

1999 ASCFG National Perennial Trials

John Dole
North Carolina State University

Now in its third year, the ASCFG Perennial Trial includes the 17 cultivars planted in 1999 and the 22 cultivars planted in 2000. We have had a couple changes in evaluators so check the Participating Grower list for the trialer in your region.

One of the top performers in both the first and second year was *Crocasmia* 'Lucifer', due to a multitude of large sprays of freesia-like crimson flowers. The plants were vigorous and the stems were long. A couple of the respondents noted that the interesting seed pods could also be used if the flowers were not harvested.

The two *Hypericums*, *H. androsaemum* and 'Albury Purple' did well with their large, brightly colored berries. These unusual cuts are something different to grow and market. However, because the fruit mature late in the season, far north locations may not be able to get a harvestable crop in a season.

Sedum 'Matrona' shined again this year with large (some say too large) inflorescences of pink to red flowers on sturdy, red stems. The plants are vigorous and hardy. One respondent referred to this plant, however, as 'deer candy'.

Of the three *Heleniums* in the trial, *H. kanaria* scored the best with a multitude of bright yellow daisy-type flowers and good postharvest life. *H. x* 'Moerheim Beauty' also did well for several respondents; it has coppery red flowers.

For the dried flower growers, one cultivar to try is *Pycnanthemum muticum* 'Mountain Mint' (although some respondents also used it as a fresh cut). This versatile, vigorous plant has great fragrant foliage. Stems were short for some respondents this year but may be taller next year.

For those growers who produce *Kniphofia*, 'Flamenco' is a winner. This vigorous plant is highly productive with long stems. Unfortunately, the unusual bright orange yellow flowers are not always readily marketed.

Eupatorium maculatum 'Carin' has large sprays of small silvery buds that open up into pink flowers. The stems are long, strong and reddish. The similarity of 'Carin' to the native *Eupatorium* species limits sales in some areas but the ease and vigor of this plant are exceptional.

In reviewing the tables and comments you might notice a couple differences. This year we asked participating growers to rate the market appreciation based on their customers - whether they were wholesale, retail or direct to consumer. Note that relatively few gave wholesale ratings and the results should be interpreted accordingly. We also asked for the cold hardiness zone and added it onto some of

the comments where we thought it would help. Hope you like the changes and I appreciate all the growers who took the time to answer a few more questions.

Based on trial results, the top five performers are automatically nominated for the ASCFG Cut Flower of the Year competition. The rankings are based on the combined ratings score: market appreciation (average of wholesale, retail and consumer)+ repeat again + ease of cultivation. Thus, from the 2000 trials *Crocoshia* 'Lucifer', *Hypericum androsaemum*, *Hypericum* 'Albury Purple', *Sedum* 'Matrona', and *Helenium kanaria*, are nominated as Cut Flowers of the Year and will join other nominations from ASCFG members and from the Cut Flower of the Year Panel.

Disclaimer: The numbers reported are averages of all the respondents and many factors will affect the success of any plant species. Our participants are growing and harvesting the trial plants in a wide variety of ways. For example, with annual asters some people harvest the entire plant as one bunch while others harvest each individual flowering branch, giving very different lengths and yield data. If a plant does well for most of the respondents, it is likely to do well for you. On the other hand, if a cultivar didn't appear to do well in the trial, it may still be a great cultivar for you. Thus, we have included summaries of the respondents comments to help interpret the data. Review the trial results carefully. If a species sounds interesting but did not appear to do well, try it anyway. The cultivar may work well for you.

Acknowledgments: All cut flower growers should thank the perennial producers for providing the plant materials and the growers for producing the plants, collecting data and submitting trial reports. Each of the growers paid \$100 for shipping expenses and agreed to provide data for at least two years. Plant were donated by four perennial producers and shipped the perennial plugs or dormant roots directly to the trialers. I would especially like to compliment Betsy Hitt, Vicki Stamback, and Leah Aufill who participated in both the seed and perennials trials and returned evaluations on all of their trial plants. I would also like to thank Betty Coleman for typing in everyone's comments, Ingram McCall for data analysis, and Leah Aufill for taking care of the Oklahoma State University portion of the trials. In preparing the report I have edited the participants' comments for space and clarity; my apologies if I've altered the tone or content of anyone's comments. Thanks to everyone for making this service of ASCFG possible.

Participating Perennial Suppliers

Cramers' Posie Patch (CR)

116 Trial Rd. N.
Elizabethtown, PA 17022
717-367-9494
FAX 717-367-8666

Here & Now Gardens (HN)

P.O. Box 6
Gales Creek, OR 97117
503-357-5774
FAX 503-357-3858

Green Leaf Enterprises/Yoder/Benary (GL)

2369 Old Philadelphia Pike
Lancaster, PA 17602

North Creek Nursery (NC)

388 North Creek Rd.
Landenberg, PA 19350

800-233-0285
FAX 717-299-7162

610-255-0100
FAX 610-255-4762

Gro 'N' Sell (GS)
320 Lower State Rd.
Chalfont, PA 18914
215-822-1276
FAX 215-997-1770

Participating Growers

Region 2 (2000)
Holly Scoggins
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg VA

Region 6 (1999 and 2000)
Vicki Stamback
Bear Creek Farm
Stillwater, OK

Region 2 (1999)
Bob Wollam
Wollam Gardens
Jeffersonton, VA

Region 8 (1999 and 2000)
Sam Barkley
Barkley's Woodstock Floral
Portland, OR

Region 3 (1999 and 2000)
Betsy Hitt
Peregrine Farms
Graham NC

Region 8 (1999 and 2000)
Paul Sansone
Here and Now Garden
Gales Creek, OR

Region 4 (2000)
MaryLee Johnson
Windswept Acres
Cecil WI

Leah Aufill/John Dole (1999 and 2000)
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK

Region 5 (1999 and 2000)
Christina Wager
Christie's Plantmart and Greenhouse
Coronation Alberta

Trial Results for Year 2 of 1999 Cultivars

Cultivar	Plants Surviving (%)	Yield (stems/plant) ^Ø	Stem length (inches) ^Ø	Market appreciation rating ^U			Repeat again rating ^U	Ease of cultivation rating ^U
				Whole.	Retail	Cons.		
<i>Aster novi-belgii/novae angliae</i> 'Benary Composition' (GL)	97.5	5.6	29.4	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	4.0
<i>Aster lateriflorus</i> 'Lady in Black' (NC)	100.0	6.5	31.7	5.0	4.0	3.5	3.7	5.0
<i>Astilbe x arendsii</i> 'Grande' (GL)	87.5	1.5	22.5	3.0	2.0	2.5	1.8	3.7
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i> (NC)	90.0	16.6	20.7	3.0	4.3	4.3	4.0	4.8
<i>Chelone obliqua</i> (HN)	73.3	6.6	22.7	2.5	2.8	3.0	3.5	4.0
<i>Crocsmia</i> 'Lucifer' (HN)	67.4	4.4	32.5	5.0	5.0	4.8	5.0	4.6
<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i> (HN)	50.0	12.3	35.0	4.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.5
<i>Kniphofia uvaria</i> 'Flamenco' (GL)	91.7	10.0	28.9	3.0	3.6	2.3	3.2	4.5
<i>Lysimachia vulgaris</i> (HN)	75.0	7.3	13.8	5.0	4.5	4.0	3.3	3.3
<i>Miscanthus sinsensis</i> 'Adagio' (GS)	100.0	14.5	34.3	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.3	5.0
<i>Monarda didyma</i> 'Red Shades' (GL)	92.2	8.2	27.9	2.0	3.3	2.7	2.0	3.8
<i>Sedum</i> 'Matrona' (NC)	100.0	5.8	24.2	5.0	4.5	4.0	4.3	4.8
<i>Solidaster</i> 'Lemore' (NC)	60.0	6.3	20.8	1.5	3.7	2.7	1.8	4.5
<i>Solidaster</i> 'Tara' (HN)	81.3	18.4	30.5	5.0	4.2	4.0	3.5	5.0
<i>Thalictrum dipterocarpum</i> (GS)	60.0	3.3	53.7	1.0	1.7	2.0	2.5	4.0
<i>Thermopsis caroliniana</i> (GS) ^U	30.0	5.0	37.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	4.0
<i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i> (GS)	80.0	4.8	42.3	2.0	2.7	2.7	2.5	5.0

Ø Data shown are from those respondents who harvested stems. Some respondents may not have harvested stems because they were too short. Flowering stems may be longer next year after plants are established. See comments section for more details.

U 1 to 5 scale, with 5 being the best.

URatings for this species should be viewed with caution as only one or two participants had enough information to provide ratings.

Trial Results for Year 1 of 2000 Cultivars

Cultivar	Plants alive at end of summer (%)	Plants flowering (%)	Yield (stems/plant) ^Ø	Stem length (inches) ^Ø	Market appreciation rating ^U			Repeat again rating ^U	Ease of cultivation rating ^U
					W	R	C		
<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i> 'Cramers' Silver' (CR)	30.8	65.0	3.75	21.9	3.0	2.3	3.0	2.5	3.3
<i>Campanula persicifolia</i> 'Blue Bell' (GL) ^U	65.8	13.3	0.0	-	-	-	-	-	1.0
<i>Campanula persicifolia</i> 'White Bell' (GL)	56.7	13.3	0.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Centaurea dealbata</i> (GS)	93.0	70.7	7.5	13.6	3.0	3.0	2.7	3.0	4.0
<i>Centranthus ruber</i> 'White' (GL)	80.2	65.2	12.5	13.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	4.0
<i>Digitalis mertonensis</i> (GS)	95.0	7.1	2.3	29.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
<i>Echinops</i> 'Arctic Glow' (GS)	75.0	51.5	3.5	15.5	-	3.0	3.0	1.5	3.0
<i>Eupatorium maculatum</i> 'Carin' (NC)	82.3	65.0	3.4	29.3	4.0	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.5
<i>Helenium kanaria</i> (HN)	66.9	57.1	7.6	29.5	5.0	3.3	4.0	4.4	4.6
<i>Helenium</i> x 'Moerheim Beauty' (NC)	99.0	89.0	6.4	25.2	4.0	2.5	3.5	4.0	4.5
<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i> (HN)	69.3	80.0	11.7	28.0	5.0	5.0	4.7	4.8	4.5
<i>Hypericum</i> 'Albury Purple' (HN)	68.7	59.4	5.1	21.0	4.5	4.0	3.8	4.8	4.8
<i>Origanum rotundifolium</i> 'Light Green Oregano' (CR)	44.0	30.0	5.0	7.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
<i>Phlox paniculata</i> 'Purple Haze' (HN)	75.6	47.3	2.1	19.5	5.0	3.0	3.3	3.6	3.8
<i>Pycnanthemum muticum</i> 'Mountain Mint' (CR)	84.0	56.7	3.4	18.2	3.0	2.0	3.5	3.7	4.5
<i>Scabiosa</i> 'Pink Mist' (GS)	94.4	87.5	9.8	11.9	1.0	2.3	2.8	2.6	4.2
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> 'The Blues' (NC)	100.0	100.0	19.2	19.9	-	2.0	3.3	3.8	5.0
<i>Silene orientalis</i> (GL)	90.0	16.7	5.0	14.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	4.0	4.0

<i>Solidago</i> 'Prairie Gold' Experimental (GL)	98.0	66.7	4.3	22.1	-	2.0	3.7	3.8	4.0
<i>Thalictrum aquilegifolium</i> 'Hybridum' (GL)	60.4	20.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Veronica longifolia</i> 'Cloudy' (HN) ^U	33.3	33.3	3.0	40.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
<i>Weigelia</i> 'Alexandra' (NC) ^U	90.6	41.6	2.5	21.3	5.0	5.0	4.5	4.5	4.5

Ø Data shown are from those respondents who harvested stems. Some respondents may not have harvested stems because they were too short. Flowering stems may be longer next year after plants are established. See comments section for more details.

U 1 to 5 scale, with 5 being the best. W=wholesale, R=retail, and C=consumer.

U Ratings for this species should be viewed with caution as only one or two participants had enough information to provide ratings.

Summary of comments

The number in parenthesis refers to the number of respondents who made the comment. If no number is present, only one person made the comment. Comments by each individual are separated with a ‘;’. Note: many respondents did not make specific comments on each cultivar and in some cases, comments have been shortened because of limited space.

1999 Perennial Cut Flower Trial Cultivars - Year 2

Aster lateriflorus 'Lady in Black'

Good Qualities: Dark foliage; This is the only aster I like and that seems to do all right for us; Excellent color - flowers did not discolor as they aged; None.

Problems: Bad branching habit, small flowers; Better used as landscape plant, entangled mess to pick, flowers not showy;

Additional Comments: I have seen other cultivars with similar colors; I really didn't get anything cuttable of this stuff; Excellent late season filler, productive, pest free and nice color.

Aster novi-belgii/novae angliae 'Benary Composition'

Good Qualities: Easy to grow (2); Color (2); Nice form; Nice stem length.

Problems: These plants just have not done well in this climate (Zone 7a), They haven't produced anything that I thought was usable, I seem to get foliar problems that wreck it; It just does not do well here (Zone 6b), the flowers look terrible when it blooms - probably because of the heat; Not pretty flower, may be our heat (Zone 6b); Low demand for this flower in Aug/Sept.

Astilbe x arendsii 'Grande'

Good Qualities: Nice astilbe, easy from seed; None - These must take a long time to look good; Nice flower.

Problems: Hard to keep them happy in this climate (Zone 7a), poor competitors against weeds, and managing water requirements tricky; Slow grower - flowers not vigorous; why grow these when there are good cultivars?; In full sun and not at its best; Needs shade to increase stem length, poor stem length in shade.

Chasmanthium latifolium

Good Qualities: Large heads, durable, easy, vigorous; It's a wonderful cut; Pretty when green; Easy-to-cut clump and neat foliage texture for arrangements; Unique seed head.

Problems: We need to work on our nutrition and we will have better results from this plant; Few stems per plant.

Additional Comments: Seeds around if you're not careful.

Chelone obliqua

Good Qualities: Late, unusual, deep green foliage, good vigor; When you give this lots of water,

which it had this year, it is beautiful and tall; Very vigorous, nice color, can be sold as a pod, gaining in popularity.

Problems: Bloom fades quickly; Need to watch the water on this, needs plenty; None; Not at its best in this climate (Zone 6b); flowers are burnt from heat; Blooms in August/September; Too short.

Additional Comments: I can barely tell difference from 'Hot Lips'; Similar to *Chelone lyonii*; Nice flower, increasing in popularity.

Crocasmia 'Lucifer'

Good Qualities: Strong, healthy. Really large 'sprays', great color, I was surprised at how large and tall the flower spikes were, I would say this was an excellent selection of 'Lucifer'; Striking - sold well at farmers markets and with florists; Florists love this as a replacement for freesia that have gone out of season; Excellent color, very vigorous, makes saleable pod, very popular.

Problems: Must buy large bulbs - first year these were not very productive, but bulbs from Walters Gardens planted this spring produced well in first year; Must be picked for fresh cut with only one or two florets open; must be dug and divided every 5-6 years, produces many corms.

Additional Comments: Not much could take the summer we had; Very popular as pod or fresh.

Hypericum androsaemum

Good Qualities: Good leaves; Excellent pink berry color, vigorous bush, rust resistant.

Problems: Slow to develop berries; Must use effective rust control program, must be propagated from rooted cuttings or divisions dug after breaking dormancy!, increasing imports from Ecuador.

Additional Comments: This one died 100% the first year; Best pricing comes with fall flush, must cut to ground 12 weeks before desired flush date.

Kniphofia uvaria 'Flamenco'

Good Qualities: Easy (2); Prolific (I counted 50 stems off of one plant); Color; None; Prolific flower and flowers are unusual; Blooms first year from seed.

Problems: Hard to sell, people just don't know what to do with them; I would like to try this again and see if we can do better. It should survive here but doesn't seem to do that well; Not very saleable - very ugly; Just another Kniphofia - limited market appeal, flowers look "old" very quickly - ragged look.

Additional Comments: Retail florist ask for this often; Not a significant improvement.

Lysimachia vulgaris

Good Qualities: When it blooms - nice color, good vase life; Strong, bulky, grew like mad, could be a very aggressive spreader.

Problems: Too aggressive, sends out runners but no flowers; Failed to bloom in 2nd year! Plants reached 40" plus, invasive, irregular flowering; The yellow starlike flowers fall a bit in the cut stage.

Additional Comments: Because of previous year drought, plants barely were alive in spring - no flowers; Nice flower, when it blooms!

Miscanthus sinensis 'Adagio'

Good Qualities: Easy, really nice plant, I used foliage as well as flowers, nice size grass; I love it but

my customers don't; they will buy Johnson grass before this; next year I'll try just the foliage, not the heads and see if that works; Can cut whole plant off to harvest and will regrow; Arching slender foliage, interesting flower stalk.

Problems: Too "grassy" - too much like wild grasses.

Additional Comments: Similar to *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Variegatus'; Other cultivars have more interesting foliage.

Monarda didyma 'Red Shades'

Good Qualities: Color (2); Easy; We didn't cut this, It is small and unimpressive next to 'Jacob Kline' or 'Raspberry Wine' - why bother; Herby fragrance.

Problems: Not very uniform, in form or color; Just doesn't seem to be as vigorous as the purple - maybe with better nutrition and some mulching it would improve; Doesn't like our heat (Zone 6b); Susceptible to powdery mildew, small flowers.

Additional Comments: Similar to *Monarda didyma* 'Jacob Kline'; Retail florist says that keeping qualities are poor; Postharvest: when cut with only couple petals open, will last 14 days in oasis preservative at 80 F; Above cultivar is much better and is very mildew resistant.

Scabiosa caucasica 'Fama'

Good Qualities: Love the flower when it's perfect; It's a beautiful color but the *Caucasica scabiosas* just won't live here longer than a year (Zone 6b) and this one is just too expensive for it to have to be treated as an annual; Color, stem length, stem sturdiness, and size of blooms.

Problems: Many in perfect flowers, trouble getting plants to survive (Zone 7a), Love the plant, but I am now prepared to say "It won't grow here."; Some stems were weak early in season.

Additional Comments: Loved the crop - but a few seemed to develop a wilt in the summer.

Sedum 'Matrona'

Good Qualities: Color (2); Huge heads, tall, easy, what a plant; These were huge - almost too big, but very nice.

Problems: Heads are so big they scare people, deer candy; Seems to be slow to spread where I have it located, I may move it to higher ground this spring and see if that helps; Too hot when flowered and passed their peak too fast; Slow to establish, plants will produce best if not lifted, production continues to increase for up to 10+ years.

Additional Comments: Same species as 'Autumn Joy', but very different flower and stem color; Very popular, in demand.

Solidaster 'Lemore'

Good Qualities: Short stems, easy, large flower size; Excellent filler.

Problems: Not as vigorous as 'Tara', gets kind of weedy looking; Disease made lower leaves unmarketable and flower quality less than 'Tara'; Not as productive or tall as other commercial cut flower cultivars.

Additional Comments: Similar to 'Tara' but later and less prolific; Similar to *Solidaster* (*Solidago*) 'Yellow Submarine', 'Tara' and to species *Solidago*; *Solidaster* just don't seem to do well in our area - just to hot (Zone 6b); Color faded quickly, poor stem length.

Solidaster 'Tara'

Good Qualities: Very vigorous, reblooms, big heads, nice color; Good filler for bouquets; Excellent cut flower!; Excellent filler, great vase life, multiple flushes, high production; Strong, tall, good color.

Problems: Gets rust, plants actually did better first year; I don't think it's worth growing when it is so cheap on market; Imports from South America and California depress prices, mildew after drought stress; None.

Additional Comments: Similar to most Solidasters; Similar to 'Lemore' but much better, flower is nicer and more stems per plant; Similar to Solidaster 'Yellow Submarine' and to Solidaster 'Lemore'; This one died the first year; Very valuable to bouquet operations - a valuable staple filler; Need more of this one.

Thalictrum dipterocarpum

Good Qualities: Great vigor, easy, large heads; Much more vigorous 2nd year, therefore, foliage and stems are extremely nice.

Problems: All of the ones I ended up with flowered white; colors are more exciting; Very unimpressive flower, poor color, very poor yield.

Additional Comments: Similar to *Thalictrum delavayi* and *Thalictrum delavayi* 'Hewitt's Double'; Must pick just before flower open; to pick later reduces vase life 2-4 days, oasis preservative lasted 9 days, in plain water, lasted 7 days; All species and cultivars appear uneconomic by the few cuttable stems produced.

Thermopsis caroliniana

Good Qualities: None listed by respondents.

Problems: Weedy appearance.

Vernonia noveboracensis

Good Qualities: Big heads, late; Very vigorous.

Problems: I got white (which were smaller and less vigorous) and purple flowering; The native is much better and seems to take the local conditions better; Not as nice flower as the wild form, may do better with less fertilizer and water; Flower color appeared "old" even though they were fresh, purple/white center of flower aged poorly.

Additional Comments: Very vigorous, nice in garden but poor cut.

2000 Perennial Cut Flower Trial Cultivars - Year 1

Artemisia ludoviciana 'Cramers' Silver'

Good Qualities: Nice herby fragrance - green/gray filler.

Problems: Don't know what to do with this plant, this must be for dried use only; Small plants, not

very good survival; see if they recover next year; Common.

Additional Comments: Received bare-root so hard to tell, very small root systems, did not survive a late freeze (April), would pot them up & grow for a few weeks in the greenhouse if I had it to do over; I will grow this again in a different area.

Campanula persicifolia 'Blue Bell'

Good Qualities: None listed by respondents.

Problems: No flowers yet (2); Plugs not vernalized.

Campanula persicifolia 'White Bell'

Good Qualities: None listed by respondents.

Problems: No flowers yet (2); Plugs not vernalized.

Centaurea dealbata

Good Qualities: Early May/June flowers.

Problems: Weak stems; Too short this year, would have many more stems per plant when they get taller; Low yield in 1st year - short stem length in 1st year.

Additional Comments: Rebloomed a bit, but much shorter stems; Needs 2+ years for good production.

Centranthus ruber 'White'

Good Qualities: White flowers stayed white for several days once cut.

Problems: Weak stems; No flowers; Needs 2nd season before evaluation.

Additional Comments: Rebloom: yes.

Digitalis mertonensis

Good Qualities: Plants look fine - will flower next year; Excellent survival considering full sun and high heat intensity; Nice Bloom color - hardy plants - early blooms.

Problems: Plugs not vernalized; No flowers; Poor stem length first season, few stems per plant.

Additional Comments: No flowering data yet; Only had one plant survive the summer; Very popular but may not be economic.

Echinops 'Arctic Glow'

Good Qualities: Survived the summer (Zone 7a), let's see how they do next year; Unique gray/blue color - nice flower shape.

Problems: Painful to handle, research technicians had a fit that I was growing "thistle", I'll not be surprised if there's some Round Up sabotage next spring; Didn't take the heat; Too short first year - needs 2nd season to evaluate; I await - this one tough as nails!

Additional Comments: Maybe good in 2nd season.

Eupatorium maculatum 'Carin'

Good Qualities: Very compact!!!, space-saving, compared to the species (usually 6-7' tall), manageable-sized flower heads; Vigorous, nice head size; Really nice flower in first year; Vigorous,

good color on stem and flower, very popular.

Problems: Bee & wasp magnets; I expect these will be much better next year; I may have planted this in too wet an area - but had decided to treat it like native eupatorium, will see next year and if necessary move plants to higher ground; Needs several years to establish good production.

Additional Comments: Similar to *Eupatorium maculatum* Atropurpureum (2) but latter has better flower color; Great vase life, loved'em at the silvery-bud stage, I pinched half of them in late June-avg. 7 stems if pinched, 2-3 if not.

Helenium kanaria

Good Qualities: Uniform stem length, sturdy stems, happy color!, some rebloom (though shorter stems); Heleniums are diehards here and I really like that they can be potentially treated as annuals; Long vase life, great stem length, very popular fall/late summer filler, excellent production in latter years.

Problems: Bit of messy pollen shed after 5 days in the vase; Postharvest: Turns water with preservative cloudy in 1 day, not desirable cut flower; These are so easy to grow - but wind and toppling is a huge problem - so support is required to get a saleable crop; Can get too tall, can flush all at once - weed sequential pruning to stagger bloom.

Additional Comments: Similar to *Helenium magnificum*; Postharvest: Lasted 6-7 days in Oasis preservative; Best vase life of all Heleniums, great clear yellow color.

Helenium x 'Moerheim Beauty'

Good Qualities: Interesting color (4); Survived wet; Perfect for early autumn arrangement. Again heleniums are diehards and easy to grow; Good stem length, lots of production in years 3-5.

Problems: It appears that plants died after cutting, turned brown before any frost, we'll see next year; Some flowered, others just formed and rosetted, next year will be better; Postharvest: Turns water with preservative cloudy in 1 day - not desirable cut flower; Wind + rain = toppling, support required to get a saleable crop; Short vase life of 3-6 days, can get too tall.

Additional Comments: You can get a similar color out of Red & Gold hybrids; Similar to *Helenium kanaria* (2); Not as vigorous as the *Helenium kanaria*; Postharvest: Lasted 6-7 days in Oasis preservative.

Hypericum androsaemum

Good Qualities: Excellent red berry color (4); Clean foliage, huge plants; Good plant vigor; Excellent berry production, good rust resistance.

Problems: High plant casualty rate in midsummer; Hard freeze before any harvest (Zone 6b) and unsure how far to cut plant back when collecting data - seemed too short; Must be propagated from rooted cuttings or bare root shipped after breaking dormancy.

Additional Comments: Similar to *Hypericum* 'Pinky Flair' which has darker pink berry; I assumed the object was to wait for berries, not cut at flowering stage, berries were about perfect the first week in October, later on, messy when squished.

Hypericum 'Albury Purple'

Good Qualities: Beautiful foliage (2); Vigorous plants - all 18 survived; No rust, Bronze foliage excellent without berry, nice berry and bract; Great color - shape.

Problems: Japanese beetles!; Poor plant vigor; Smaller berry than Androsavemum or Flair series; Too short.

Additional Comments: Similar to *Hypericum* 'Flair' series; Just a smattering of flowers; Will be taller next year.

Origanum rotundifolium 'Light Green Oregano'

Good Qualities: As with the mountain mint, these plants looked dead upon arrival but were planted anyway, they just never came out of it; Long vase life! Excellent filler with nice wiry stems but delicate looking blooms; Nice filler.

Problems: Small plants, not good survival early, ones that survived did make good growth; Poor plant establishment; New field and lots of rain caused excessive washout of some varieties before they were fully established; Origanum does not ship well as a bare root plant, must be propagated from root cuttings.

Additional Comments: Similar to *Origanum* 'Hopely's Purple'; We used it strictly as fresh filler though I have used it dried in past and liked it.

Phlox paniculata 'Purple Haze'

Good Qualities: No powdery mildew! (2); Light purple color, popular in weddings work, very mildew resistant, ships well, has 7-10 day vase life with Rogard RS; Color.

Problems: Weak lavender color (2); Rather weak plants, foliage suffered from some kind of black spot, not all plants flowered; Did not establish well; I liked the color but people kept asking whether it was white, purple or pink; Needs 2nd season to reach economic production; Too short.

Additional Comments: Similar to *Phlox paniculata* 'Miss Violet'; They were not happy campers this summer; Maybe next season will be better; Two weeks earlier than 'Miss Violet', very popular color.

Pycnanthemum muticum 'Mountain Mint'

Good Qualities: Great foliage fragrance (4); Usable at many stages of development, vigorous; These looked dead when they arrived but we planted anyway. We had a terrible summer with no sign of any plants. This fall we've had a lot of moisture, cooler temps and when observed November 10th, 15% of the plants were alive. We expect next year they will take off and fill the bed. The 15% we have currently look very good. I think this will be a good plant; I like that it grows quickly and establishes itself even in less than perfect conditions; Very vigorous.

Problems: Weak, sprawling stems; Prostrate growth habit = poor cut quality.

Additional Comments: Several plants did not flower; Need to grow 1 more year, to see what to do with this plant; We used strictly as fresh and it makes an excellent filler.

Scabiosa 'Pink Mist'

Good Qualities: Nice pink color (2); Good rebloom; Excellent number flower stems per plant (estimate 15-20) but too short to use; It wants to flower - from the minute the plants were received it was throwing blooms.

Problems: Too short (3); Some weird buds/flowering within the foliage rosette; Arrived too late in

season to make good growth before flowering; Hopefully next year the stems will be longer and stronger; Typical of this type of scabiosa - wiry stems with heavy headed blooms go down in wind and rain (which we had lots of this year) then the stems twist and bend and are very hard to harvest/use; I await next year.

Additional Comments: Seemed more lavender than pink; More suitable for landscape plant; They bloomed but were very short so I didn't harvest so they wouldn't get additionally stressed; Need 2nd year, but bet it will be too short.

Schizachyrium scoparium 'The Blues'

Good Qualities: Interesting foliage, vertical accent; Easy, nice color, easy size to use; Nice color and easy to pick; Nice for filler - gives a natural look to bouquets. Dries well too - but dried doesn't look any different than plain old bluestem; Too early to tell.

Problems: Florists seemed uninterested; Determining when and how to harvest - think it's best to cut all at once... but how did others handle it; Too early to tell.

Additional Comments: Tough plants; no fatalities; Didn't cut any of the perennials in this year's trials because of weather and to let them get established; I really think this is an incredible landscaping plant; Needs 2nd year to evaluate.

Silene orientalis

Good Qualities: Very easy and uniform, large head size.

Problems: No flowers this year (2); Plugs not vernalized; Plants were too small to flower this year.

Additional Comments: No flowering data.

Solidago 'Prairie Gold' Experimental

Good Qualities: Good basal branching for a solidago, no rust!; Has great feel, nice clean foliage.

Problems: Stems rather short; Not quite as vigorous as I would like, some problems getting it to survive in field; Needs 2nd season before evaluation.

Thalictrum aquilegifolium 'Hybridum'

Good Qualities: None listed by respondents.

Problems: Plugs not vernalized; These plants had one set of true leaves when they arrived so maybe they will do something next year; Dead; Needs 2nd season before evaluation; No flowers.

Additional Comments: No flowering data.

Veronica longifolia 'Cloudy'

Good Qualities: Flushes, 2 weeks earlier than 'Blauriesen', uniform tall stem length, mildew resistant.

Problems: Dead; Needs two seasons to fully establish, blue is on light blue side - some florists prefer a darker blue.

Additional Comments: Similar to Veronica 'Blauriesen'; Forces very well in greenhouse after 12 weeks cooling.

Weigelia 'Alexandra'

Good Qualities: Lovely burgundy foliage (3); They seem like they will be tough enough for our

climate; Good vase life.

Problems: Just a smattering of flowers, very prostrate habit; Didn't flower this year; Too short and seemed to flower in heat of summer due to stress; Takes 2-3 years to reach economic production, short stem length is first year.

Additional Comments: Similar to 'Wine and Roses', which is trademarked, looks about the same to me; We didn't cut any stems this year, too short and waiting for them to grow for next year.