

NEW VARIETY STANDOUTS

With hundreds of new introductions making their debut at the 2016 California Spring Trials, it can be difficult to pick favorites. Here's a glimpse into the latest varieties that may make their way to your retail shelves.

By Jasmina Dolce



YEAR OF THE BEGONIA

As you're well aware by now, the National Garden Bureau named 2016 the "Year of the Begonia." Gardeners love begonias for a variety of reasons. Recent breeding presents versatility, tolerance to a range of environments and relatively easy maintenance. While visiting exhibitors this year, it was apparent that begonias remain a strong focus for breeders going forward.

1. Selecta's new Mistral series of trailing begonias is ideal for hanging baskets, with its large eye-catching blooms that will not easily drop. Two colors are currently available: Yellow and Pink.

2. New Topspin begonias, bred by Syngenta Flowers, can be produced and sold along with early spring annuals. They are tolerant to cool growing temperatures and have great field performance. Four colors and a mix are available (White is shown).

3. 'Evi Bright Pink', a new introduction from Beekenkamp, flowers all summer long and may just be your customers' last plant standing. It exhibits strong heat tolerance and flower power.

4. Benary's 'Funky Pink' is a novelty basket item from seed that is easy to grow and ship, and it performs well in mixed containers. Gardeners will love its "shredded" semi-double appearance and mounding habit.

5. The latest addition to Dümmer Orange's Unbelievable series, 'Tweetie Pie' features persistent flowering and strong branching that shows off blooms and dark foliage.

6. Green Fuse Botanicals displayed its pre-introduction begonia 'Double Beaucoup Pink Bicolor'. It presents a great display of color and will perform well in hanging baskets and combination planters.



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PRETTY IN PINK

Each year, there always seems to be one or two colors that dominate the new variety displays at Spring Trials. This year, various hues of pink — from blush to fuchsia — were everywhere.

1. One of Florist Holland's newest additions to the Garvinea collection, Sweet Surprise is a stunning pink gerbera. It is self-cleaning and produces a ton of flowers on one plant.

2. Heartbeat is a new color in Suntory's Surfinia petunia series. It boasts a very unique coloration, white blooms with soft pink heart shapes. This could be a huge seller for Mother's Day.

3. 'Pinki Pinks', bred by Jaldety, is a versatile plant that can be used as a groundcover or in baskets and combinations. It is hardy to Zone 7 and has a long flowering season with masses of pink flowers from early spring to late fall.

4. Sakata is celebrating SunPatiens 10th birthday this year. While the series is not new, the company continues to expand its lineup. 'Sunpatiens Spreading Pink Kiss' features an abundance of soft blush-pink flowers with a striking dark rose eye.

5. Part of the Whetman Pinks collection marketed by PlantHaven, dianthus 'Pinball Wizard' took eight years of breeding work and presents highly scented double flowers. It is covered in masses of fancy pink and white blooms above silvery blue foliage.

6. Danziger's 'Amore Queen of Hearts' presents a heart-shaped yellow and pink pattern. It has a semi-trailing habit, and is bred specifically for stability in its flowers.

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HARDY INTRODUCTIONS

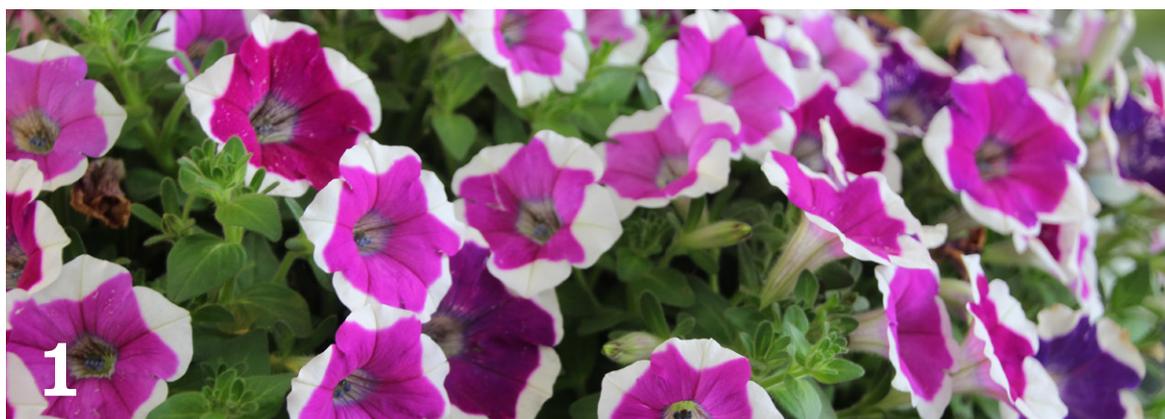
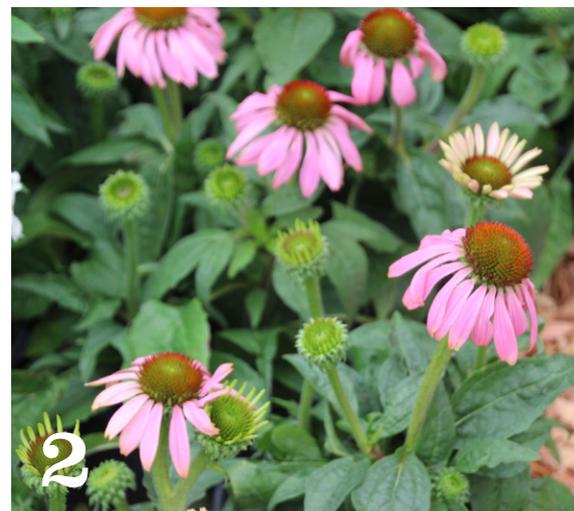
The demand for perennials continues to grow. Gardeners enjoy the one-time investment for repeat blooms year after year, so breeders are introducing really exciting, breakthrough varieties. Gardeners also want their perennial gardens to stand out, and breeders are listening.

1. New SpinTop gaillardia by Dümmer Orange is compact, features summer flowering and plays well in mixed combinations. 'SpinTop Yellow Touch' bears an interesting yellow edging on its red petals.

2. Echinacea 'Prairie Splendor Rose Compact' is a first-year flowering perennial with no vernalization requirements. It is naturally compact and flowers up to three weeks earlier than traditional varieties.

3. Hardy to Zones 4 through 9, Proven Winners' veronica 'Magic Show Pink Potion' showcases improved vigor and flowering. Baby pink flowers cover the top half of the plant in early summer to midsummer, and deep green foliage forms a low, wide mound.

4. 'Plum Cascade' by Terra Nova Nurseries is a trailing heucherella that can be used as a groundcover or in hanging baskets. It features deeply lobed, purple-silver leaves and free-flowering light pink flowers.



LANDSCAPE LOVERS

The landscape category has seen tremendous growth over the past few years, and the breeders have been paying attention. Consumers want plants that will survive the entire season, won't lose their color and will tolerate various weather conditions.

1. Westhoff's new Big Deal series is like a Crazytunia but with landscape performance. This durable new collection is bred to flower earlier, grow taller and spread wider.

2. Flame is Hem Genetics' latest introduction in the Chica series of dwarf marigolds. It boasts fully double, large flowers and provides color all season long.

3. 'Angelface Super Blue' by Proven Winners creates a massive presence in landscapes with its huge blue-violet flowers on tall, sturdy stems. It can also be used as a premium cut flower.





4. Pink Bicolor, the newest addition to Ball FloraPlant's EnduraScape verbena series, brings a novelty color to this verbena collection. The series stays in flower and keeps its color longer in the heat, and it is hardy to the low teens.

5. Trilogy, American Takii's series of mounding petunias, is known for its strong habit and non-fading blooms throughout the season. 'Trilogy Deep Purple' is new for 2016.



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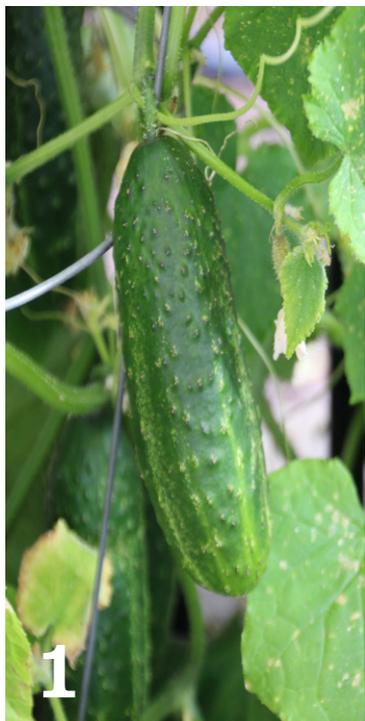
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GREEN GOODS



BACKYARD TO TABLE

As consumers become more health conscious, edible gardening continues to increase in popularity. From herbs to tomatoes to strawberries, new edible introductions are quickly becoming a staple at the Spring Trials.

1. 'Gherking', bred by PanAmerican Seed, is an early, bitter-free pickling cucumber. Finished height

is 6 to 12 inches, and it spreads 4 to 6 feet.

2. 'Sweet Valentines' is an experimental tomato by Hem Genetics. Its fruits are heart shaped and would make an excellent Valentine's Day item at retail.

3. Sakata's new hybrid shishito pepper, 'Takara', has a mild but rich flavor. The plant is compact with short internodes and has high production potential.

4. Hort Couture introduced a new line of edible

varieties, Culinary Couture, which is made up of 30 new varieties. One of our favorites is basil 'Bambino Purple'. It looks great in containers and has incredible color and fragrance.

5. Burpee's new Take 2 tomato combinations are perfect for small-space gardeners. Three combos are available, and they each produce one slicing and one cherry variety.

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