

## 6 years, 3 months, 75 issues

I have to smile when looking back at my first issue published November of 2003. With 3 pages it was mostly about new varieties including the back then brand new FlowerPower™ Osteospermum series with varieties still in the program today.

It started out with news about new varieties but soon developed into a platform about Selecta in general. Continuing in this tradition we will look at Lobelia rooting this month as well as at

a cool-grown Christmas Feelings crop (actually it was introduced in the December 2003 issue and is now our best selling Poinsettia variety worldwide). Not to forget a short preview about my hiking adventures for this summer.

There is lots to read in the January News Flash, so sit back, relax, and enjoy this issue.

Sincerely yours,  
Stefan Reiner



## Variety of the Month

**MiniFamous™ Dark Blue** deserves this title because it is not only our best selling Calibrachoa variety, it is also our single best selling variety over all crops. Part of our iGeneration series, it features large flowers, a great color, a semi-trailing habit, and early flowering.

## Magadi™ Lobelia



Lobelias have changed quite a bit in recent years. Newer lines like Magadi™ have taken this crop to the next level by providing better summer performance, earlier flowering, and overall better characteristics. However, rooting Lobelia is not always easy and sanitation is especially important for this crop.

There are two main categories in Magadi Lobelia today, the shiny leaf varieties and varieties with larger, lighter green, and hairier foliage. All of them are inter-specific but with slightly different looks.





The images above are taken 10 days after sticking the URC. To the left you see the Lobelia type with larger hairier foliage. To the right the shiny leaf Lobelia type. Usually the cuttings from varieties to the left root easier and faster. The shinier leaf varieties as shown to the right will root slower and therefore need mist longer.

You can see already that cuttings on the right side are starting to turn dark or purple. We call it purpling during rooting, and it is mostly caused by stress from misting. For example, Magadi™ Basket Dark Blue is a shiny leaf Lobelia type. These types need mist frequently but with short running times. This will keep them turgent without over-wetting the liner. Too much water on top of the cuttings will lead to purpling in the first week or 10 days.

As mentioned before, these shiny leaf types root slower and therefore require mist longer. So when taking the mist off too early, you will notice wilting, and cuttings will start to turn darker and will turn purple. In this case the purpling was caused by reducing or pulling the mist too early.

Sometimes using a cheese cloth on top of cuttings will help pull them through, especially when mist can't be applied differently.

If you are not responding the first signs then you may end up with trays like the ones to the right.

Usually more than one crop and for sure more than one variety is in the same misting section. The tip of mixed crops is certainly rooting TrixiLiners, and the example below shows how you can pull them through.

The other crops were ready to be pulled from mist, but Lobelia started to show purpling after a day with less mist (left lower image). We placed the cheese cloth on top of the trays over the weekend and were able to help them to pull through. The center images shows the crop a week later and the right image after pinching ready for transplanting. Misting is critical for a successful Lobelia crop. Pay attention and respond to first signs in order to minimize losses.



### In general:

Rooting time is about 3.5 to 4 weeks. Shiny leaf Lobelia varieties root slower than varieties with larger hairier leaf. If possible, pinch in propagation. Don't come off mist too soon, and continue mist until well rooted. Avoid over-saturation of the rooting media especially the first week.

Plant liners before they are overgrown and avoid hardening off too harshly. High light intensity (< 4,500 fc) and long days during finishing will improve flowering and overall plant habit. Larger plants and baskets will benefit from a second pinch.

Keep sanitation up whenever handling Lobelia, especially when pinching (virus risk - INSV)!

For PGR use B-Nine 1,500 - 2,500 ppm and Sumagic 3-5 ppm as a spray when needed. Drenching Bonzi at 1 ppm 3-4 weeks before sale works well too.

Watch for Thrips and keep strict sanitation when dealing with Lobelia. INSV (TOSPO virus group) moves very fast in Lobelia (see image to the right).



## Selecta varieties in Better Homes and Gardens®



A number of Selecta varieties have just been featured in Better Homes and Gardens® publications:

- The Spring 2010 issue of Garden Ideas & Outdoor living, a Better Homes and Gardens® special interest publication, featured MiniFamous™ Double Lemon and Zion™ Copper Amethyst in the 15 Great New Annuals for 2010 editorial.
- On their website under top new red, orange, and yellow annuals for 2010, they featured MiniFamous™ Double Lemon, MiniFamous™ Double Orange, and Zion™ Shadow Red. <http://www.bhg.com/gardening/flowers/top-red-orange-yellow-annuals/>
- On their website under top new blue, pink, and purple annuals for 2010, they featured Famous™ Violet Picotee, MiniFamous™ MiniDouble Magenta, and Soleil™ Purple. <http://www.bhg.com/gardening/flowers/new-annuals/>

MiniFamous™ Double varieties have been very popular lately and were featured several times in consumer publications. Make sure you are stocked and ready for consumer demand. Different looking, great performing varieties are trendy, and the Zion™ series, Soleil™ Purple, and Famous™ Violet Picotee fit the bill.

### top new red, orange, and yellow annuals for 2010

By Justin W. Hancock



#### minifamous double orange calibrachoa

The first orange, double-flowering calibrachoa available to home gardeners, MiniFamous Double Orange calibrachoa is a winner because of its strong color and delightful rose-shape blooms.

**Name:** MiniFamous Double Orange Calibrachoa

**Growing conditions:** Full sun and moist, well-drained soil

**Size:** Trailing to 10 inches

**Grow it with:** Pair it with yellow and apricot calibrachoes to create the feeling of a tropical sunset.

**Source:** firstclassplants.com

**Available from seed:** No

[Learn more about calibrachoa.](#)

### top new blue, pink, and purple annuals for 2010



#### famous violet picotee petunia

A vigorous variety that's constantly covered in bloom, Famous Violet Picotee petunia features magenta-violet flowers boldly outlined in white.

**Name:** Famous Violet Picotee Petunia

**Growing conditions:** Full sun and moist, well-drained soil

**Size:** To 1 foot tall and 2 feet wide

**Grow it with:** Accent the petunia's trumpet-shape flowers with a brightly colored osteospermum.

**Source:** firstclassplants.com

**Available from seed:** No

[Learn more about petunia.](#)

[Get estimates to finish your basement from local contractors.](#)

## Christmas Feelings (is a) Cool Crop .....



Marc Uecker and his team decided to grow Christmas Feelings™ in 2009 following our Energy- and Space-Efficient tech guide they saw in the 2008 Selecta Poinsettia catalog. Starting their crop earlier, they grew a nice and strong plant in early fall. The images below are showing the crop in week 45 with first color.

Lowering the temperature after the beginning of short days, they finished the crop nice and cool for first week of December (image left).

They took it slow and left some room in case adjustments need to be made. Most importantly they decided to grow the whole zone this way and selected varieties



suitable for it. They learned to adjust watering and feeding techniques to the new regime and are ready to take the Poinsettia cool crop to the next level in 2010.

A couple of points you should watch when deciding for a cool crop:

- **Planning**

Correct scheduling is critical. Select the correct varieties meeting your needs.

- **Vegetative Period**

Build the plant when it is cost-effective. Start earlier (about two weeks). Keep temperature up to build a good plant (watch night temperatures). A good root system is key.

- **Generative Period**

Now it is time to reduce the temperature. Start about two to three weeks after short day started. Set the temperature recommended by the supplier. Warmer, brighter days allow you to lower the temperature even further. For best results don't undercut the recommended temperatures.

- **Remember**

Cool grown Poinsettias will finish later, have smaller bracts, and have more intensive (darker) color – whites may turn creamy.



Keep the humidity in mind and don't undercut the dew point. Space at the right time to avoid quality problems and disease issues. Watch light levels and give the appropriate light whenever possible.

Finishing Poinsettias cool in great quality by reducing cost works. However, it needs to be planned ahead and well executed.

Contact us for information about varieties suitable for a cool crop finish and don't forget to ask for the technical sheet (shown to the right), which is also available on-line:

[http://firstclassplants.com/FCP/pdfs/TechSheet\\_Poinsettias\\_CoolCrop\\_2010.pdf](http://firstclassplants.com/FCP/pdfs/TechSheet_Poinsettias_CoolCrop_2010.pdf)



### Growing an Energy-Efficient Poinsettia Crop

**Successful Energy-Efficient Poinsettia crop starts with the variety selection and planning. A critical time to the vegetative crop period from planting until the beginning of short days (about two weeks into short days). This is the time a strong plant with proper height and a healthy root system needs to be built. Once you reach week 3 of the short day (or generative) crop period, it is all about finishing and waiting for your cost per plant even more difficult to achieve. The general growing practices vary slightly between a regular and a cool crop. The necessary recommendations will focus on the Christmas Feeding® series but can be applied to other energy efficient varieties as well.**

**Planning**  
The Christmas Feeding® series is a low vigor series and requires more time to grow before entering short days. In addition they don't grow much after the beginning of short days and don't stretch toward the end of the crop. These are all good things but need to be considered during the planning process. Plant varieties in the Christmas Feeding® series one to two weeks earlier compared to the more vigorous varieties. The extra time is necessary to ensure height and overall plant quality. Starting in week three after the beginning of short days, temperatures are much lower, compared to a standard crop, reducing heating costs. The crop will be delayed by about two days, but the overall quality and shelf-life will be improved. It's also the period heating is most expensive. By growing energy-efficient varieties like Christmas Feeding® series, Christmas One, Christmas Cool series, and SK 62, you not only reduce heating costs but also grow more plants per square foot, reducing your cost per plant even further. They are low maintenance with little or no inputs, helping to maximize cost efficiency.

**Vegetative Period**  
Don't try to reduce costs during the wrong time. Energy-efficient varieties like Christmas Feeding® are not intended to be grown and then planted. During the first weeks, until the beginning of short days, you need to keep the temperature up. Night temperatures are especially important, as heating may be necessary during cold nights in August and September. Recommended temperatures during the vegetative growing period are 68°-72°F day / 65°F night. Depending on the location of your greenhouse and the general condition, recommended drops can be applied to control growth. Drop temperature by 1°-2°F two hours before sunrise until about two to three hours after sunrise. Keep the average temperature in mind to avoid starting and watch for the dew point. Don't use cool misting or side shoot inhibitors. Keep the temperature up in the morning until the plants even out. When humidity is a problem, Negative DIF with 65°F night and 65°F day has proven to be the better choice. PGR treatments may become necessary, but remember that varieties in the Christmas Feeding® series are low vigor varieties so fewer applications with lower concentrations are recommended. General good growing practices increase approach to a strong plant quality when entering the generative crop period.

**Generative Period**  
This is the time to reduce costs by turning down the heat. About two to three weeks less short days (depending on the crop and location of your greenhouse) slowly lower the temperatures for the recommended minimum. The plant won't grow much anymore, and that explains why the vegetative crop period is so important. You need to enter the first phase with strong heating and good quality plants. Heating is not expensive during summer and early fall but will become more expensive starting mid-October, so build the plant when it's cost effective and use what you have.

**Remember**  
To secure quality and cost savings, you will need to watch a couple of important points during the low temperature finishing phase. In general, a cooler green crop will finish a couple days later than a warmer crop. Plants with smaller bracts, and shorter internodes, finish more quickly. When planning on growing an energy-efficient crop, avoid mixing energy-efficient varieties with regular varieties. You can grow energy-efficient varieties in the same crop stages as those vary from stage to stage. When planning on growing an energy-efficient crop, avoid mixing energy-efficient varieties with regular varieties. You can grow energy-efficient varieties in the same crop stages as those vary from stage to stage. When planning on growing an energy-efficient crop, avoid mixing energy-efficient varieties with regular varieties. You can grow energy-efficient varieties in the same crop stages as those vary from stage to stage.

**Questions? Please contact Tech Support for any questions you may have. Toll Free 800-555-5444 ext. 104. [selecia@firstclassplants.com](mailto:selecia@firstclassplants.com)**

Series	Min. average temperature during the vegetative period	Finishing time	Enter short days
Christmas Cool series	65°F day / 65°F night	12 weeks	12 weeks
Christmas One	68°F day / 65°F night	12 weeks	12 weeks
Christmas Feeding® series	68°F day / 65°F night	12 weeks	12 weeks
SK 62	68°F day / 65°F night	12 weeks	12 weeks

## Hiking in 2010



Yes, we will be hiking in 2010 again. I have planned most trips already, and two of them take us in all new territory.

We are planning to climb 14,496 feet high Mount Whitney (left) during a 5-day backpacking trip, starting at Cottonwood Lakes and taking us through some of the most beautiful areas in the Sierras, a path little traveled (except for the Mount Whitney part). By doing so, we don't have to go through the lottery system for climbing it, as it is necessary when starting at Whitney Portal (and it is a much nicer hike).

The other trip, actually taking place a month before Mount Whitney, is in Yosemite National Park. This time we will enter the Park from Twin Lakes on the North East side of the park. We will hike up beautiful Matterhorn Canyon (lower image) to Smedberg Lake and back via Kerrick Canyon. This trip should take us 4 days into one of the secret spots in the Sierras, not much traveled at all.

However, starting the season will be our snowshoe trip to the Pear Lake Ski hut in Sequoia National Park in February. We will stay overnight in the hut. They just got about 10 feet of new snow during the most recent storms, and it looks like it will be an epic hike. We would like to add one more backpacking trip in August, a trip I have been looking at for a few years now. It is called the circle of solitude, a 6-day trip covering almost 70 miles and 19,000 feet of elevation gain/loss. Besides 13,180 feet high Forrester Pass, it takes you over two more passes into the real and little traveled back country of the Sierras.

## Rooting your own TrixiLiner



Trixi® has been a real success. It is the future of mixed baskets. The team at Dramm + Echter in California realized the possibilities of Trixi when looking at the finished baskets we displayed during Pack Trials 2010 and added Trixi® to their finished program for 2010. Besides the core cut flower business, they are finishing spring annuals for local chains. As a finisher with their own rooting division, they decided to root TrixiLiner® themselves.

They ordered their URC following our Trixi® recipes and decided for a 50-cell ellepot tray. It was their first time rooting TrixiLiner®. Instead of trialing just a few, they decided to go the whole nine yards. The image to the left shows you their two planting weeks (two weeks apart).

The result has been very good. The images above show two different recipes as close up and a tray.

They planted the liners this week and decided to plant four TrixiLiner® per 12-inch basket as recommend. I will keep you posted on the progress in the next NewsFlash issues. It is not easy, but it can be done.



## Selecta News

Christmas Beauty (SK 62) looked great in Florida at the UOF Poinsettia open house (image).

The Poinsettia availability is on-line, and orders can be booked. We are offering now world-wide availability on a first come, first served basis. All Selecta Poinsettias will ship from our farm in Uganda. The single location concept ensures a uniform cutting quality throughout the season and guaranteed no split shipments.

Book early and ensure best availability for Selecta's best selling Christmas Feelings™ series and the top newcomers Christmas Eve, Wintersun, Christmas Day, and Christmas Beauty.

The 2010 Selecta Poinsettia program has all it takes to be the best and most modern program available. Selecta genetics work, it's that simple.



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