

# 1995 ASCFG National Cut Flower Trials

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One of the most interesting parts of conducting the ASCFG Cut Trials is talking to the participants and reading the reports. Many participants commented on the record drought that hit much of the upper midwest and northeast. Others had more rain than they could handle. Not surprisingly, the difference in results between growers was amazing-- a particular species or cultivar was both the best flower in the world to one company and the worst to another. Each year, however, a few species do well everywhere and this year was no different.

The *Gomphrena Bicolor* Rose from American Takii was a hit for just about everyone, receiving some of the highest scores of the year. The vigorous, productive plants produced large flowers on strong stems. It was used both as a fresh filler flower and a dried. The pink outer color seemed to darken after drying which provided an even greater contrast with the white center.

The five Benary's Giant Dahlia Zinnias all scored well in the trial for being productive the whole season and easy to grow. Particularly outstanding were 'Crimson Monarch' and 'Scarlet Flame' which received exceptional remarks such as 'the best zinnia ever' and 'the only cultivar to do well in our part of the country'. While some participants reported powdery mildew, the bane of zinnia production, the Benary cultivars appeared to have some resistance and mildew problems often appeared late in the season if at all. Look for more colors of this series to be included in the 1996 trial.

*Asclepias curassavica* 'Silky Gold' from Kieft made another great impression. This cultivar was included again in this year's trial because it received only a limited test in 1994, but the same great results appeared. The novel pale-orange color and long, easy to cut stems were noted. Kieft's *Monarda hybrida* Lambada also did well with the people looking for something different. The purplish spikes had an excellent vase life, dried well and had an interesting fragrance.

Not to be left out, Sakata included two cultivars which did particularly well. *Statice* Excellent Light Pink Shades wowed participants with great colors which were easy to sell. Plants produced many long-stemmed flowers and were drought resistance. The *Celosia* Sparkler Wine is another addition to this popular series, noted for its vigorous growth and strong stems.

The ASCFG National Cut Flower Trials were conducted by 45 growers and universities around the country. Seed were donated from several breeders and distributors. Evaluations were made by the growers themselves and included approximate yield per plant, stem length, market appeal, ease of cultivation, chance that the crop would be grown again the next year and comments. Twenty nine evaluations were returned to John Dole, Oklahoma State University for final compilation. **Thank you to all of the participants** for their work keeping records (many returned results despite a record drought in parts of the country) and to the **seed companies** for donating the seed. A special thanks to Randall Smith for helping me send out the seed and prepare this report.

## Trial Seed Suppliers

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American Takii, Inc.  
301 Natividad Rd.  
Salinas, CA 93906

Ernest Benary  
1444 Larson St.  
Sycamore, IL 60178

Kieft Bloemzaden B.V.  
2209-B Bulson Rd.  
Mt. Vernon, WA 98273

Sakata Seed America, Inc.  
18095 Serene Dr.  
Morgan Hill, CA 95037

## Trial results

Company - Cultivar	Yield (stems/plant)	Length (inches)	Market appreciation rating <sup>2</sup>	Repeat again rating <sup>2</sup>	Ease of cultivation rating <sup>2</sup>
<b>American Takii</b>					
Celosia Pink Candle	4.8	37.3	3.6	4.6	5.0
Flowering Kale Sunrise	0.5	17.3	1.8	1.6	3.3
<sup>1</sup> Flowering Kale Sunset	1.0	23.3	1.6	1.8	4.3
Gomphrena Bicolor Rose	58.8	15.9	4.3	4.5	4.7
Statice Friendly Yellow	30.8	16.5	2.3	2.4	3.7
<b>Ernest Benary</b>					
<i>Ammobium alatum</i> Bikini	19.4	13.3	3.5	3.5	4.3
<i>Helianthus annuus</i> Cutting Gold	3.2	42.1	4.3	3.8	4.8
<i>Limonium sinuatum</i> Compindi Light Blue	10.5	18.1	3.3	3.3	4.0
Lobelia Compliment Mix	2.8	14.8	2.8	3.5	3.0
Lobelia Fan Cinnabar Rose (Pelleted seed)	8.0	16.3	3.0	2.6	3.2
Lobelia Fan Deep Red (Pelleted seed)	9.1	22.1	3.0	3.0	3.0
<sup>1</sup> Lobelia Fan Orchid Rose (Pelleted seed)	- <sup>3</sup>	-	-	-	-
Lobelia Fan Scarlet (Pelleted seed)	5.7	12.6	3.3	3.3	3.4
<i>Monarda didyma</i> Panorama	10.5	26.8	3.0	4.0	4.4
Zinnia Giant Dahlia Rosa	32.9	17.5	3.8	4.1	4.8
Zinnia Giant Dahlia Crimson Monarch	28.9	17.2	4.2	4.5	4.8
Zinnia Giant Dahlia Eldorado	21.3	14.5	3.6	4.0	4.8
Zinnia Giant Dahlia Hallo	26.5	16.3	4.5	4.3	4.5
Zinnia Giant Dahlia Scarlet Flame	28.5	17.0	4.3	4.3	4.8

## Kieft Bloemzaden

<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i> Rose Barlow	perennial <sup>4</sup>				
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i> Christa Barlow	perennial <sup>4</sup>				
<i>Asclepias curassavica</i> Silky Gold	8.0	30.3	4.5	4.3	5.0
Carthamus Yellow Grenade	1.8	15.3	2.0	2.0	2.0
<i>Euphorbia marginata</i> Kilimanjaro	6.9	20.1	3.4	3.2	4.1
<i>Gypsophila elegans</i> Lady Lace	3.0	11.5	2.3	1.6	2.8
<sup>1</sup> <i>Helipterium roseum</i> Red Bonnie	8.0	6.0	2.0	1.3	1.7
<i>Helipterium manglesii</i> Timeless Rose	4.2	10.2	3.4	3.0	3.3
<i>Limonium sinuatum</i> QIS Dark Blue XL	19.9	16.4	3.8	2.8	4.0
<i>Limonium sinuatum</i> QIS Soft Pastel Shades	15.5	14.9	3.8	3.6	3.8
<i>Linaria purpurea</i> Canon J. Went	14.7	18.3	2.8	2.8	3.8
<i>Monarda hybrida</i> Lambada	10.0	19.7	3.4	4.0	4.6

## Sakata

Aster Matsumoto Blue Tipped White	4.3	17.6	4.0	3.6	3.2
Aster Matsumoto Pink Tipped White	5.8	19.3	3.1	3.0	4.2
Aster Matsumoto Lavender	5.0	21.5	3.6	3.0	3.6
Celosia Sparkler Wine	12.8	20.3	4.0	4.0	4.6
Celosia Sparkler Formula Mix	11.8	13.1	3.0	3.1	4.1
Snapdragon Sonnet White	7.3	11.2	3.3	2.3	4.0
<sup>1</sup> Snapdragon Sonnet Mix	5.0	15.0	3.3	2.6	4.0
Statice Excellent Light Pink Shades	15.1	16.9	4.3	4.4	3.8
Statice Excellent Formula Mix	14.0	17.0	4.0	3.6	4.0
Sunflower Moonbright	3.0	43.6	3.5	2.5	4.4

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<sup>1</sup>Data represents five or fewer respondents.

<sup>2</sup>1 to 5 scale, with 5 being the best.

<sup>3</sup>No results reported.

<sup>4</sup>Perennial which did not flower in first year.

## Summary of comments

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For each species '+' refers to the good qualities of the cultivar and '-' refers to potential problems. The number in the parenthesis refers to the number of respondents who made the comment. If no number is present, then only one person made the comment. Note: many people did not make specific comments on each cultivar and comments in some cases have been shortened because of limited space or similarity to the comments of other participants.

### **American Takii**

#### **Celosia Pink Candle**

- +Long flowering period (2), grew well once established, took heat well.
  - Early flower didn't keep pink color, poor germination, not a lot of market demand as a solid bunch/single stem item.
- Similar to 'Pink Tassles'

#### **Flowering Kale Sunrise**

- +Color (2), good germination, strong plants, good postharvest, customers loved them.
  - Many insects (2), plants bolted before coloring up and didn't stand up.
- This species did best in cool weather and probably did not do as well in the trial overall because we were not able to get the seed to the participants until late February.

#### **Flowering Kale Sunset**

- +Turned beautiful pink and white in the fall, color variable but intense in some plants.
  - Insects, poor germination, not marketable, limited use in our market.
- This species did best in cool weather and probably did not do as well in the trial overall because we were not able to get the seed to the participants until late February.

#### **Gomphrena Bicolor Rose**

- +Color (5), held color well when dried (2), true bicolor (2), easily cultivated (2), easier to pick than purple and rose (the stronger stems tangled less), very vigorous plants, tolerated drought well, large heads, tremendous amount of blooms, good germination, long flowering time, lasted 8 days as an untreated fresh cut, seed had 90% germination.
- Almost too short to use in mixed bouquets, leaf blight late in season, stems sensitive to humidity after dried, hard to harvest, disease on foliage, unknown leaf spot, did poorly in greenhouse even though other cultivars did well.

#### **Statice Friendly Yellow**

- +Color (5), long stems (3), dried well, strong stems for a yellow statice, nice branching, vigorous, full plant, productive and early, some flowers were pale yellow--customers liked pale yellow.
- Flowers shattered easily (2), difficult color to use or sell (2), plant flopped over, many stems but hard to find good ones, stems a little short, very susceptible to browning of flowers, flowers skimpy, flowered late.

### **Ernest Benary**

#### ***Ammobium alatum* Bikini**

- +Many flowers per stem (2), many stems per plant (2), big flowers, plants kept growing, nice white, sturdy stems, dried nicely.
- Soft stem when dried, Japanese beetles loved them, plants died of chlorosis in plug tray.

#### ***Helianthus annuus* Cutting Gold**

+Color (4), good postharvest life (4), flower size (3), very uniform (2), strong center stalk, side shoots strong with good length, long stems, flowers opened well, flowers with pollen opened up better, early flowering, these sunflowers were so perfect - like silk ones - the only big sunflower worth growing.

-No problems (3), too short, bacterial leaf spot, has pollen,  
Similar to 'Sunbright'

### ***Limonium sinuatum* Compindi Light Blue**

+Color (3), blended well with most flowers, strong stems, plant were huge, nice heavy heads, early flowering.

-Grew nice and healthy but few flowers, plants grew slowly, few stems, tiny flowers, no flowers, short, have grown much better purple statice than this one.

### **Lobelia Compliment Mix**

+Colors (3), lasts long, strong stout stems.

-Weak stems or plants (3), poor field establishment (2), slow grower, poor root system, never flowered, did not germinate, short stems, uneven production.

This cultivar may perennialize and we may have more comments next year.

### **Lobelia Fan Cinnabar Rose (Pelleted seed)**

+Color (5), sturdy stems.

-Poor germination or field establishment (2), short, limited use for shape, yield low.

This cultivar may perennialize and we may have more comments next year.

### **Lobelia Fan Deep Red (Pelleted seed)**

+Color (3), fast bloomer, good postharvest, easy to grow, sturdy/straight stems, fall flowering, grew easily.

-Short, wilts easily, slow grower, too long to transplant, floppy flowers, not marketable, required special care in greenhouse, tricky to condition.

This cultivar may perennialize and we may have more comments next year.

### **Lobelia Fan Orchidrose (Pelleted seed )**

-Didn't germinate or grow well (3), no data collected.

This cultivar may perennialize and we may have more comments next year.

### **Lobelia Fan Scarlet (Pelleted seed)**

+Color (5), long postharvest, nice spikes, grew well, plants looked great, sturdy/straight stems,

-Didn't germinate or grow well (3).

This cultivar may perennialize and we may have more comments next year.

### ***Monarda didyma* Panorama**

+ No mildew (2), strong plants, lots of different colors, grew easily from seed, nice filler-looked great with dahlias, nice scent, good postharvest--wilted on hot days but would recover, nice mix, good germination, good vegetative growth.

-No problems, powdery mildew, plants looked healthy until they started to bloom--after which they looked sick, wilted in heat after cutting, needed to pick off spent flowers, lots of bees on plant when cutting, stems were short at first but were longer later in season.

### **Zinnia Giant Dahlia Rosa**

+Color (7), long stems (4), very productive (2), flower size (2), decent disease resistance, good postharvest, a beautiful zinnia.

-No problems (2), color okay but appeared washed out, lacked intensity, color not as marketable as reds or oranges, could use staking.

### **Zinnia Giant Dahlia Crimson Monarch**

+Color (5), long stems (3), good postharvest (2), flower size (2), sturdy stems (2), long harvest period, good germination, a really good red, fully double flowers, thrived in drought, good producer, lasted up to eight days as an untreated fresh cut.

-Powdery mildew (4), no problems, grasshoppers, needed to be staked, florists complained that they didn't hold up as well.

### **Zinnia Giant Dahlia Eldorado**

+Color (8), flower size (2), good branching (2), long stems (2), sturdy stems (2), productive (2), good postharvest, no mildew, long harvest season.

-Color faded-especially in heat/looked old before cutting (5), powdery mildew, Xanthomonas leaf spot, less double than other varieties.

### **Zinnia Giant Dahlia Hallo**

+Color (8), large flowers (4), good branching (2), strong stems, good germination, long stems.

-Powdery mildew (4), slugs, grasshoppers, stems needed to be staked, no problems, weaker stems than Crimson Monarch, color faded.

### **Zinnia Giant Dahlia Scarlet Flame**

+Color (6), productive (2), long stems, good branching, large flowers, decent disease resistance, strong stems, stems got longer as season progressed, good postharvest life.

-Powdery mildew (3), florists didn't care for this color.

## **Kieft**

### ***Aquilegia vulgaris* Rose Barlow**

Perennial, didn't flower first year. Preliminary reports indicate vigorous growth.

### ***Aquilegia vulgaris* Christa Barlow**

Perennial, only a few plants bloomed in first year. Preliminary reports indicate vigorous, drought resistant growth.

### ***Asclepias curassavica* Silky Gold**

+Color (3), strong stems (2), flowered late in season, long stems, no disease problems, easy to care for.

-Flowers took too long to fully open--hard to decide when to harvest (2), wilted during harvest (2), butterfly larvae, seed pods formed before some flowers opened.

### ***Carthamus* Yellow Grenade**

-Hard to germinate and get a crop, many plants were short and unusable, plants weak, went to seed without being harvested, foliage dried out, buds turned yellow.

### ***Euphorbia marginata* Kilimanjaro**

+Nice filler (3), unusual leaves/interesting (3), beautiful (3), striking markings, easy, germinated much faster than regular 'collected seed', grew well in drought, larger than past varieties.

-Low germination(3), wilted (3), only one stem per plant (3), no problems (3), latex (2), stems weren't long enough, shorter earlier varieties not as good as the old tall variety, very pretty plant but very different from the native *Euphorbia* and therefore had no commercial value.

### ***Gypsophila elegans* Lady Lace**

+Wonderful filler (2).

-Dried out when weather got hot, did not germinate in field, succumbed to diseases, not a cut flower variety, muddy looking, very short plants, tiny flowers, not a good producer, didn't stand up tall in row,

should have started in February and planted out in early April, plugs looked good going into the field but rapidly declined.

### ***Helipterium roseum* Red Bonnie**

- +Everyone liked the flowers, dried well, good germination.
- Short, aphids, rabbits, seedlings never established.

### ***Helipterium manglesii* Timeless Rose**

- +Color (3), dried well (2), easy to germinate, interesting flower, nice flower size and shape, bloomed early.
- Too short (2), rabbits (2), aphids, short season in field.

### ***Limonium sinuatum* QIS Dark Blue XL**

- +Color (3), strong stems (2), productive (2), healthy plants, long stems, excellent color, rebloomed nicely after cut, uniform height and flowering times, large heads, heavy stems, easily harvested.
- Late to flower (3), no problems, no blooms, short.

### ***Limonium sinuatum* QIS Soft Pastel Shades**

- +Colors (5), good germination (2), dried well, strong transplants, earliest to harvest, flowers filled out well, healthy, easy to grow, strong stems.
- Short (2), not productive (3), didn't withstand drought well, some colors didn't develop flowers fully, weak looking, washed out, not good for drying.

### ***Linaria purpurea* Canon J. Went**

- +Beautiful/unique flowers (5), favorable postharvest, spike shape very useful, lacey/delicate filler.
- Too short (2), too many stems needed to make it noticed in a bouquet, low germination, washed out flower color, flowers opened randomly and unevenly--could not harvest useable sprigs.

### ***Monarda hybrida* Lambada**

- +Great postharvest life (2), striking flowers, strong stems, long flowering period, good for mixed bouquets but consumers didn't buy it by itself -- wholesalers liked single species, dried nicely, great fragrance, nice color.
  - Individual blooms turned brown before the flower cluster was fully developed, no problems, poor germination, smelled, looked like a weed but seemed to sell well.
- Similar to *Monarda citriodora* (Lemon Mint, Texas Horsemint).

## **Sakata**

### **Aster Matsumoto Blue Tipped White**

- +Color (4), fairly tall in growth, much better than older varieties, always sold, new look--different on angle of observation, long postharvest life, nice tiny bouquets, sold well.
- Whitefly, leafminer, some flowers malformed, bloomed once and plants died out, low productivity.

### **Aster Matsumoto Pink Tipped White**

- +Color (3), good postharvest life, lasted five days as untreated fresh cut, customers liked, did well in drought, tall.
- Too short (2), whitefly, leafminer, frosted before anything else, plants didn't do well in field, first sowing produced only 4-inch stems--second sowing produced 10-inch stems, flowers were slightly larger than a quarter.

### **Aster Matsumoto Lavender**

- +Color (4), tall, good markings, popular at the market, performed a little better than pink and blue tipped cultivars.

-Too short, very sensitive to cold, color similar to other Matsumoto cultivars, whitefly, leafminer, got aster yellows a bit early--was only able to make one early cut.

### **Celosia Sparkler Wine**

+Color (3), good in bouquets and by the bunch, grew well, no stem rot in field, sturdy stems, nicely formed heads, good foliage, very vigorous, fast grower.

-No problems (2), entire Sparkler series was a bit short for easy use in mixed bouquets, didn't dry well, flowered too soon in field and didn't get the needed stem length.

### **Celosia Sparkler Formula Mix**

+Color (2), easily grown (2), long/stocky stems, nicely formed heads, interesting novelty flower, useful in mixed bouquets.

-Poor production in field (3), unusual form--not much market appreciation, didn't dry well, too many dull shades.

### **Snapdragon Sonnet White**

+Nice bright white, beautiful, healthy, early crop did well but too short, early.

-Too short (2), midsummer problem with insects in flowers.

### **Snapdragon Sonnet Mix**

+Really beautiful colors (2).

-Too short.

### **Statice Excellent Light Pink Shades**

+Color (4), productive (3), long stems (2), flower heads filled out nicely, flowered until mid season, good germination, fairly good drought resistance, early, easy to harvest, nice quality.

-Low production (2), brittle when dried, flowers didn't develop later in the season.

### **Statice Excellent Formula Mix**

+Color (2), long stems (2), high yield, flower heads filled out well, strong stems, good production, good quality flower early in season, one light yellow in assortment -- would like to have this color.

-Heads didn't fill out well, flowers didn't develop later in the season, small flower heads.

### **Sunflower Moonbright**

+Color (5), flower size (3), easy to grow (2), excellent to get both center and side stalks, often two flowers on side stalks, great quality for farmers markets--not for florists, mixed well with flowers, very uniform.

-Pale yellow color (2), a high percentage of misshaped petals, short, side stalks were short, not nearly the sunflower that 'Sunbright' was, if the plants got big -- they won't hold their heads up in the field or as a cut, postharvest was poor.

## Trial Participants

Marylyn Anderson  
Flowering Meadow Farm  
Damascus, MD

Frank and Pamela Arnosky  
Texas Specialty Cuts  
Wimberley, TX

Douglas and Gloria Austin  
Austin Gardens  
Flushing, MI

Phil and Dorothy Bartlett  
Ocean View Farm & Greenhouses  
Nantucket, MA

Lyn Bogdan  
Orlando, WV

Lynn Byczinski  
Fairplain Farm  
Lawrence, KS

Leon Carrier  
Gaithersburg, MD

Martin and Theresa Connaughton  
Wilderness Flowers  
Sante Fe, NM

Barbara Cospers  
Cospers Flowers  
Highlands, NC

Suzanne Dayton  
Dayton Farm  
East Hampton, NY

Janet Foss  
Everett, WA

Roseann Greenberg  
Forever Green Farm  
Allentown, NJ

Jim Harbage  
South Dakota State University  
Brookings, SD

Jeff Hartenfeld  
Hart Farm  
Solsberry, IN

Betsy Hitt  
Peregrine Farms

Graham, NC

Jim & Liz Kelderhouse  
Copper River Farm  
Traverse City, MI

Kristen Keuhn  
Kuehn Petals & Greens  
Esparto, CA

Susan Lathrop  
Busy Acres Flower Farm  
New Haven, VT

Kathy Melmoth  
Recipe Gardens  
Pittsford, MI

Susan O'Connell  
Fertile Crescent Farm  
Hardwick, VT

Nona Perriman  
Shinnery Hills Farm  
Cheyenne, OK

Jackie and Charlie Pike  
Texas Nature Treasures  
Fort Worth, TX

Randall Smith/John Dole  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, OK

Vicki Stamback & Judy Rose  
Bear Creek Farms  
Stillwater, OK

Terri Starman  
Univ. of Tennessee  
Knoxville, TN

Robert Suzuki  
Sunrise Ranch  
Oxnard, CA

Rick Vilonen  
Ben Brock Farm  
North Amherst, NY

Cheryl Wagner  
Wagner's Homestead Farms  
Belleville, MI

Lulu Wootton  
Cape Farm  
Marlboro, VT

