

# Colorado State University

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### From the Desk of Dr. Klett



The fall season has turned to winter in Fort Collins since it is snowing today and we have had several very cold days already. In the annual garden, both the ground beds and containers have been cleaned and dead plants composted. The final Annual 2022 report has been published and you should have received a copy via email. If you did not receive a copy, please email me at [jim.klett@colostate.edu](mailto:jim.klett@colostate.edu).

Our efforts now have shifted to our three year Perennial and Cool Season Trials. The formal report for the Perennial Trial should be done by mid to late December. The winners of our 2022 Top Performers are listed in this newsletter.

All of this information will be up on our website soon. The Winners of our 2022 Annual and Perennial Trial will be announced at the upcoming state industry educational shows in person this year. Information about these winners have already been sent out for our "Best Of" annuals and will be shortly for our "Top Performers" perennials.

I want to state my sincere thanks and appreciation to all who made the Colorado State University Annual, Perennial and Cool Season Trials possible in 2022. Without your continual support, we could not continue to do these trials.

I want to especially thank Tate Erickson for the excellent job he did as the Annual Trial Garden Coordinator in 2022. Tate has agreed to continue in this position for the 2023 season so I feel the 2023 trials will be again in great hands. Also thanks to the rest of the annual student crew; Ila Jolly, Ian McLellan, Cienna Tonini and Calvin Nycum for their excellent job in maintaining the annual garden during 2022. Ian McLellan will be the Cool Season Trial Coordinator for the 2022-23 season. Thanks also to Sarah Mendus for all her excellent efforts in coordinating the three year perennial trial in 2022.

Have a safe and wonderful Holiday Season and you will hear from us in early 2023.

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## 2022 "Top Performer" Perennial Winners

The results are in and we are excited to announce the 2022 "Top Performer" Perennials! Winners of the "Top Performer" award are selected by a different process than the "Best Of" Annual winners. Since individual perennials often peak at different times of the year, evaluators meet and review photos that were taken every two weeks during the growing season for the entire trial period of two winters and three growing seasons. Data tabulated by the student coordinator throughout the season is also taken into consideration during the process. The evaluators are members from the Perennial Trial Garden sub-committee which is made up of professionals from the local Green Industry as well as staff from Colorado State University. A perennial entry is only considered for the "Top Performer" award if it has maintained superior performance in the ground for two winters and three growing seasons.

### **Armeria Dreameria® 'Dream Clouds' from Darwin Perennials**

Heavy first flush of pure white flowers gives a crisp, impressive appearance with plenty of "Wow!" from visitors. The pom-pom flowers give a unique appearance and form for the garden. Growth habit is very uniform and the tidy, dark green foliage is attractive even without flowers.



### **Leucanthemum Sweet Daisy™ Rebecca from Dümmer Orange**

Plants were “right in your face” at peak bloom as they formed a solid canopy of flowers which was quite spectacular. Blooms were stunning white with multiple layers of petals and a yellow eye for maximum show. Petals had a very frilly edge and this was definitely not your average Shasta daisy. Plants had a compact and tidy growth habit.



**Phlox paniculata Early® Magenta from Dümmer Orange**

Compact, uniform plants almost resembled a wall of solid magenta flowers. It was noted for its ability to bloom early and stay late into the season. It also provided a good show of flowers the first year it was planted in 2020. It was resistant to powdery mildew.



**Phlox paniculata Ka-Pow® White from Darwin Perennials**

The season of bloom was noted for being exceptionally long as it flowered early and stayed attractive for a long time. Plants were compact, uniform, sturdy and maintained excellent habit despite overhead watering. Branching was very good which created an abundance of crisp, white flowers that were very showy. Foliage was very attractive and never had any powdery mildew.



**Phlox subulata Spring® Blue Improved from Dümme Orange**

Flowers made an impressive carpet of blue in the spring. The season of bloom was noted for being exceptionally long lasting but the plants were also noted for looking good all through the summer. The growth habit makes an excellent ground cover and spreads evenly.



**Rosa Petite Knock Out® 'Meibenbino'<sup>PP 11,252,928</sup> from Star® Roses and Plants**

This rose is in a class of its own with very beautiful, glossy foliage and petite growth habit. Flowers had a dark, saturated red color that made a striking combination with the glossy, dark green foliage. The petite growth habit created an overall appearance that easily was described as “adorable”. Besides the impressive appearance, it was also noted that it was very low maintenance and had good first year flowering back in 2020. It could be a great addition to containers on the patio as well as in mass plantings in the ground.



**Salvia Midnight Purple and Midnight Rose from Dümnen Orange**

Both entries had prolific flowering at the same time and complemented each other well. Growth habits were very uniform with the same height. Both plants had very intense, attractive flower color but the stems on both were noted for being dark that really helped make the flower color “pop”.



**Salvia Midnight Purple**





**Salvia Midnight Rose**

**Thermopsis lupinoides (Golden Candles) from PlantSelect®**

At its peak, it was described as a "jaw dropping, showstopper, 50mph plant" due to its prolific, stunning yellow blooms. In addition to its robust flowering, it is a tough plant that is hardy to Zone 3 and drought tolerant for the xeriscape garden. The lupine-like foliage is lush and attractive as well along with being a good nitrogen fixer for the soil.



## **Perennial Perspective - Sarah Mendus, 2022 Perennial Flower Trial Student Coordinator**

It's been a great year out in the 3-Year Perennial Trials. The plants were planted in the ground in May but our season begins back in January, when we started receiving entry forms for the 2022 season and washing pots in preparation for the plants that would be shipped to us in March and April. This year there were 90 new entries, everything from Jacob's ladder and primroses to and black-eyed Susans and hollyhocks.

By the end of June all the new varieties were planted in the garden next to those that were planted in 2021 and 2020. At that point the focus in the 3-Year Perennial trials shifted from installation to weeding and general maintenance. It was a unique growing season this year, with temperatures consistently hitting the low and mid 90s in the peak of the summer, as well as some precipitation. The garden remained nearly pest free all season, except for Japanese beetles, which had a presence in Fort Collins this year. In the 3-Year Perennial Trials they mainly targeted the roses, hibiscus, and hollyhocks, but we tried to mitigate their impact by knocking them off into cups of soapy water every morning.

In addition to maintaining the gardens we also collected data. Every two weeks we would take pictures of each taxa to document their growth and assign each one a plant and flower rating. These ratings were also given once a month by members of our Perennial Trial Subcommittee. The ratings consider the cultivar's flower power, uniformity, vigor, health, and overall quality, and is given a numerical value for its performance.

In November our Perennial Trial Subcommittee met to decide which taxa would be awarded "Top Performer" awards. The plants that were up for the "Top Performer" award were plants that were planted in 2020, so they have experienced 3 growing seasons and 2 winters and have had very high survival rates in addition to a combined plant and flower rating average of 3.75 out of 5 or higher. These are the best of the best in the Colorado State University 3-Year Perennial Trials and are listed earlier in this newsletter.

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## **Final Thoughts - Tate Erickson, Annual Flower Trial Student Coordinator**

The Annual Trial Garden is all finished for the 2022 season! The beds are cleaned and the containers are all bare. A big thank you to everyone involved in the 2022 season, It was a great successful year for the CSU trials. The garden was popular even until late October, since our mild fall allowed for a lovely show till the end. I couldn't be more appreciative of my crew and all their hard work they put in through the season. Ian, Ila, Cienna, and Calvin have been hardworking additions as seen through the spectacular show the 2022 garden presented! I'd also like to thank the guidance given from my supervisors Dr. Klett and David. The final report is finished and has been sent out, it's also available on our website. I am excited to continue the experience I've gained this previous season onto next!

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