

Colorado State University



From the Desk of Dr. Klett



Welcome to the first issue of the 2021 monthly electronic newsletter to keep you informed of the happenings in the flower trials at Colorado State University. After receiving suggestions from a sub-committee of the Annual Trial Garden advisory committee, we decided to change the format and content of the newsletter to reduce the content repetition by various authors and only give a short update on the monthly activities happening and then discuss one of the previous years winners in more detail along with concentrating on one specific topic pertaining to the trials.

We are all excited about the 2021 trials and hope it will be able to be a little more normal year with the use of Colorado Master Gardener volunteers and a more structured evaluation and consumer day in August. Currently we are busy potting up plugs of close to 844 different varieties of annual flowers from 18 different companies from around the world. Also, all of our seed entries have been distributed to our four cooperating greenhouses germinating and growing a flat of each of those varieties.

Our three year perennial trial continues to grow and in 2021 we have 124 new entries to plant with most gaining size in our greenhouse presently. We will be taking winter survival data as soon as spring like weather returns to Fort Collins.

It has been a harsh and cold winter in Fort Collins with some very cold temperatures without snow cover and our cool season trial is very slow in showing color and seems it will be a good test year to determine the real survivors.

In this issue I would especially like to thank in more detail all of the companies for our in-kind donations to the trials. The CSU trial is unique in that we are not a commercial trial but a non-profit, unbiased university trial and without these donations, we could not conduct these trials without going into the red financially. They are greatly appreciated by the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture at Colorado State University and Annual and Perennial Trial Garden Advisory Committee. We want to recognize the following companies for their generous donation in past years and again for our 2021 trials: Blackmore Inc. and Greencare Fertilizer for donating water soluble fertilizer for use in the garden and greenhouse; ICL Specialty Fertilizer for donation of Osmocote® slow release fertilizer in the beds and containers; Tagawas and Pindstrup for donation of potting media for growing on all of the vegetative plugs; Organix for donation of organic media for all sun beds and containers; Welby Gardens for growing all the seed propagated All American Selections varieties; Browns Greenhouse, Kiyota's Greenhouse, Dutch Heritage Gardens for propagating seed varieties at a substantially reduces cost for our trials and Harrell's for donated water soluble and slow release fertilizer for containers.



Organix has been donating their "Growers Mix" to amend the beds for over 20 years and in early April they again donated 60 cubic yards which the students distributed on all the beds and containers. It is available at garden centers under the EKO brand name.

"Best Of" Winner *Spotlight* - Bee's Knees Petunia
from Ball FloraPlant



(Petunia x hybrida 'Balcobees' PP32,448)

During the 2020 trial at CSU, the abundant flowers and great two tone yellow color provided exceptional flower power on very vigorous and well branched plants. It was noted for having the best yellow of any petunia in the trial. The color held up very well in the high light intensity of Colorado.

The breeder notes that: Bee's Knees Petunia Bee's Knees is filled with lush blooms and puts on a high-impact show all season long with very little attention. It brings the most intense yellow petunia to the market, along with the best performance! This variety holds its yellow color better than any other yellow petunia. It features dark green foliage and outstanding branching.

General & Information

Height: 8-10" (20-25cm)

Spread: 16-22" (41-56cm)

Exposure: Sun

Water: Medium

Rooting Hormone: No

Average Days with Mist: 6-9

Pinch: No

Average Propagation Time (weeks): 3-4

Comments: Avoid stretch by moving crop to cooler air temperature in second and third weeks of propagation. Transplant on time.

Soil pH: 5.4- 5.8

Light Levels (fc): 5,000- 8,000

Temperature Day: 59-76°F (15-24° C)

Temperature Night: 53-61°F (12-16° C)

Fertilization (ppm N): 225-300; every two weeks

No. of Pinches: 0-1

Plant Growth Regulators (S) = spray / (D) = drench: B-Nine(S) 1,500-2,500 ppm, applied 2-4 times, can be used to control habit early. Bonzi(D) 0.25-1.0 ppm applied as crop matures will control final height but not delay flowering or reduce flower size.

Comments: Cool temperatures and high light will reduce need for PGRs. Monitor regularly for high pH and possible iron deficiency.

Crop Time Gallons: 1-2 ppp, 6-8 weeks

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