



By Melhem Sawaya

growing in the **GREEN**

California dreamin' - Part Two

Visitors this year were especially impressed with the many new introductions, and the sales ideas highlighted in the marketing displays

Editor's Note: This is the second instalment in Mel's recap of this year's California Breeders Showcase, more commonly called the California Pack Trials. Part One featured Mel's backgrounder on the Showcase. To review that introduction, go to our website and review Part One in our "Past Issues" section. And without further adieu, here's more sampling from this year's tour.

Ipomea Sweet Talk Light Green' (1) reflects new breeding in which the leaves are much narrower so they will enhance a combination rather

than dominate it. Ipomea is an excellent variety in combination. One one liner will fill a good part of a mixed container, which makes it an excellent value plant. Also, ipomea could be used as an annual ground cover; weeds would be unable to compete.

'Petunia Blanket Double Rose' (2) flowers fairly early in the season. The double petunia blankets add a rich look to any combination, even with those not as floriferous as a single petunia. The flowers last a long time and, in the summer, the flowering power increases due to high light and longer days. This makes it an excellent show and garden performer.

'Salvia Cathedral Lavender' (3) is the fourth addition to the Cathedral series. It is noted for its vibrant colour that can show

and perform well in many landscapes. Also, like many other *Salvia farinacea* that are produced vegetatively, they have a uniform colour and, through selection, a more uniform growing habit. 'Salvia Cathedrals' are excellent centres for combinations.

Container vegetable gardening is a reality and, if there is one variety that boosted this trend without any hesitation, it would be 'Tomato Tumbling Tom Red' (4) where you get over 200 tomatoes per plant when it is planted in a 12" or 14" pot. This is an example of providing great value to the consumer, who will respond by increasing the demand on that product. Also, 'Tumbling Tom' is excellent in large mixed containers, hanging baskets or pots where they can be mixed with strawberries and other edible plants.

Capitalizing on the success of the 'Tumbling Tom' tomatoes, 'Eggplant Ivory' (5) and 'Basil Aristotle' (6) are introduced for container vegetable gardening. These are great introductions! However, do not include these two varieties, or any new container vegetable, on a large scale. Try a few to test consumer response and increase your production the next year if feedback and sales are favourable.

'Delphinium Grandiflorum Summer Nights' (7) is one variety of perennial that will flower in the first season of planting in the greenhouse. Providing an excellent show, it will have consumer appeal when it is packaged properly. This plant is low energy in production and gives good value to the consumer.

'Begonia Illumination Peaches and Cream' (8) is the new addition to the trailing begonia lineup. It is excellent in both shade and sun, has many large double flowers, and features an excellent growing habit. 'Illumination' is excellent in hanging baskets, alone or in mixed containers. Like any other begonia, it should be produced in full sun in the greenhouse so it can take the outdoor elements better – especially the sun. This applies for any plant, but it is more critical for some of them.

'Pentas Graffiti Lavender' (9) is a good garden variety of pentas. Gardens that are planted with masses of them make an irresistible landing strip for hummingbirds. They are excellent in landscapes or mixed containers with other bird-attracting varieties.

'Philotus Exalta (Joey)' (10) is in its second year in production and growers are trying to find the best way to present this different plant. It shows best in larger containers as monoculture or





2

in mixed containers. Growing 'Joey' in 4" pots doesn't do it justice because it shows best when grown freely and is allowed to branch.



3

'Viola Trailing Violina Yellow' (11) is one of the new introductions of violas that will tolerate heat and will bloom the whole summer. As a matter of fact, it will come back the next year where the seed from the flowers will have germinated in many unplanned places. It is excellent for hanging baskets, containers on its own, and in mixed containers.



4

'Calibrachoa Million Bells Terra Red' (12) is the new addition to the series that started the calibrachoa craze. 'Terra Red' has a mounding, full growing habit that produces excellent hanging baskets or large containers. Like most other calibrachos, it flowers the whole season until frost.



5

'Mandevilla Sun Parasol Crimson Red' (13) is only one colour in the Parasol series. They have small, shiny leaves with stunning flowers. The series is perfect for June sales because all mandevillas flower by light accumulation, where the foot-candle accumulation required is four to six times that for a geranium or petunia. Pinching the tips will definitely delay flowering. It is excellent as a large patio pot and also in mixed containers. This is a high-end product – *let's leave it there.*



6

'Dahlia Dahlinova Hypnotica White' (14) is a larger dahlia that is a much better garden performer than the compact varieties. It has excellent container show, is profitable to grow and provides great consumer satisfaction. In addition to good garden performance, 'Hypnoticas' make great large containers and combinations.



7

'Petunia Fortunia Purple Vein' (15) features the happy medium between an upright petunia and a spreading variety, providing an easy-to-ship petunia and the excellent semi-spreading habit for the consumer. The vibrant colour with a deep purple throat makes it an excellent choice for colour coordination in mixed containers.

'Geranium Summer Idols Neon Purple' (16) is a good, all round geranium with dark zoning that fits in most sizes. It is good for 4" or 6" pots, in hanging baskets and with combinations.

'Petunia Sophistica Lime Rose Bicolour' (17) is definitely a different colour of flower. Not just a different shade of purple-red or blue, the variety has a range of colours, including lime, yellow and pinkish hues,



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etc., that make wonderfully colourful combinations. The plant habit is semi-trailing, so be careful – you do not want to sell an overgrown ‘Sophistica,’ as the plant centre could split.

‘Petunia Debonair Dusty Rose’ (18), like the ‘Sophistica,’ is a different colour shade that opens the way to having different combinations for a totally different landscape look.

‘Petunia Easy Wave Burgundy Star’ (19). The Wave series is complemented by the ‘Burgundy Star,’ which makes it a more colour-complete series. This is a well-advertised and well-known series that is easy to produce from seed and has excellent greenhouse performance. Consumers will be pleased with its garden performance.

‘Calibrachoa Can Can Mocha’ (20) is an especially good looking colour in this series. The ratio of leaves to flowers is perfect. With the increasing popularity of calibrachoa, new colours and series are continually being introduced. Try the new ones and, if they perform better, then shift to the newer series but don’t change just because it’s new.



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'Petunia Sunspun Series' (21) is another early flowering compact series that is suitable for 4" and 6" production. Try it in hanging baskets. Trial a few at your home to see how it will perform for the consumer. Taking care of the ultimate consumer is the basis for the success of our industry.

'Osteospermum Voltage Yellow' (22) is a good performer. With the new breeding of osteospermum featuring improved heat tolerance, it now flowers the whole summer. It is also a spectacular garden performer in landscapes due to its vibrant colours that bloom all summer long. 'Voltage Osteospermum' exemplifies these characteristics. It has bright yellow flowers, and lots of them.

'Euphorbia Breathless Blush' (23) is a new colour of euphorbia that you can combine with white euphorbias. 'Breathless Blush' will show well in large pots alone or in combinations with white colours; it will add to the combination but not overpower it. All euphorbias show well only in large containers due to the long flower stems. In addition, the flower-to-foliage ratio is too high for a small container.

'Argyranthemum Madeira' (24) is an early flowering variety in which the flowers last a long time and the new flowers will cover the old ones quite nicely. 'Madeira' can be grown in 4" and 6" pots, and large containers. The ratio of flower-to-vegetative growth is good. When 'Madeira' is given a long period of time to grow, the large containers will be loaded with flowers on a nice canopy of foliage.

'Calibrachoa Superbells Yellow' (25) is a new, improved, colour for this series. I like the Superbells because the vegetative ratio to flowers is higher than other calibrachoa, which makes it an excellent garden performer. This is because, during the sunny summer days, flowering is the easy part but building the plant body (vegetation) could be hard for calibrachoa with very high ratio of flowers to vegetation. 'Superbells Yellow' is excellent alone in every pot size and in hanging baskets.

'Lobularia Snow Princess' (26) is an impressive newcomer. Every year there is a standout new variety and this year it is 'Lobularia Snow Princess.' This is a trailing alyssum that doesn't want to go by that name. It has an excellent growth habit that, supposedly, will take high temperatures. The leaves stay green through



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six to seven layers of foliage that are loaded with white flowers. If 'Snow Princess' has that performance in our hot summers, which we will find out during our Trials this month (see ad on page 33), then it is definitely a winner for both growers and consumers.

'Petunia Pretty Much Picasso' (27) has definitely got a different flower – some will love it and others will be indifferent. It is what I call a "three-foot" plant because, if you look at it from a distance of 40" to 50," the flower will mix with the foliage and you will not see any colour, but with some artistic mixes, you can come up with a definitely different display.

'Petunia Supertunia Lavender Skies' (28) has brilliant colour, is very floriferous, and features an excellent trailing habit that makes it a natural for hanging baskets and mixed containers.

'Calibrachoa Minifamous Double Orange,' 'Amethyst,' 'Lemon,' and 'Magenta' (29) are colours in a new series that takes calibrachoa to another standard. These varieties are early flowering and, surprisingly, very floriferous for double flowers. They're excellent in hanging baskets and high-end mixed containers.

'Osteospermum Zion Copper Amethyst' (30) is one colour in this series. 'Zions' are quite colourful and compact, which makes them suitable for 4" and 6" potted plant production. In addition, 'Zions,' like many other osteospermums, can take the summer heat and will flower all summer long.

'Petunia Soleil Purple' (31) is a petunia that is extremely drought tolerant since it survives on very little water. Try this variety on a small scale and note the consumer response. We do not know much about the culture for flowering, daylength response, or what size pot it is really suitable for, but 'Soleil Purple' definitely reflects interesting breeding.

'Petunia Fame Yellow' (32) is an attention-getter. If you are always looking for a good yellow petunia to put in your mixes, 'Fame Yellow' is an excellent choice for its semi-branching habit and good ratio of foliage to flowers.

'Petunia Cascadia White Magic' (33) is another excellent trailing type of petunia with a robust growth habit. It has lots of clear white flowers and is excellent for hanging baskets and mixed containers.

'Petunia Littletonia White Sweet Pink'

