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Pack trial preview

PLANT BREEDERS REVEAL WHAT'S IN THE PIPELINE FOR LANDSCAPERS BY BRIDGET WHITE

EVERY YEAR, plant breeders host a huge coming out party. They all join together to set individual open houses over a week-long period. Collectively known as the Spring California Pack Trials, these events are an opportunity for breeders and marketers to show their customers (distributors, growers, retailers and landscapers) what their company is about, how to use their products and, more importantly, what new varieties they have to offer.

Plants displayed at Pack Trials will generally become available to the landscape trade in 2010 or 2011, so this event is a great opportunity to see what's on the horizon, learn culture tips and gets tons of planting ideas.

Below is a sample of what you will find at the Pack Trials that are scheduled from March 28 through April 5, 2009. For a complete listing of exhibiting companies, dates and locations, go to the National Garden Bureau's website (www.ngb.org).

American Takii

American Takii is featuring a theme of "Coming Together" to promote the blending of Sahin and Global Flowers into Takii & Company, Ltd. With the new brand will come a major display

change for the 2009 Pack Trials, now featuring a substantial landscaped area with multiple vignettes instead of row trials. The goal is to provide ideas on how to integrate annuals, perennials and vegetables as well as to show the habit and garden performance.

Of particular interest to landscapers is the addition of two new colors to its Pansy F1 Nature series, Frosty Blue and Yellow with Blotch. Nature is a hybrid between pansy and viola genetics combining the best attributes of both. The flower size may be small, about 1-1/2 inches, but the color show is huge, they virtually cover themselves in flowers. They maintain a neat habit, which is great for commercial landscapes.

Sahin will feature many perennials and grasses suited for landscape applications. Agastache Rose Mint, which has a fresh, mint scent, is excellent for landscape use. It branches very well and is extremely long flowering, beginning in March and continuing through to the first frost.



PROUD SPONSORS

DRIFT®
GROUNDCOVER ROSES



 **Benary®**



ANTHONY TESSELAAR PLANTS VARIETY FOCUS: FLOWER CARPET® 'AMBER'

Flower Carpet® 'AMBER' is the 3rd of the Next Generation of Flower Carpet roses and a complete breakthrough in color for ground-cover roses. This Next Generation breeding provided, among other attributes, improved disease resistance along with heat and humidity tolerance. Earlier Next Generation® releases include Flower Carpet 'Scarlet' in 2007 and Flower Carpet 'Pink Supreme' in 2008. For more information on this and other Anthony Tesselaar Plants, go to www.tesselaar.com.

Grasses have become mainstays for landscapers. *Carex flagellifera* Auburn is a copper bronze-colored sedge. It has an upright habit when young and gracefully arches when mature.

Ball Horticultural Company

Ball's themes this year will focus on what the company calls "retail holdability" and "reboundability," both with direct correlation to landscape performance.

Ball will be displaying numerous new series at this year's event. Among the varieties with the greatest interest for landscapers include Sun Spun Petunias and Breathless Euphorbia. Sun Spun Petunias require less water and handle lower temperatures for season-long impact. Ball shaped and early-spring flowering, this series is great for corporate plantings. Breathless Euphorbia can be compared to Euphorbia Diamond Frost. It is extremely low maintenance and uses little water when established. It is a demonstrated performer in planters, beds and mixed containers. Other featured series include Titan Vince, the industry's first hybrid vinca, and Taishan Marigold, a dwarf African with stronger stems.

Continuing on a long tradition of hosting landscapers during Pack Trials, Ball will have guided tours tailored to the needs of landscapers as well as a brochure featuring top-performing annuals and perennials for landscape use.

Bodger Seeds

Visitors to Bodger Seeds and Bodger Botanicals will find the company's usual displays of both seed and vegetative items but with a bit of a twist. This year, the focus will shift to showcasing products in different forms to illustrate versatility. From 4-inch pots to hanging baskets, combinations to in-ground beds, visitors will get to see just how many ways they can use these plants. Particularly interesting will be typically potted items displayed in-ground

to highlight landscape potential.

Two new items for Pack Trials 2009 are Ipomoea Sweet Caroline Quill Light Green and Sweet Caroline Quill Purple. Like the rest of the Sweet Carolines, these "sweet potato vines" are more reserved in habit than Marguerite and Blackie. Quills have very finely dissected foliage and add a texture to the Ipomoea class that has not been previously seen.

Ernst Benary of America

Avoiding overall themes in favor of spotlighting the genetics themselves, Benary's display will be emphasizing FastraX perennials (annualized perennials) and a new pansy series (developed for field performance). Both products have broad-based landscape performance and promote user success, saving time and money.

Benary will also have several new annual varieties that will be of interest to landscapers. The most exciting is the new Rudbeckia Denver Daisy. To celebrate the city's 150th celebration, the Denver Daisy was selected to be a symbol of "greening" and beautification of the city. Thousands of plants were planted around the city of Denver, and more than 2 million seeds were given out in packets to schoolchildren, at the local banks, etc.

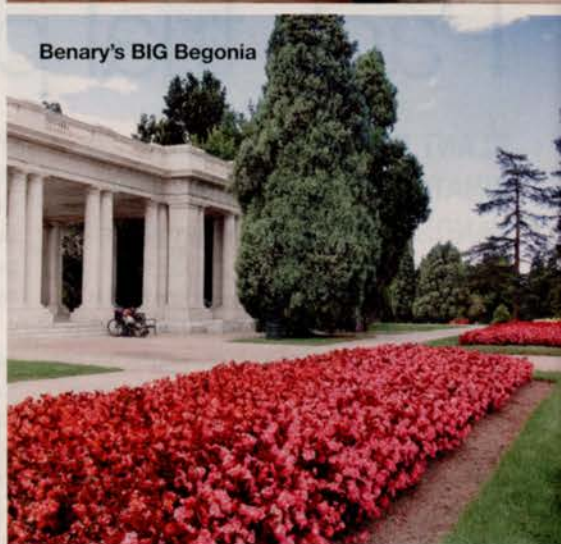
There will also be a lot of emphasis on the BIG Begonia series that was introduced last year. This series has huge potential for the landscape market, and the company is receiving lots of interest for all colors.

Goldsmith Seeds

With a theme of "Color 365," the Pack Trial displays at Goldsmith Seeds will show attendees how to extend the traditional



Ball's Breathless Euphorbia



Benary's BIG Begonia

window of sales and make money during off-peak times. Goldsmith will provide education and handouts to landscapers, and plans to emphasize varieties that are easy-care for maximum profitability.

For spring, think Aromas Snapdragons. One of three new series, it is bred for early-season performance and perfect to brighten up early spring beds. Well-branched plants produce numerous strong stems that resist lodging in the landscape.

For summer, Big Kiss Gazania is a heat lover that has super-sized plants and flowers that do very well in the landscape. It can take water stress without signs of being affected and comes in two interesting two-toned colors.

continued on page 46



CONARD-PYLE VARIETY FOCUS: DRIFT® ROSES

From the company that brought you The Knock Out® Family of Roses comes a revolutionary family of hardy groundcover roses. Drift® Roses are virtually maintenance-free with great resistance to rust, powdery mildew and black spot. They have tons of flowers from spring to early frost with very attractive foliage. Their naturally dwarf, true groundcover size is perfect for small gardens and combination planters. Drift Roses® complement any garden in any landscape.

continued from page 44

Mammoth Pansy is specifically bred for fall. This pansy is bigger, better and stronger. It is stretch resistant under warm conditions and has a robust landscape performance with large, flat flowers that offer maximum visual impact.

Proven Winners/Spring Meadow

Featuring extensive gardens, trials and displays that showcase both new and old varieties, Proven Winners is planning extensive opportunities for landscapers. Among the events already planned for landscapers are a spacing trial to demonstrate that Proven Winners plants cover more square footage than older forms, a landscape day hosted by EuroAmerican Propagators and printed information on which varieties are best for the landscaper.

In addition to the annual, perennials and grasses displayed by Proven Winners, Spring Meadow will displaying the varieties in its Proven Winners ColorChoice line. Spring Meadow's philosophy is easy-care plant material that does not need dead-heading, is vigorous in the landscape, and has wide adaptability and performance.

Under the theme "Color Your World," Spring Meadow will introduce the first true miniature buddleia, Blue Chip, which reblooms and reaches a maximum width and height of 30 in. It works in container gardens, perennial borders and mass plantings. Also new this year is a new series of reblooming hydrangea called Let's Dance. This series includes the first-ever new-wood blooming lace cap as well as a reblooming mophead with good fall color.

Jackson & Perkins/Suntory

Presented at the Jackson & Perkins Research facility, Suntory's displays for the 2009 Pack Trials will deviate substantially from themes that have been shown in the past. The main emphasis of the displays will be to show how well Suntory varieties

perform in landscape design, as well as in production settings. The plants will be set up in actual growing conditions for landscape purposes, not in a pot buried under bark. The landscape design will incorporate the most prolific Suntory varieties that are, and can be, used in the landscape under most North American conditions.

Marietta Bidens is one of the featured plants that is primarily for landscape and potted container use, not hanging baskets as are other bidens series. This series is very floriferous, tough and durable and can be used as a replacement for plants like marigold.

Significantly underused in landscape design, Nierembergia is available from Suntory in the Summer Splash series. Suntory Nierembergia are outstanding for landscape design, with a semi-mounding habit, durability and continuous flowering. Other featured varieties include multiple new colors in existing series such as Tapien and Temari Verbena, Astoria Phlox, Surdiva Scaevola, Million Bells Calibrachoa and Surfinia Petunias.

Syngenta Flowers

In a display that focuses on all four seasons, Syngenta Flowers' 2009 Pack Trials will show visitors how to increase profits throughout the year instead of just the spring. Featuring displays that are applicable for growers, retailers and landscapers, this year's event will highlight integrated ideas to drive revenue and profitability.

Among many existing, improved and new varieties, Syngenta is showcasing two varieties with exceptional potential for the landscape market.

The Lantana Bandana series offers a



Goldsmith's Mammoth Pansy



Spring Meadow hydrangea



Suntory Nierembergia

unique approach to this landscape staple. It has a mounding habit with extra large flowers that look great in the landscape and mass plantings. With its outstanding color and exceptional heat tolerance, Bandana will bloom all season long. New colors this season include White and Lemon Zest.

An interspecific begonia hybrid that performs well in both sun and shade, Begonia Braveheart is the ideal versatile workhorse for the landscape market. Newly available in Rose Bicolor, Braveheart has exceptional vigor and flower power that fills beds quickly with eye-catching results. 🌿

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BENARY VARIETY FOCUS: BEGONIA BIG

The new Begonia BIG series offers a large, spreading habit (12- to 15-in. spread) that allows landscapers to use half the number of plants, saving time and money. Large (2- to 3-in.) flowers cover BIG begonias, creating masses of color from full sun to full shade locations. At 15- to 18-in., BIG begonias are more vigorous and showy than traditional wax begonias. Their versatility and vigor in even the most challenging landscapes makes them a must have for any landscape.



Bloom boom

Kalmia latifolia Firecracker, from Dick Jaynes and Briggs Nursery, explodes with red colored buds that open white, then to light pink. This easy-care, leaf spot-resistant mountain laurel is ideal for gardens up to Zone 5 — and, if protected, it works great in Zone 4. With a mature height of 3-x-2 ft. in 10 years, the Firecracker is a compact plant that is great for foundational plantings or to complement broadleaf evergreens. In addition, because mountain laurel are "off-limits" to deer, it's ideal for woodland settings. It blooms from late spring to early summer and is best in full sun in a cool, moist, well-drained, acidic soil. It also performs well in partial shade. For more information, visit www.briggsnursery.com.

2009 All-America Selections winner

As this year's recipient of the AAS Cool Season Bedding Plant award, the Viola F1 "Rain Blue and Purple" variety creates a spreading pool of cool blue colors. This cold- and heat-tolerant "Johnny Jump-Up" plant will bloom in the South during fall and winter, and in the North in the spring and summer. The 1.5-in. blooms change color from purple and white to purple and blue as they mature. The plants spread 10 to 14 in. in the landscape or container, and feature a trailing habit for hanging baskets or patio urns.

For more information, visit www.aaswinners.com.



Olympic gold

During the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, PanAmerican Seed's Taishan Marigold stood out among the more than 200 million plants that were used in landscape beds throughout the city, and continually thrived throughout the high humidity and extraordinary heat of the summer months. Available in 2010 to the trade, the African marigold variety is available in gold, yellow, orange and mixture. It offers strong branching and delivers high-impact color. For more information, visit panamseed.com.



Light breeze

As part of Novalis' Plants that Work by Color brand for 2009, Diascia Breezee is a softly hued twin spur ideal for mixed containers and window boxes. It can also serve as an excellent border plant in a sunny spot. It blooms best when night temperatures are cooler, and is at its peak in early spring to early summer and again in autumn. Colors in the series include Appleblossom and Apricot (pictured). For more information, visit www.novalis.com.

Ebony excellence

Wayside Gardens' new Aquilegia "Black Barlow" greets spring with violet-black, tiny dahlia-like blooms that continue to impress for three months or more in Zones 3 through 8. Bred specially for cutting, this shade perennial's long-stemmed flowers reseed generously to increase garden beauty every year. This vigorous plant reaches up to 3.5 ft. in bloom, and about 18 in. wide. For more information, visit www.waysidegardens.com.



SOARING EAGLE VARIETY FOCUS: COCONUT PALM *COCOS NUCIFERA*

Coconuts are the most universal and widely distributed palm tree in the world. Although used mainly for food, fiber, and construction in other countries, the coconut has become a symbol of the tropics for homeowners and developers everywhere. Although the tree is typically very cold-sensitive, surviving through the winter only in tropical or sub-tropical climates, it has been used seasonally in temperate climates for years. Planted for the summer, coconuts can add an instant tropical look to any home or business for very little cost.

