

Yes, it is summer!

Summertime is fun time for many reasons.

Poinsettia cuttings are arriving, and this issue talks a bit about rooting Poinsettias.

The new spring annual season is on our minds, and there is no better time to look at new recipe suggestions and review Spring Trials than summer. This issue will cover the first of three new recipe suggestions and links you to a Spring Trial review.

Summer is also hiking time, and this issue features the first

backpack report of the year.

Selecta had a very successful Flowertrials show, and I wrap up the highlights.

Last but not least, a follow-up to last month's issue about customers and how they are changing.

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

Sincerely yours,
Stefan Reiner



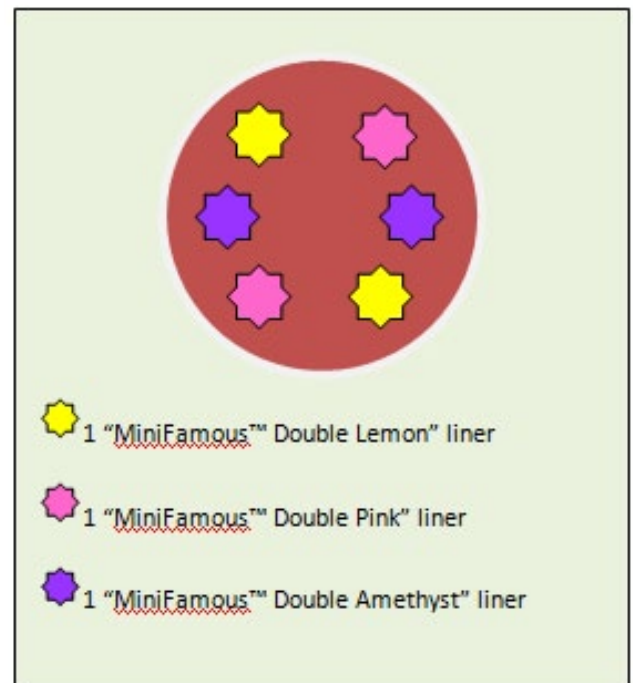
Variety of the Month

Zion™ Pink is all new for 2011 and finally, a really nice pink Osteospermum. It flowers very early with lots of large-sized flowers, creating an instant wow effect. Its medium vigor is easy to control and its free branching results in well filled pots. Overall a very nice variety.

Combo with a Kick - 4!



This Combo with a Kick combines best selling colors with the beauty of MiniFamous™ Double Calibrachoa. The one and only double flowering Calibrachoa offers exclusive looks and proven performance.
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:

MiniFamous™ Double is unique for several reasons. They combine rose-shaped flowers with the great performance we are used to from Calibrachoa. Most other double flowering crops offer limited possibilities or are sensitive, but not so double Calibrachoa. As with all Calibrachoa, they recover quickly from rain, survive drying out, and recover

from stress rather quickly. Many other double flowering crops have rain- and shipping-sensitive flowers, but not double Calibrachoa. They offer almost unlimited possibilities and are exclusive from Selecta. MiniFamous™ Double is the only double flowering Calibrachoa.

This mix combines the top selling colors Yellow, Pink, and Blue in a wonderful way. A well-branched habit, medium vigor, and early flowering make this mix a great spring season item as well as a wonderful holiday mix for Mother's Day and Easter. We call it the Petticoat mix; how would you name it?

Production:

Starting from rooted liners is quite straight forward, as all three varieties used have similar needs. For a 12-inch basket use 2 liners per variety and plant as shown above. The crop time from liners is about 10-12 weeks, depending on the location and time of the year. Use a well-draining growing medium with a pH of 5.4 to 5.8 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 side shoots have well developed (close to covering the basket surface). Afterwards hang them in a bright, well-ventilated location. Increase fertilizer rates to an EC of 1.8 to 2.2 by using 200-250 PPM N of a well-balanced fertilizer with micro nutrients. 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 PGR sprays to control the baskets with B-Nine 1,500 to 2,500 PPM or Sumagic 10 to 20 PPM. Bonzi drenches at 1-3 PPM 2-3 weeks before sale (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.



Selecta at the Flowertrials



During the 2010 Flowertrials in Holland, Selecta proudly presented its latest results of innovative breeding. Watch Nils Klemm as he introduces this product by clicking on the image to the left taking you to our new [SelectaNewsFlash](#) channel on YouTube.

The varieties fit perfectly into our standard FlowerPower™ line and can be grown together (as the grower cultivating the exhibition plants did). If you are into different languages, click on the language you would like to hear and test your skills in [German](#), [Dutch](#), and [Italian](#). The show was a huge success for Selecta. The exhibition was

located as in past years in the floating greenhouse close to the auction, and with over 2,000 visitors it was the best year yet. Besides FlowerPower™ Double highlights included Trixi® multi-cutting liner recipes, SuperTrouper™ pot carnation, the new compact and early flowering Latina™ NGI series, and much more. As one of the leading geranium suppliers in Europe, we showed our entire line-up in top quality in the standard pot size. Plants displayed on tables and on CC containers made it easy for the growers to evaluate varieties. Mixed containers and baskets as well as POP material helped retailers to gather ideas on how to use the different varieties. Great weather and a motivated team contributed to the success. Maybe next year you will have the time to visit.



No water shortage in Yosemite



Our first backpacking trip of the season was full of surprises. Because of late snow storms and the snow melt being a month behind, the high elevations had still lots of snow and creeks were high because of melting snow. Our original trip was not doable (too much snow and a dangerous creek crossing) as were our two back-up plans. After a nice chat with the rangers, we decided to hike from Tuolumne Meadows following the Tuolumne River via Pate Valley to White Wolf (hitch-hiking back to our car). Rangers told us to expect a number of creek crossings and flooded areas on our way. They were not kidding. We spent a lot of time in ice-cold water. First crossing was before 7:00 a.m. 2 miles after the trail head and with 26F outside temperature (image left). It was cold to get in, freezing cold half way, and I



didn't feel my legs when arriving on the other side. We hiked through flooded areas twice, had to cross a wild creek at a waterfall (click on the play button above), hiked flooded trails, and crossed another wild creek on our way to White Wolf. Every time we had to change our shoes and warm-up afterwards. So overall it was slower going than usual, but it was fun at the end, for sure it was an adventure. Tuolumne River was very high, and the waterfalls along the way were unbelievable. Click on the play button below to see Waterwheel Fall as we experienced it. In numbers we hiked 31 miles, gained 6,500 feet (lost 7,000 feet) in three days. Besides all the water, we hiked before the trail crews maintained the trail, so climbing fallen trees and navigating through last year's burn area added to the adventure. It took us only 10 minutes until French tourists gave us a ride back to our car parked in Tuolumne Meadows.



Time to rethink

In the last issue I spoke about consumers and customer service. It pays to go the extra mile, and I experienced it just last week again myself. MSR is a company producing quality hiking equipment. I use a variety of their products and last year I had a problem with my super light shelter. It got stickier and stickier with every use. I called them and was told that they replaced the material as they had numerous complaints. They asked me to send back my problematic shelter in exchange for a new one. They paid all the shipping costs and shipped me the new model free of charge. I was impressed but also disappointed that I could not read anywhere about the problem and the exchange. So I am sure there is a number of disappointed people out there not knowing about the exchange. The company did well in how they treated me (and probably anyone who contacted them) but failed to go the whole nine yards. So for me not the best example, and this was the reason I didn't mention them last month. However, last week, during my first backpacking trip this season, my super light and fast water filter failed on day one. Luckily I always carry a back-up in form of a chemical treatment option. Back from the trip I took images of the problem and mailed it to MSR. They replied immediately and told me what went wrong (was actually my mistake) but still sent me a new filter cartridge free of charge. I am impressed and even though I had a problem with the filter, I will continue to support MSR and recommend their products.

Why am I telling you this? Consumers are changing, and if we don't believe it, then let's look at ourselves. I know my family shopping has changed. We don't mind to pay a bit more if we know the company backs its products (REI, MSR) but at the same time, especially when shopping for groceries, we are switching from national brands to store brands (usually a bit cheaper). With the most recent news about the bad housing numbers, the bad consumer index numbers, and the fact that many expect a deflation and a possible depression, we better accept the fact that not only the weather influences our sales. It makes it even worse, at least for a few years to come. Nice weather makes us sell plants easier, but we still have to compete with other products out there. If the weather is bad, we can't count on customers coming in later once the weather improves again. It might just be a lost sale. Even if the bad outlook now changes, we still will have a few years of struggle to come. On this all experts agree. Some say it will be a roller coaster ride with ups and downs, but overall we will go up and recover. Right now we seem to face a downturn again. Others are not as optimistic. Whatever happens, by now most consumers have realized that they better have some money on the side for the time to come. Consumers have changed the way they are spending money. How can we ensure our industry stays on top? We all make mistakes like Apple with its reception problems on its iPhone 4 and Toyota. Half a year ago everybody spoke badly about Toyota and their future, but today their numbers are healthy and they invested in improving their image not only with marketing but by changing their products and backing them up. If we believe in our products by showing it and back them up, then consumers will be willing to invest more in gardening again. They will spend their \$ wisely, and a happy customer is a good customer. Just think how you would like to be treated and make it happen.

For Example - if a consumer buys a basket and forgets to water it but takes the time to bring it back to you asking for help, don't you think this effort is worth a free exchange? It will go a long way. How many are really returning with a product that died? How many are taking the time to contact you about a problem they had? Spreading the word is the most effective and cheapest way to promote your business. If you send this consumer home empty handed, customers spreading that tale will harm your business in ways you can not even imagine. The internet is a powerful tool. Take time and read consumer evaluations, and you will be surprised how active many are. Most of the time my wife and I are reading consumer evaluations on-line before buying a new product. We have changed our minds many times because of it. Bad experiences by others usually turn us away. Our industry sells what no other industry sells. We sell nature! Going the extra mile will go a long way.

Talk to your Poinsettias at least once a day!

July is the time Poinsettias start to dominate our minds. Growers rooting Poinsettias are receiving their unrooted cuttings, and others are expecting their liners soon. "Are Poinsettias an easy crop?" Yes, they can be, as long as everything works out as planned and if we adapt quickly if the weather does not play along, cuttings are delayed, or some other minor problems come up. Because the margin is very small and every change may affect our bottom line, I want to point out a couple of common-sense thoughts and experiences to ensure that your Poinsettia crop makes that bottom line a success. Poinsettias react very differently from area to area, variety to variety, and crop to crop. What may have worked one year does not necessarily work the next. To my interns I used to say, "You must feel what is going on in your Poinsettia crop." A successful Poinsettia crop depends so much on the environment it is

cultivated in, and that is something a grower should feel. It's as if the plants are communicating with the grower. I like to say, "Talk to your plants at least once a day."



URC were stuck in the morning about 5 hrs ago.



URC were stuck the day before and started to recover.



After two weeks cuttings have rooted and are off mist.

Propagation always starts with sanitation. Starting clean and keeping it clean will avoid most headaches with your Poinsettia crop. Most pests and diseases in Poinsettias can be avoided with climate control and by keeping the area weed-free. Scouting and early detection is crucial for a good result. Be ready for your cuttings; everything should be in place so they can be planted right away. The climate in the propagation area should be set at least the day before the cuttings arrive so the perfect climate can be established. Get your cuttings out of the box and stick them. If a cooler is available use the cooler, if not place the open bags on a table and start misting. The media should be saturated with water so no watering is needed right after planting. I like to water them after the first couple of days, as callus develops better with air around the base, but roots like the contact with the media. If possible, stick cuttings right away in the propagation area. If this is not possible, avoid stress during sticking and move plants as soon as possible into the right propagation climate.

The best climate for rooting Poinsettias is a soil temperature between 70-74°F and an air temperature between 76-83°F. Temperatures higher than 86°F will stress the cuttings, and lower than 68°F will lead to longer rooting times and diseases.

Mist the cuttings from the beginning, but keep in mind that at the same time water is your best friend and your worst enemy. Water quality is very important, as poor quality (especially high salt levels) can damage the cuttings. Cover wire-mesh tables to reduce airflow stressing the cuttings. Use a fine mist and avoid over-misting. Short intervals with little mist are the key, as best results are generated if no drops on the foliage are formed and run-off water is avoided (as it will leach out nutrients and damage the new foliage forming). Wetting agents can improve the misting result significantly. The first night and the next three days (first weekend) will decide the success or failure of the crop, and the climate is the key to success. After the first night in propagation, cuttings should be turgid, and after the first weekend they should be "standing" like soldiers.

Start with low light conditions; avoid airflow at plant level (but keep air moving slightly) and create a humid and warm (very warm but not hot) microclimate. When entering a Poinsettia propagation area during the first weekend (and throughout the first week), you should start to perspire after a couple of minutes.

Create a humid but still somewhat active climate. After the first weekend, start to increase slowly the stress level to force Poinsettias to root. This is done by decreasing mist, lowering the humidity, and slowly increasing light levels. After the first 7 days, callus should form, and after about 10 days, the first white root tips should come out of the callus. If the callus is getting bigger and bigger and no roots form, it is an indication that the stress level is too low; if callus turns brown, the stress level is too high (too hot, over-saturated media).

After the first 10 days, cuttings should start to develop. The perfect moment to mist is when cuttings start to dry off and wilt very slightly (foliage-edges start to roll up). There is no perfect recipe for telling time and intervals, as this depends on plants, climate, and mist systems used. Check cuttings on a regular basis and adjust the mist intervals (it can be partly automated by using a combination of light-accumulation and time control).

Start feeding as soon as callus forms, or at the latest, when first roots develop. Use low salt levels (EC between 1 and 1.2) and feed with every watering, using a balanced Cal-Mag based mix like 14-2-14 plus micronutrients. Best if



Too much mist leached out nutrients and damaged the cuttings.

kept growing, since hard plants won't branch well and will need a long time to get going. In Poinsettia terms, hardening off means to get them away from mist and prepare them for a more active climate (more air flow, slightly lower temperatures, less humidity, and higher light levels). Remember the climate Poinsettias need after planting and for the pinching period; that is what they should get used to.

Attention to the details:

To ensure a good and successful Poinsettia crop it must be close to perfect from the beginning on. Problems during rooting will affect the crop during the whole production time. For example heat and humidity stress in the propagation will affect the branching negatively, leading to fewer bracts. Any kind of stress should be avoided to ensure good quality young plants and to get a good start of the crop.

Avoid the following during rooting:

- Heavy wilting of the cuttings.
- Drying off of the leaves during the first days.
- High light intensity.
- Heat, i.e. temperatures above 90°F.
- CCC in high concentration - max. of 1,000 PPM.
- Fertilizing or spraying chemicals during high light levels.
- Misting with big drops.
- Too much mist.

In the August issue I will cover planting, pinching, and the vegetative period of Poinsettias which are the next critical stages in a Poinsettia crops.

Selecta News

During summer most trade magazines feature spring trials in their issues. A good way to recap what is new for 2011 or refreshing what one saw touring the trials are the videos Ball created. Click on the image to the right and watch me presenting Selecta's new varieties as seen in the store front of the 2011 Ball spring trials. For more videos visit their channel on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/pblanchard01>.

Next weekend is OFA Short Course time. Make sure to visit us at the Ball booth and pick-up the new Trixi™ flyer. A great tool to sell Trixi™ to retailers and to consumers. The new Selecta catalog is available as well, and in case you didn't get a copy yet, stop by and pick one up. Make sure to participate the Saturday morning session "A New Look at Problem Crops" (in two parts) starting 8:00 a.m. and stop by our booth # 1553.

fertilizer solution is washed off after feeding by using pure water. Fertilize early in the morning to avoid sunlight damage.

PGR treatments should start the moment new foliage forms (depending on varieties and the URC, this can be as early as 10 days after planting). A CCC / B-Nine tank mix works the best; concentration depends on the area and varieties. Sprays can be applied even if plants are still under mist. Apply late evening or early morning when mist is turned off and replace a mist cycle with the spray. The same rule applies for fungicide applications. Use preventive fungicide applications to avoid problems like Botrytis, Rhizopus, Pythium, and Rhizoctonia.

Week 3 of propagation is the time to **start hardening off** cuttings for shipping or planting. Hardening off Poinsettias by no means comes close to hardening off spring plants. Poinsettias must be

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