



Outstanding Annuals In 1997
 Last week we looked at several outstanding perennials that Dr. Robert Berghage evaluated at the University Park Trial Gardens in 1997. They included Echinacea Magnus, Heuchera Purple Palace, Eryngium Blaukappe, and Digitalis Apricot.

This week we will look at several outstanding annuals including verbenas, marigolds, petunias, begonias and others. In all, Dr. Berghage, staff and volunteers planted over 800 cultivars in the 1997 trial gardens. Their results are reported in "Friends of the Garden, Fall, 1997".

Real standouts, in 1997 were Verbena Romance Pink, and Romance Deep Rose. They performed very well, with numerous bright flowers in July and August. Heirloom Apple blossom and Heirloom Light Blue produced pastel flower colors that make a nice display combined and other bedding-plants Verbena Imagination, a former AAS winner grew well, but flowered poorly.

It was also a very good year for the seed geraniums like the cultivar Marvick Star, was outstanding with vigorous growth, and good flower production. The gazania were very nice this year too. Daybreak Bright Orange and Daybreak Red Stripe were both vigorous and flowered profusely.

Many annual plants started slowly last May but finished strong by September. The fibrous begonia performed well late into the season. Victory Greenleaf Rose was one of the nicest, with outstanding flower color and contrasting foliage.

were two of the most colorful plants in the garden in August and September.

They were vigorous and uniform, did not suffer from any disease problems and were only slightly bothered by Japanese beetle.

The marigolds were all smaller than normal in 1997, but all performed well late into the season. Several of the nicer cultivars were Luna Orange, Luna Yellow, Hero Bee and Safari Tangerine.

The vincas were slow growing and small. However a few seemed to be able to tolerate the cooler season better than others. The Cooler series was best. The cultivar Cooler Icy Pink was best.

The grandiflora petunias performed much more poorly than the other types (floribunda and multifloras). Storm White was the best white in the trials. By far the best overall petunias were the "wave" series, Pink Wave and Purple Wave.

Of the milliflora petunias the best cultivar is still Fantasy Pink Morn. Lirica Showers Blue and Lirica Showers Rose were interesting new petunias for this year.

They have very small flowers (1/2 inch) and tiny leaves on prostrate almost woody stems. They performed well in the garden.

Another interesting "new" plant for the University Park garden was he Cape Daisy (Osteospermum). These plants flowered well in the spring but flowering dropped off in the summer. In the fall many succumbed to disease, with the exception of the cultivar Seaside.

White plants on both sides died, these plants were still going strong in September. They produced a reasonable number of light purple daisy like flowers all season long which graced their dark green succulent foliage. This cultivar was vigorous but compact.

The most interesting new impatiens were the cultivar Super Elfin Sunrise. This cultivar had spectacular unique flowers with orange centers and fuchsia edges.

There were a number of nice cut flower plants in the garden this year. Sunflower Valentine had numerous nice medium/small lemon yellow flowers on long stems. Cut flower asters of the Matador series from benary were nice double flowered asters.

The cultivar Matador Fiery Red for example was red with white centers on long stems. These plants flowered a bit later than other cut flower asters in the garden but they were worth the wait.

For a complete summary write to: Dr. Robert Berghage, director, Horticulture Trial Gardens, 102 Tyson Blvd, University Park, PA 16802. Please include a \$10 check made out to the Pennsylvania State University.



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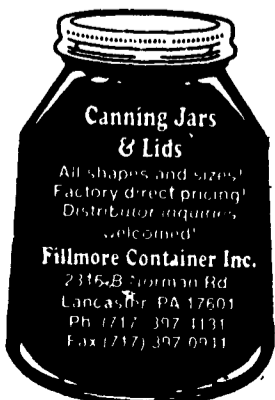
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