

Poinsettias on our minds

It is Poinsettia time, and I traveled all over the continent in November. Final Poinsettia stop was Europe where I visited our Poinsettia comparison trials and breeder trials.

This slightly delayed issue will feature Poinsettias, especially the ones I saw at growers and trials I visited in the U.S. at the end of November.

It includes the third and last part of our combo with a kick series, and this one is one of my favorites.

Selecta News will introduce you to our 2010 semi-commercial Poinsettia trial variety.

Remember, the NewsFlash is now on Twitter. Check it out and follow my tweets!

There is lots to read in the November News Flash, so sit back, relax, and enjoy this issue.

Sincerely yours,
Stefan Reiner



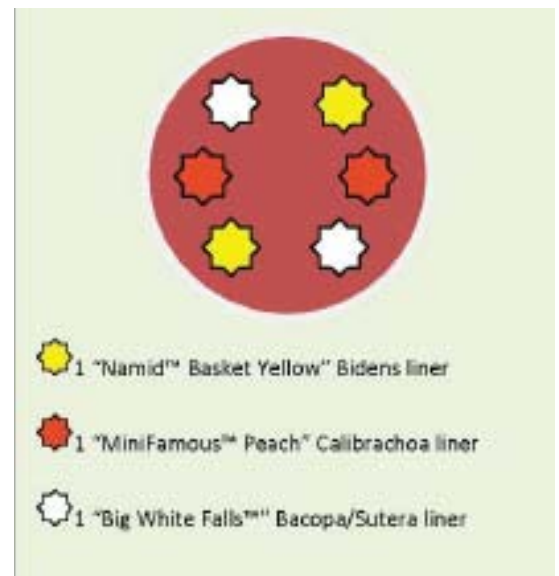
Variety of the Month

Christmas Beauty (SK 62) has been one of the outstanding varieties this year. It was part of our semi-commercial trial program, and many growers took advantage of it. It is a mid-season, low-vigor variety with sturdy stems. Perfect for Thanksgiving sales.

Combo with a Kick - 3!



This Combo with a Kick combines the bold colors of "Namid™ Basket Yellow" Bidens and "MiniFamous™ Peach" Calibrachoa with the soothing color and flowing habit of "Big White 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 Bidens "Namid™ Basket Yellow" with its bold, golden yellow, large flowers and great summer performance. A Bidens that works very well in

mixed baskets, not too compact but not too wild either.

Great contrast comes from the best-selling Calibrachoa "MiniFamous™ Peach." Calibrachoa are perfect for mixed baskets, the color is bold, and the dark center creates that appealing effect. The "MiniFamous™" Calibrachoa series is known for its 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. Sutera "Big White Falls™" is a pure white 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.

Production

Starting from rooted liners is quite straight forward, as all three varieties used have quite similar needs. Sutera, 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 from liners is about 9 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 2.0 by using 200-250 PPM N of a well-balanced fertilizer with micro nutrients. Keep temperatures at 65-75° F days and 50-60° 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 2,000 PPM. 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.

Poinsettias at Rainbow, B.C.

Rob O'Hara from Rainbow in B.C. sent me these images of his Christmas Day (SK 64) crop. He took advantage of our semi-commercial trial offer and grew a larger quantity of it. The variety has the vigor for different plant sizes, has thick sturdy stems, an excellent root system, and finishes perfectly right at Thanksgiving for shipping all the way into the beginning of December.

Rob said in one of his reports: *SK 64 (Christmas Day) - We love this variety! Roots best ever, stem strength and habit very upright, color and*





centers very good. We will grow more next year.

In his follow-up report a week later he wrote: *SK 64 (Christmas Day) has the best root system I have ever seen on a poinsettia and had a lot of wows and jaw dropping at the grower tour last week, I feel that this variety has great potential.*

Rob, to the left with our Pink Candy, also grew a good chunk of our new Christmas Beauty (SK 62) and this is what he reported about it:

SK 62 (Christmas Beauty) - almost same evaluation as SK 64, we really like this one for smaller plants.

Rob trialed Pink Candy (images to the left) and Wintersun (our top-selling white, dark foliage variety) last year and grew it as larger crop this year. He likes them both very much as well, and Wintersun got a lot of positive comments during the week 47 B.C. Poinsettia grower tour.

Rob is growing a lot of Christmas Feelings and colors in 6-inch pots. He also uses Christmas Angel in 13-inch pots (including tricolor combinations). He starts his crop from URC.

Selecta's new red (Super) Stars

In the October NewsFlash issue I introduced you to the new Selecta Poinsettias for 2010. I used the catalog images. I thought it would be a good idea to follow up with images from growers I took in week 47. This way you can see how they will look in production.

The first two are Christmas Eve (image right) and Christmas Beauty (SK 62). Both varieties are in the so-called "Premium" category. Growers ask me usually what they can use with the Premium™ series, a low vigor, round but upright growing series with good color on top. **Christmas Eve** fits the bill for timing. It is slightly more vigorous and upright growing compared to Premium™. **Christmas Beauty (SK 62)** has the same vigor and has a similar look but more and sturdier branches. It finishes mid-season and can be grown nicely together with Premium™.





Christmas Eve - early season variety (November 15-22, 7-7.5 weeks), medium vigor, upright, and sturdy.



Christmas Beauty (SK 62) - mid-season variety (November 20-27, 8-8.5 weeks), low vigor, upright, and very sturdy.



Christmas Day (SK 64) - mid season variety (November 25 - Dec 2, 8-8.5 weeks), medium-high vigor, and sturdy.

The next category growers are asking for is the "Prestige" category. A high vigor variety with extremely sturdy stems, nice V-shaped habit, and late mid-season finishing. **Christmas Day (SK 64)** fits this bill. Its advantages over Prestige™ Red are that it shows more color on top earlier and



it can be finished cooler. The images above show you both varieties side by side. Prestige™ Red is to the left and Christmas Day to the right in both images. Christmas Day (SK 64) is the variety Rob O'Hara from Rainbow reported so positively about.

The next variety on my list is **Happy Christmas (SK 70)**. It is a variety for the early season with medium vigor and an overall high quality look. Its color is stunning and will shine from the distance. A great variety for independent garden centers and growers looking for impressive plants.



Happy Christmas (SK 70) - early season variety (November 15-22, 7.5 weeks), medium vigor, and sturdy.



Noel (SK 67) - mid-season variety (November 20-27, 8 weeks), medium vigor, upright habit, and sturdy.

One of my favorites of the 2009 semi-commercial trial varieties is **Noel (SK 67)**. It is a medium vigorous upright growing variety with large bracts and lots of cyathias. It finishes mid-season, right for Thanksgiving sales. It shows a lot of color early on and can be shipped long before first pollen. This extends the shipping window quite a bit in both directions. If you are looking for a more versatile mid-season variety with great color and an impressive look, search no further, Noel is the right choice. It is a variety that can compete with Freedom™ and Prestige™. See images below comparing it with Prestige Red (left plant in both images).



Yes, a lot of new red varieties. Actually, and I am sure you noticed, Christmas Eve is not new for 2010. It was new for 2009. However, with over 3 million sold in its first year with good feedback so far, and I wanted to make sure it is in this report.

Selecta's best, tested and trusted by growers worldwide, are the Christmas Feelings series (our #1 variety world wide), Christmas Eve (use Wintersun and Pink Candy as color additions), Noel, and Christmas Day. Great color additions are Merry White and the all new Christmas Angel Marbella.

Selecta's 2010 semi-commercial trial variety



Our 2010 semi-commercial trial variety is **SK 72**. SK 72 is an early season variety with high vigor. It finishes November 15-22 (7.5 weeks). It is a vigorous variety with sturdy stems and large pointed bracts in a very good dark red. It has a V-shaped upright habit with very sturdy stems. A very clean plant with great dark green foliage and overall appealing look.

Make sure to take advantage of our 2010 semi-commercial trial offer. This is a chance to test upcoming varieties in larger quantities. Selecta - Varieties that work!

Selecta First Class, Inc.
P.O. Box 231306
Encinitas, CA 92023-1306
800-955 5644

<http://firstclassplants.com>