

## Kicking off the season

Now it is official, the 2009-10 season has started. At the 2009 OFA Short Course, many growers and retailers collected their final impressions and are now getting ready to put their programs together. We will look at the 2009 Short Course and the talk of the show.

This spring was very special when looking at the weather early on, and growers reported more problems with Calibrachoa and Thielaviopsis than in past years. We will take a close look at it.

What's new? We are getting ready for our 2010/11 introductions and make sure to keep on reading future NewsFlash issues to be one of the first ones to find out what's on the horizon from Selecta.

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

Sincerely yours,  
Stefan Reiner



## Variety of the Month

The re-launched **MiniFamous™ Double** series leads the way this season. We took out the old and brought in the new, and it shows. They were show-stoppers at Pack Trials and at the Short Course. The all new MiniFamous™ Double varieties are Calibrachoa at its finest!

## OFA Short Course 2009

With an all new booth featuring a fresh design and an open layout, we presented our top novelties and leading trademarks. The stunning plant quality drew crowds into our booth. We may not have won the best booth award, but we had for sure one of the most talked about presentations. With our 2009 Pack Trial slogan "fewer is more" we focused also at the Short Course on less varieties but more pots of them, creating color splashes.

I must say I was stunned by the feedback and interest in our four main novelties/trademarks for 2009/10: MiniFamous™ Double (especially Double Lemon, left), Trixi™ / TrixiLiner™, Soleil™ Purple Petunia (the new draught tolerant Petunia), and Bonfire® Begonia.



It was amazing to see how fast Trixi™ / TrixiLiner™ has become an industry-known trademark. Featured at the front corner of our booth (below to the right), it received a lot of attention. Visitors walking by stopped, looked, read, and said - Yes, this is Trixi, I have heard lots about it. Our new handy brochures didn't last long, and the new recipe Trixi™ Double Delight (second from the top) was the favorite. Besides MiniFamous™ the best known Selecta trademark and variety is Bonfire®. We had a large center booth display of Bonfire® (top) and left the variety label away on purpose. I would say at least 90% of all visitors knew it was Bonfire®. People love it, and this year I heard way more success stories compared to last year. Growers learned how to grow it and retailers how to sell it -- consumers just love it. Bonfire® is still one of the hottest varieties out there and the unrivaled leader of Begonia boliviensis (leading in recognition and performance). The secret to success? If you weren't satisfied, start it two weeks later (RC's in March is early enough). I was quite surprised how well known our all new drought tolerant Petunia Soleil™ Purple is (center below). Visitors walked to it and when reading the variety label they knew exactly what it was. Thanks to the nomination for the Medal of Excellence Editor's choice award, we even had more visitors asking about it on Tuesday. Leading the pack is with no doubt MiniFamous™. It was great to see visitors walking up and looking at those



great-looking Calibrachoa plants and saying: No wonder, it is a MiniFamous™. I have heard that statement over and over again, at least as often as the comment: MiniFamous™ is simply the best Calibrachoa out there. MiniFamous™ Double Orange (above to the left) was just one of the highlights at our booth. MiniFamous™, America's best selling Calibrachoa series for a reason.

Besides our products the #1 question was related to the rooted cutting supply of Selecta genetics. We had growers, retailers, and sales reps asking us this question. Angela and I took as much time as we could to walk the show and talk to as many as possible about this subject. The past 10 years Selecta's vast root&sell network has supplied the

market with rooted cuttings of Selecta genetics. And this won't change. The root&sell network is for Selecta a critical and important part of our distribution system, and we will continue to support it in the future. For 2009/10 we have a network of 15 root&sell companies throughout the U.S., and most of them have increased their offering of Selecta genetics for this just-started season. The rooted cutting supply of Selecta genetics will remain open to the broker network, and Selecta will support not only the root&sells but also the brokers. We are finalizing our program offering for 2010/11, and incredible new varieties and products will be added and available to the root&sell network. Yes, our product offering will change over the next years, but it always has been changing in the past. Varieties, series, or maybe even an entire crop will be dropped to make room for innovations. This we have always done in order to keep our offering as streamlined as possible. Together with Ball we will work very hard for your support, and we will keep offering rooted cuttings of Selecta genetics to the broker network via our large root&sell network, including TrixiLiner™.

The 2009 OFA Shourt Course is history. Thank you to all visitors for stopping by our booth. Now it is time for summer field trials. I will keep you posted on the ones I visit, and what I have heard so far is that Petunia Soleil™ Purple and Calibrachoa MiniFamous™ are doing really well.

## Calibrachoa and Thielaviopsis



I had a chance to talk to some of my colleagues at other breeder/suppliers of Calibrachoa, and this year we all got more questions about plants dying, especially in mixed baskets. In most cases it is Thielaviopsis, and Calibrachoa are susceptible to it, especially when giving the perfect conditions for this fungus. Calibrachoa hate it to sit wet and cold, as they easily become water logged. Once struggling they will fall behind other crops and eventually die off. We had a very bright spring early on, and when the weather got back to normal, Calibrachoa plants started to die in mixed baskets often 6-8 weeks into the crop. Quite often we respond too late to such weather patterns, and in this case baskets were too wet and conditions cool, perfect

for Thielaviopsis. Keep the basics for Calibrachoa in mind, including use a well draining substrate, warmer temperatures after transplanting so they can root into the new substrate, don't soak them, and water only when needed, keeping them on the dryer side. Keeping the pH in the correct range and avoiding high EC levels is important as well. Most importantly, don't let liners become root bound and overgrown. Transplant them early and when actively growing to avoid a plant shock. Control their root system weekly and when in doubt, drench preventively.

Grow stunning Calibrachoa by avoiding the eight most common mistakes listed below:

### 1. Variety Selection

Know what the final product should look like.

### 2. Scheduling

Don't start too early.

### 3. Don't over-mist in rooting

Eight out of ten are over-misting during rooting, especially the first 10 days.

### 4. Start warm

Calibrachoa need it warm during rooting and the first days after planting.

### 5. Substrate / Fertilizer/ pH / EC

Starting with the right substrate and watching the pH and EC will prevent many headaches.

### 6. Pinching

Don't let the liner overgrow before pinching. Keep cuttings growing and compact.

### 7. PGR's

Using the right PGR at the right time will prevent quality issues. However, it all starts with the variety selection and scheduling.

## 8. Avoid late flowering

Don't use flower-delaying chemicals. Make sure to select the right varieties for very early flowering, and if this still won't do it, try to grow Calibrachoa without a pinch.

For more information about Calibrachoa visit our [minifamousclub.com](http://minifamousclub.com) website featuring detailed tech sheets about rooting, finishing, and much more.

## Tuning Calibrachoa Baskets

Already during Pack Trials and now again at the OFA Short Course growers asked me what they need to do in order to get the full color look for Calibrachoa baskets we displayed.

It all starts with a well-branched overall compact but ready-to-grow liner (check out our tech sheet for rooting Calibrachoa). Use at least 5 liners for a 12-inch basket and grow them following our recommendations as listed in our tech sheet for finishing Calibrachoa. You will need a well-branched, good quality basket to make it work.

The PGR applications will make the difference between a flowering basket and a ball of color. You may have to apply one or two light spray applications to keep your basket overall looking good. Use B-Nine or Sumagic for it (see our tech sheets for more details).

The trick however, is to apply a PGR drench about two to three weeks prior to the sales date (or at about 70-80% of your desired size) using Bonzi. Using a rate of 1-2 PPM Bonzi will slow down the growing tips and push flowers to the outside, creating the full color look.

Be sure to follow the recommendations for the use of Bonzi to avoid problems like stunting. Don't apply it to dry plants and don't apply it overhead.

For more information visit our MiniFamous™ Calibrachoa dedicated website: [minifamousclub.com](http://minifamousclub.com)



## Selecta News

I know it has not much to do with Selecta, but I can't resist not writing at least a couple words about hiking. I am getting ready for my second backpacking trip this summer, this time it will be in Sequoia National Park hiking the "Mineral King to Little Five Lakes" loop. Day one is about 13 miles with 5,200 feet of elevation gain over 11,800 feet high Franklin Pass. In my last report I spoke about reducing weight. In light of day one I looked at every oz. I invested in a new tent, reducing the weight by 1.2 kg (2.65 lb) and the latest in sleeping pad technology, bringing another 300 g (0.65 lb). In addition by leaving stuff behind, the overall reduction is about 2 kg (4.5 lb). The reduction in weight also reduced volume.

By investing in what makes sense and focusing on what I really need I am able to go further. Isn't that true for many things? Isn't it true for our industry as well?



Selecta First Class, Inc.  
P.O. Box 231306  
Encinitas, CA 92023-1306  
800-955 5644

<http://firstclassplants.com>

