

FIRST CLASS NEWS FLASH



September 2006

It is like a tradition for us to update you on our stock plants with the beginning of our first shipments. This News Flash issue will cover our 2006 stock plant update, a Serengeti® Nemesia crop report, and more very useful information.

A clean start

Selecta First Class cuttings are shipping from two locations, Florexplo S.A. in Costa Rica and Irit Nursery in Israel. In Israel we have the larger part of our Geranium stock and about 1/3 of our Calibrachoa stock. Costa Rica grows all other stock except for Pot Carnations. Due to specific regulations, Pot Carnations ship from an on-shore facility in Canada. Shipping from only two off-shore locations will reduce split shipments and therefore shipping costs.



The two images above show part of the facility in Costa Rica (Geranium production), the Selecta crop manager Rodolfo (yellow shirt) and his assistant Manrique (blue shirt). We believe in a clean start, and so it is no surprise that our team does the utmost to ensure clean cuttings. Our Geranium production is USDA certified starting with our EE production in Germany and on the Canary Islands, which is supplying the clean stock cuttings to Costa Rica, and of course the E level in Costa Rica shipping cuttings to the U.S. and Canada. Israel is certified voluntarily, as the USDA does not require a mandatory certification for Israel (it is a Ralstonia-free country). Both farms follow the Selecta production, sanitation, and testing protocols. Both farms are audited on a regular base and visited by Selecta technical consultants ensuring highest quality standards. The images below show the inside of our Costa Rica Geranium production.



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The first product to ship from Costa Rica is Osteospermum. Geraniums will start shipping from Israel first, and Costa Rica will be starting in week 44. Selecta prides itself on treating all products with outstanding care following our strict protocols. We are on top of the latest developments, including new viruses, bacteria, or other threats. All of our products are produced following the toughest protocol we have (our protocols are developed for the most sensitive product and applied to the whole product range). So it is no surprise that our Osteospermum production looks like the images shown below.



All houses have all concrete floors, tables with a hanging-bag construction, trip irrigation, and 100 bag units per table (lower right image shows a sanitary unit separation -- after 100 bags the workers have to go through an additional sanitary step to reduce possible spread on tables). The lower left image shows the barrier for worst-case rain scenario. In addition to the huge drainage system shown on the previous page, each house is surrounded by a 10-inch concrete barrier (wall) to avoid any outside water entering the greenhouse. All houses feature double room (three doors) entry areas and are fully insect-screened. This is the basic construction for all Selecta houses in Costa Rica, no matter what crop we grow in it.



This year we added two more large production houses in Costa Rica and increased our Geranium capacity in Israel. On top of that, we improved our productivity per square feet by applying improved growing techniques. Our overall production was increased significantly and should not only ensure great availability but also outstanding quality throughout the season. Please don't hesitate to contact us for any questions you might have.

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Serengeti® Nemesia

Their incredibly brilliant colors will stun your customers and make your mixed planters and baskets irresistible.

Serengeti® inter-specific Nemesia boasts brilliant colors on large Nemesia-like flowers, adding striking color and flower power to mixed planters and baskets. After its introduction three years ago, inter-specific Nemesia quickly gained popularity because of its striking colors. The yellow and red colors are especially outstanding, and no other spring annual was able to come close to the displayed color power. Together with their larger flowers and mounded habit, they are perfect for combination planters of any kind.

Serengeti® is available in two different growth habits and a range of solid colors and bi-colors. Choose Serengeti® Upright for varieties displaying an upright habit, scented flowers, and extended outdoor performance. Choose Serengeti® for varieties displaying a mounded habit and striking colors. Offer diversity by finishing Serengeti® Nemesia in 4- to 5-inch pots, and mix them in combination baskets and planters. Serengeti® Nemesia is available unrooted (URC) and rooted (RC).

Propagation

Propagating inter-specific Nemesia is relatively easy when following basic recommendations. After arrival, stick URC with one cutting per cell in standard 102/105 cell trays, using a good-draining, airy substrate (like paper-pots or glued pots). Don't stick too deep and avoid over watering of young plants and water stress. After about 7 to 9 days under mist, cuttings should have rooted well, so start reducing mist as soon as possible. The average propagation time varies between 4 and 5 weeks. Pinching in propagation is an option but not necessary. Some growers prefer a non-pinch crop for smaller pots. Propagate at 70-74°F (21-23°C), and reduce temperature after roots have developed. Harden off plants before transplanting. Don't let finished rooted cuttings overgrow (getting root-bound) in the liner, as this will increase the chances for fungal disease problems. Inter-specific Nemesia requires increased air circulation and higher light levels.



Growing On and Finishing

Inter-specific Nemesia needs more attention than most other spring annuals. Attention to the details will help alleviate problems. Use a well-drained, peat moss-based substrate with low salt levels and a pH around 5.8 to 6.2. The fine roots require a well-drained soil and are sensitive to over-watering and higher salt levels.

Use one plant for 4- to 5-inch pots, five plants for 12-inch baskets. Do not transplant the liner too deeply (plant level with the new substrate or slightly above), as crown rot may occur. Crop time from a rooted cutting in 4- to 5-inch pots is about 6-8 weeks, and for 12-inch baskets about 9-11 weeks, depending on

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location, time of the year, and the liner. If the liner is not pinched, pinch during transplanting or right after. In high light areas, some growers prefer not to pinch their 4- to 5-inch crop, resulting in a looser plant habit promoting better air circulation. Too tight and extremely compact plants (also a result of too much PGR use and cold temperatures) are more susceptible to botrytis and other fungal diseases. Upright varieties are not as free-branching as mounding, varieties and therefore pinching upright varieties is recommended for all areas.

Start with a constant feeding program after roots have developed. Use a well-balanced fertilizer (like 20-10-20 + micro nutrients) and 200-250 ppm N. Watch the salt levels, shoot for an EC of 1.8-2.0, and keep a close eye on the root system.

The key to a successful inter-specific Nemesia crop is water management and paying attention to the details. Grow on the dry side; avoid wet feet, stagnant water, and overhead watering. Water in the morning and avoid overhead watering so plants are dry during the night. Maintain low humidity and avoid reducing temperature below the dew-point. Let media become dry between watering.

Cool temperatures and high light levels encourage branching, compact growth, and flowering. After roots have developed, the optimum temperature ranges between 65-75°F (18-24°C) days and 50-60°F (10-16°C) nights. Use cool morning treatments for better habit and earlier flowering. Start after side shoots have developed. Spray with 2,500 ppm B-Nine or 10-15 PPM Sumagic if PGR treatments should become necessary.

Watch for Thrips, Aphids, Leafminers, Botrytis, Phythium, and Thielaviopsis. Fight virus vectors like Aphids and Thrips and maintain sanitation when handling the crop. The application of preventive fungicide treatments during propagation and finishing will help, but correct water management, maintaining proper pH, increased air circulation, and good soil porosity are critical and will help alleviate problems.

Spice up your combinations with the incredible colors of Serengeti® Nemesia. Choose from colors like red, cerise red, apricot pink, yellow, and the two bi-colors sunset (orange and red), and yellow and white. Serengeti® Upright is available in yellow, violet, and cream. Check out our website at <http://firstclassplants.com> for more information, images, and great recipes.



Please don't hesitate to contact us for any questions you might have including scheduling, don'ts, and recipes.

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ColorPower® New Guinea Impatiens



More and more growers discover our ColorPower® New Guinea Impatiens. Their large flowers, uniform habit and flowering, distinctive color range, medium vigor, and outstanding grower, as well as outdoor performance, make them first choice when it comes to NGI. The best part is that Selecta First Class offers a volume discount, including all spring products, and your NGI order might just add the volume needed for the next volume price break. ColorPower® is the industry's most uniform series when it comes to vigor, habit, flower size, and flowering time. Three new varieties joined the line-up of 22 well differentiated and brilliant colors.



Fire

Lavender Flame

Purple Blue

Electric Orange

Salmon Pink

Pictures were taken at a grower in the Northwest in week 16 last spring (RC planted in week 05). Plants are in a 5-inch pot with one RC per pot, no pinch, no PGR. It **can't** get much better than that!



Orange Flame

Coral Flame

Deep Pink

Lavender Blue

Perfect White

For information, varieties, services, and NEWS, visit our website 'firstclassplants.com' and request our new catalogs.

Sincerely yours,
Stefan Reiner

First Class: Where innovation, reliability, quality, and customer service meet.

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