzari. There are three poinsettias that are now available in North America, with unrooted cuttings coming from Vivero. Two are winter rose types that are part of the Roccostar series: Red and White. Nick Read said that they're more vigorous than others on the market and have a more open V-shaped habit. They'll still work well in high-density production, however, and don't need any support rings. They're also being marketed as a cut flower, Nick added. They finish in 7.5 weeks and are best suited for 4 in. and up—1 ppp if you use PGRs.



Roccostar Red, White (and Giulia in front).



My other fav of the trial

Giulia



The third intro from Lazzari is Giulia, which Nick said “is just dope.” I asked what was so “dope”about it and he explained that it’s a tough, stout plant with multiple layers of color with a speckled pattern. It’s more of a florist type because of its vigorous habit, so it’s not the easiest to sleeve, but it is a cool novelty. Giulia finishes in 7.5 weeks and is best for 4-in. pots and up. I would say that this is my other top pick of the trial.



Poinsettias as cuts …

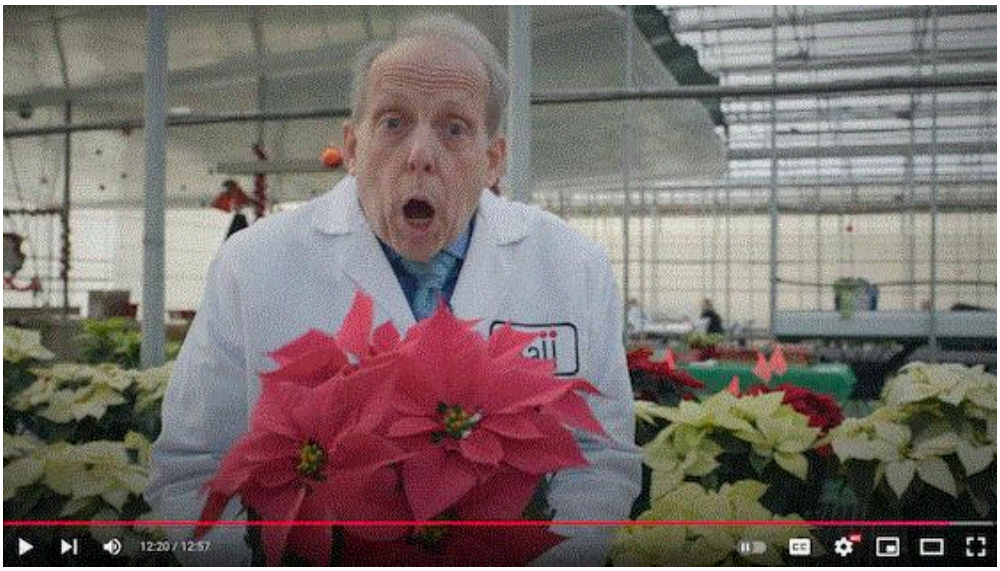
There was a bit of “poinsettias can be used as cut flowers, too” chit-chat going on at the trial. And this was proven by the fact that our very own 2024 Young Grower Award winner and cut flower grower Drew Groezinger was there having discussions and looking at the different varieties.



Watch my video of all of the new varieties I mentioned above, along with Drew's thoughts on using poinsettias as cut flowers (jump to 7:55 if you want to get right to it).



The Hortistican on novelties



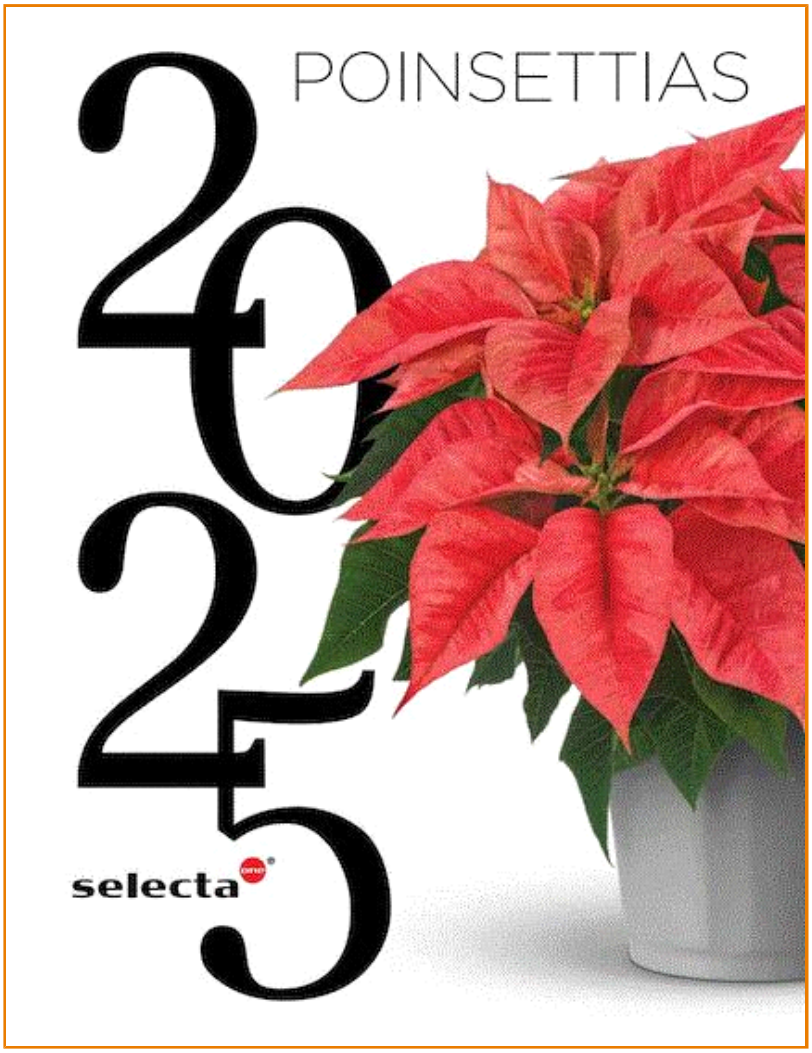
You didn't think we'd forget to have a little fun while at Heimos, did you? Since it's become our poinsettia open house tradition, we did another video with Ball Hortistician Dr. Marvin Miller teaching us something about poinsettias. This time: Why we should appreciate novelties more. Just stick around until the end of the main poinsettia video to see it (or jump ahead to 10:38 if you're too excited to see it to wait).



Finally …

Thanks very much, Jen, for all that great coverage. And thanks, Osvaldo, for the photos! Do check out the videos—Osvaldo was using our new 6K cinema camera. And Marvin was once again rockin' the lab coat!

I'll wrap up the poinsettia discussion with the launch of the 2025 Poinsettia Catalog from Selecta One, a 50-page resource showcasing how the company "is your growing partner for the widest selection, highest quality and dependable availability for poinsettias."



This year's catalog features advice from Selecta One's technical experts Gary Vollmer, Lauren Blume and James Doukas, who share "Poinsettia Pointers" and help you plan a successful season.

Some of the key new varieties and features in the catalog include:
- The new Sky Series—An exciting starry pattern in poinsettias
- Christmas Beauty Prince—So charming it made the cover! (I see what they did there!)
- Poinsettia Pointers—Helpful tips and advice throughout the catalog from the Selecta One Poinsettia team

- A comprehensive culture guide—To help you achieve a perfect finish

Feel free to email me at beytes@growertalks.com if you have ideas, comments or questions.

See you next time!



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