

Highlights from Our Trial Garden Tour

On August 25, 2016 UMass Extension Greenhouse Floriculture Program and the Massachusetts Flower Growers Association co-sponsored a trial garden tour. We began at Cavicchio Greenhouses, Sudbury, MA where Kerri Stafford, Head Grower walked us through their new demonstration garden. Next we visited J.P. Bartlett's where Robin Messer showed their new introductions. We ended the day at Elm Bank Reservation, Wellseley with lunch under the beautiful shade trees and a tour of the Mass Hort Society trial gardens with David Fiske, Trial Garden Coordinator and Heather Gartner, Pleasant View Gardens.

It was interesting to see how specific plants performed during this particularly hot, dry summer.

Here are some highlights and comments about the plants on the tour:

Cavicchio Greenhouses – Here are a few favorites and comments from Kerri Stafford, Cavicchio Greenhouses for plants that were grown in the ground and potted up in containers. Comparison varieties of plants were grown next to the new cultivars being trialed. All trial garden plants were grown in the greenhouse using the same cultural methods as plants being grown for sale.

Plants in the Ground

Salvia 'April Night' is from Danziger and is the second year in our trial garden. It is bred to flower sooner than 'May Night'. We have found that it is much more florific and has a much nicer shape and habit than 'May Night'. It is a great, easy option that can be produced as an 8 week crop from planting to sales in the greenhouse, with great garden performance for the consumer.

Pervoskia 'Blue Steel' is a seed perovskia from Pan American. It performs much better than a lot of the old vegetative varieties and has a slightly more compact habit.

Marigold 'Fireball' is from Pan American seed is a very unique marigold. As the flower matures, the flower color changes between an orange and red. It looks great in both the ground as well as potted. When it is in flower the colors are always changing like a fireball.

Verbena Endurascape 'Pink Bicolor' is a new addition to the Endurascape series from Ball Flora Plant. The bicolor pink flowers are stunning. The Endurascapes were bred as a landscape verbena. They are a beautiful ground cover that stays in flower all season long. You never see dead flowers on it. Pink Bicolor helps round out the color selection in the Endurascape series.

Argyranthemum 'White Butterfly' is from Proven Winners. It is a nice addition to the Butterfly series.

Angelonia 'Archangel Cherry Red' is from Ball Flora Plant. It is one of the first "red" angelonias on the market. Large blooms cover the plant all season long.... A stunning addition to the Archangel series.

The Mega Copa Series is a new bacopa series out of Ball Flora Plant. The Mega Copas hold their flowers throughout the season and even in the hot humid days we had through August. The 'Blue' and 'White' are stunning.

Plants in Pots

Angelonia 'Archangel Cherry Red' - See above

Argyranthemum 'White Butterfly' - See above

Bacopa 'Mega Copa White' - See above

Lantana 'Lucky Red' is a new color addition to the Lucky series from Ball Flora Plant. It has a compact spreading habit and performs outstanding in the heat of summer.

Marigold 'Fireball' - See above

Verbena Endurascap 'Pink Bicolor' – See above

Celosia 'Dracula' is new from Pan American. It is a Cavicchio Trial Garden Favorite. It is a unique brain type celosia with a single giant comb per plant. A very fun addition to the celosia selection on the market.

Salvia 'Magic Wand' is a stand-alone salvia from Danziger. It is a large plant with beautiful purple flower stems. It is also a great in-ground plant that the pollinators love.

The Topspin series is a new Begonia series from Syngenta. The series is a green leaf series that contains a rose, pink, scarlet and white. It is an outstanding performer both in the sun and shade as well as in ground and potted.

'Sunstanding' Impatiens is a new hybrid impatiens series from Dummen. Much like the 'Sunpatiens', they have a great color assortment and are super garden performers both in sun and shade.

JP Bartlett's - Comments about new geranium varieties from Robin Messer.

Introduced this past spring, 'Forever Red', is a true, dark red geranium, with medium to high vigor; nice zoned dark green leaf; strong flower stems and excellent flower count.

'Mayflower II' flowers earlier than the original Mayflower with the same beautiful coral pink as 'Mayflower'. It is much more florific, with medium vigor, medium green foliage and no zoning.

'Aspen White' is our newest white that stays clean white in heat, flowers early and is florific with medium vigor, medium green foliage and no zoning.

#04319 – Orange has bright orange colored flowers, early flowering, floriferous, high in vigor, zoned with medium green foliage.

#05011 – Rose Red is similar to 'Patriot' but with a distinct color of its own. This variety has medium vigor, dark green leaves and large prolific flowers.

#07355 - Bright Rose has lots of very large flowers, medium in vigor and nice zoning. It received the highest rating in our trial garden.

Massachusetts Horticultural Society - Here are a few favorite plants that were chosen by Trial Garden Tour attendees with comments from David Fiske, Trial Garden Manager.

Lantana 'Lucky Red' (Ball Flora Plant) grew very well in the greenhouse in 4" pots. Plants flowered early and stayed compact and well branched. Out in the garden it preformed great, flowering all season and growing 24" wide and tall and no pest or disease problems.

Angelonia Angel Face series (Proven Winners) all performed very well with taller, strong stems, larger flowers, well-branched, and insect or disease problems. It was great as a container plant and nice cut flower.

Coleus 'Inferno' (Ball Flora Plant) has great color brightness - a stand out color. It grew great in 4" pots, sizing up early, no breakage and nice strong branching habit.

Verbena EnduraScape series (Ball Flora Plant) all bloomed early in 4" pots in the greenhouse and did not stop all summer long. Foliage was clean with no insect or disease damage, and a good pollinator plant.

Vinca Viliant and Titan series (PanAmerican Seed) from seed flowered in 9 weeks went all season no blight, disease or bug problems 24" really seemed to enjoy our 24 days of 90+ degree sunny hot dry weather. Very easy no care plant

Achillea millefolium 'New Vintage Rose' (Darwin Perennials) was a great early flowering perennial. It flowered all summer, was well-branched with many flower heads, compact growth habit, good, clean foliage and great color.

The new unnamed AAS entry zinnia Zahara type red stayed flowering in greenhouse to the end of garden season with no insects or disease problems, was compact 20" tall with large 3" flowers -great addition- hope it wins an award.

Thank You to our hosts/speakers Dave Fiske and staff at Elm Bank and Mass Hort Society; Laura Abrams and Robin Messer at JP Bartlett; Paul Cavicchio, Kerri Stafford and Cathy Davis at Cavicchio Greenhouses; and Heather Gartner, Pleasant View Gardens.

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