

## Crunch time

August is the perfect time to order the 2011 spring crops. All spring trial reports are in, summer trials are at their peak, catalogs are available, and reps are ready to take orders.

This issue features another great recipe, this time in softer tones, and looks back at the OFA Short Course.

Selecta News features one of the best Petunia varieties, and page 6 tells you where to find electronic versions of our catalogs and flyers.

Last but not least, a report about my recent backpacking trip in Sequoia Kings Canyon National Park including Mount Whitney.

There is lots to read in the August NewsFlash, so sit back, relax, and enjoy this issue.

Sincerely yours,  
Stefan Reiner



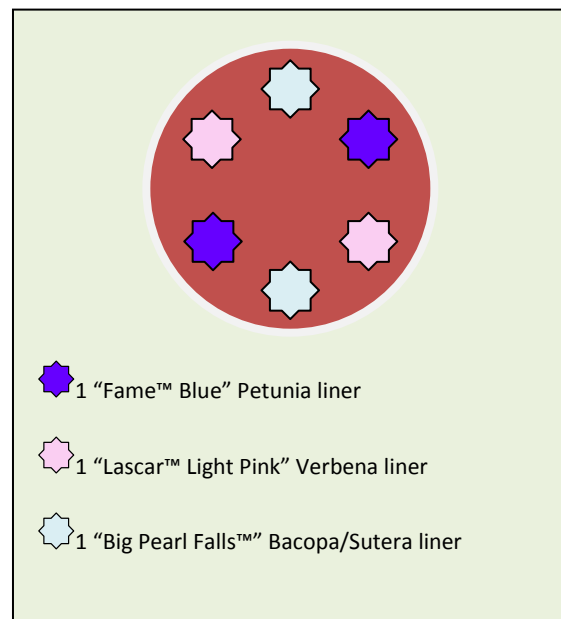
## Variety of the Month

**Trixi™ Caribbean Cocktail** is not only our #1 selling combination but also a great outdoor performer. We hang the basket in week 14 and four months later, in week 31, it still looks fantastic. Trixi™ uses MiniFamous™ Calibrachoa, the industry's best series.

## Combo with a Kick - 5!



This Combo with a Kick combines the soothing colors of the best selling "Fame™ Blue" Petunia and "Lascar™ Light Pink" Verbena with the relaxing color and flowing habit of "Big Pearl Falls™" Sutera. By Selecta First Class.



Selecta has put together a number of combinations using only three different varieties/crops in 12-inch baskets. Our goal was to show that sometimes less is more. The selected combination was one of the favorites. It combines three top-selling Selecta varieties.

The kick comes from the controlled-growing, bestselling Petunia "Fame™ Blue" with its clear blue, non-fading large flowers and great summer performance. It's a Petunia that works very well in mixed baskets, not too compact but not too wild either.

Great contrast comes from the top-performing Verbena "Lascar™ Light Pink." Its soft but solid color creates that appealing effect. Lascar™ Verbenas are great for mixed baskets and known for their outstanding performance for growers and consumers alike.

The flow comes from a variety that not only looks good but works very well in mixed baskets. Sutura "Big Pearl Falls™" is a lavender flowering variety for spring. Its vigor is medium, and it will come out of every corner. It flowers very early, so there will be a lot of color at point of sale. It also has a great summer performance.

### **Production**

Starting from rooted liners is quite straight forward, as all three varieties used have quite similar needs. Sutura, however, should be a double stuck-liner (2 URC per liner) for better results. For a 12-inch basket use 2 liners per variety and plant as shown above. The crop time for a good sized basket from liners is about 9-12 weeks, depending on the location and time of the year.

Use a well-draining growing medium with a pH of 5.8 to 6.2 and a low EC of 1.2 to start with. After planting, water the baskets slightly in without soaking them. Keep them warm until roots have formed and a pinch can be performed. Hang them about two weeks after pinching in a bright, well-ventilated location. Increase fertilizer rates to an EC of 1.8 to 2.2 by using 250 PPM N of a well-balanced fertilizer with micro nutrients. Keep temperatures up until plants are rooted in well. Afterwards keep temperatures at 65-75° F days and 54-60° F nights. Cool morning drops will help to improve plant quality, flower and foliage color, plant habit, and harden the plants. Start treatments after plants have branched well and cover the basket surface. Lower temperature by 8-12° F about 2 hrs before sunrise until 2-3 hrs after sunrise. Keep the average temperature up in order to avoid delaying the crop.

Avoid drying out or over-saturating the growing medium, as this will not only affect plant quality but also the finish time. Roots will suffer when conditions change from one extreme to the other. Grow them on the dry side, letting the substrate become dry (color turns light brown) before watering. But do so before the substrate starts to separate from the pot edge.

Use B-Nine sprays to control the baskets with a rate of 1,500 to 2,500 PPM. Bonzi drenches with 2-4 PPM two to three weeks before desired sales date (or at 75% of the desired size) work very well.

Most common pests and diseases are aphids, thrips, botrytis, and pythium. Good water management and climate control will take care of fungal diseases. If necessary, apply recommended fungicides. Scout for pests regularly and treat early on. Please contact us for more information.



## 2010 OFA Short Course



The 2010 OFA Short Course was a successful show for many. Visitor numbers were up overall I was told, and the mood was good on the show floor. Sessions were well participated and speakers were happy as far as I have heard.

For Selecta it was the first time in 10 years with no separate booth. Integrated in the Ball Horticulture booth, we got a prime center spot. Between BallFloraPlant and Ball Exclusives we were not only at a great spot for people walking the booth, the outstanding plant quality from Gro'n Sell, especially the gorgeous Trixi™ and MiniFamous™ baskets, pulled visitors literally into the booth. We had the best traffic ever and our idea to focus on some core products in top quality paid off. We sold a lot of product during the OFA and thanks to the support



from Ball, we were able to take care of all visitors.

Highlights included our Trixi™ baskets and especially the all new Trixi™ Lollipop mix (top right image) was responsible for many good talks with visitors. MiniFamous™ double was an attraction, and the top quality Double Lemon (center left image) got a lot of attention. MiniFamous™ is well recognized and there is no need to explain why the plants looked so good. I heard several times it is a MiniFamous™ and nothing else is expected from the best. Our SuperTrouper™ pot carnation got as much attention as Bonfire® begonia and Soleil petunia. Especially IGC's love Bonfire® and Soleil for their consumer-friendly performance and recognition. But at the center of attention was Trixi™, with no doubt. After all, Trixi™ is the future of mixed baskets and containers.

## On top of the lower 48!



Summiting 14,497 feet (4,419 meters) high Mount Whitney was always on top of our list. Facing our last summer in the U.S. gave us the push to go for it. After hiking two of the most beautiful backcountry areas (Rae Lakes and Little Five Lakes) in California last year, we wanted to hike to two other places on many hikers' lists, Crabtree Meadow and Mitter Basin. So we decided against day hiking Mount Whitney and started instead at Horseshoe Meadows' making it a five-day trip, combining our goals into one hike.

Besides the high altitude we hiked at (average well above 10,000 feet), we covered 60 miles and gained / lost 14,000 feet.

The top image shows Mount Whitney (center) standing tall as seen from the Whitney Portal road leaving Lone Pine.



Day one took us from the trailhead at Horseshoe Meadows via Cottonwood Pass to Rock Creek. The center left image shows Big Whitney Meadow as seen from the ridge above Chicken Spring Lake. At Rock Creek we met 20-month old junior ranger Torsten and his mom and dad. Mom was the official ranger at the station. They stayed for the entire summer at Rock Creek and had fun. Torsten was about to climb 14,042 feet Mount Langley with his dad, helping researchers setting up a station on its top.

Day two took us from Rock Creek to Crabtree, one of the nicest places around. The top right image shows you the view via Crabtree Meadow towards Mount Whitney and surrounding mountains. It was a rather short day, and we arrived just before lunch. But in light of climb the next day and the fact that we had to get up before 4.00 a.m., it was



good to have the afternoon to relax and explore the area. Day three was the big day. We left camp just before 5:00 a.m. and hiked in dusk towards Mount Whitney. The lower left image on the previous page shows you the area after Guitar Lake at sunrise. The image to the right of it shows you the first view of the peak after Trial Crest about 1.5 miles from the summit. After 7.5 miles and 4,500 feet elevation gain, just before 10:00 a.m., we reached the summit.

The top two images are taken on top of Mount Whitney, the left one with the hut facing Southwest and the image to the right facing Southeast. We stayed for over an hour on top before heading back down to our basecamp at Crabtree. The second image on the left shows Hitchcock Lakes left and Guitar Lake right with the Kaweah Peaks in the far center and the great western divide with famous Sawtooth Peak in the far back (left = Mineral King area). The third left image shows the trail heading towards Guitar Lake.

Back in camp before 3:00 p.m. called for a relaxing afternoon including swimming in the creek. The day before the climb we met ranger Rob (ranger at Crabtree) and his wife Laura (ranger at Tyndall Creek), and they asked us to stop by the evening after the climb and tell them about our hike. Guess what, we had home-made pizza (in a wood fired oven) that night with a good glass of red wine in great company. The rangers in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park are great, and we've met a number of them already. I can only encourage you to take the time and stop by the ranger stations on your way. Have a chat and update them on what you saw. You may not end up getting pizza and wine but for sure great insights about your remaining trip. Laura and Rob told us about a great camping spot at Lower Soldier lake in the Mitter Basin area, ending our great trip perfectly. The lowest image shows you Lower Soldier lake where we spent the last night. By the way, we had no pain the day after the climb. Must have been the wine, because we slept like babies all night.

Yosemite National Park is a great place to visit, but when

it comes to backpacking and the best experience then Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park is the place. Mineral King, Little Five Lakes, Rae Lakes Loop, Crabtree, Mitter Basin, Mount Whitney, Pear Lake, Forester Pass, Evolution Valley/Basin, Muir Pass, the High Sierra Trial, and Bearpaw Meadow are just some of the great places to visit in its backcountry. Ranger stations are well spread out and great folks inhabit them. The sheer sizes, remoteness, and beauty of the park offers never-ending possibilities. Don't get me wrong, we love Yosemite, but we creave Sequoia and Kings Canyon. The last image shows 12,080 feet New Army Pass (center) from Long Lake on our way back out from Lower Soldier lake via New Army pass to Horseshoe Meadows. We will be back!



## Order now!



In case you missed Spring Trials and didn't make it to the OFA Short Course this year, don't worry, we can help. In the August Grower Talks issue you will find our 2011 new variety brochure, and you can see an electronic version by visiting <http://firstclassplants.com/FCP/k/introductions2011/> or clicking the image to the left. The entire catalog is also available online as an electronic version. Just visit our website and click on the catalog view button (or copy and paste this address into your browser: [http://firstclassplants.com/FCP/k/Spring\\_2011/](http://firstclassplants.com/FCP/k/Spring_2011/)).

Availabilities are posted and at their best. Make sure to contact your Ball sales rep for URC orders and the rep of your choice for RC orders sold via our vast root&sell network.

My top novelty picks for 2011 are:

- Trixi™ Lollipop and Melon Sorbet
- MiniFamous™ Apricot Red Eye evol. and Light Pink + Eye
- Fuego™ Red White Eye and Lascar™ Magenta
- Zion™ Pink
- Magadi™ Electric Blue and Dark Blue
- Bonfire® Choc Red
- Sunrise™ XL True Red and Appleblossom

## Selecta News



Famous™ Violet Picotee is one of the best picotee varieties on the market today. Easy for the grower (medium vigorous and early to flower) and great for the consumer. Its bold color and stable white edge is a striking combination. The images to the right show it outside a mall in Woodburn, OR. Fessler Nursery provided the plants and sent us the images.



Famous™ Violet Picotee is also used in our new Trixi™ Purple Heart (left) together with Big White Falls™ Bacopa and Fuego™ Dark Violet Verbena. It was a hit at the OFA Short Course, and Famous™ Violet Picotee looked great.



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