

# FIRST CLASS NEWS FLASH



May 2006

## It's Poinsettia time!



The peak of the spring plant season is behind us, and spring is all around us. The season was good. But what's next? Poinsettias! Because of small margins, many would prefer to not grow Poinsettias anymore. To be honest, Poinsettias are one of my favorite crops and also one of Selecta's. Selecta has a team of dedicated specialists working on Poinsettias, improving their performance so growers can make better profits. Our customers know that growing Selecta genetics means increased profits, and the same is true for Selecta Poinsettias. Selecta introduced the next generation of Poinsettia genetics over the course of the last couple of years, and even if some competitive varieties were introduced later to the market, it does not automatically mean they are the next generation genetics. Many of them are bred

using old, well-established varieties and may look different and new, but are no real improvements for growers.

Labels and large, different looking varieties that are more difficult to grow will at the end not improve the bottom line. A variety with the perfect branching structure but having other deficiencies, like higher temperature needs and unpredictable finishing, may solve one but create other problems that cost money at the end. Super-compact varieties may work great when fall is perfect or when planted a couple of weeks earlier, but ultimately will save no costs for growers. The market is not really willing to pay more for Poinsettias, and we have to adapt so we are able to improve our results. Today's markets need easy-to-grow varieties that finish fast, are reliable, have lower temperature needs, are sturdy, and have good post-harvest characteristics. Ask yourself if the varieties you grow today are new genetics with the features mentioned above. If not, is the reason for not switching because you always grew those varieties and got your cuttings always from the same supplier? Maybe it is time to move on and improve your bottom line.

What can the next generation Selecta genetics do for your bottom line? We can save you dollars by providing:

- Competitive, reliable, and on-time supply of Poinsettia cuttings.
- Quality cuttings delivered in 48 hrs to your door.
- Varieties requiring lower temperatures, saving \$ that go straight into your pocket.
- Easy-to-grow, medium-vigorous varieties that reduce costs like PGR use.
- Excellent branching and a sturdy V-shaped habit for more plants per square feet and easier shipping.
- Reliable timing and on-time finishing varieties with great post-harvest characteristics.

## Selecta Genetics – a way to better profits!

I decided to change the routine once again following our “Be different” slogan and will not talk about the varieties and how great they will work for you. Instead this issue will focus on production and what you can expect from us over the next weeks and months.

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## Selecta Poinsettia Production Update

URC and RC of newer genetic varieties will look different, and many growers are still caught by surprise when receiving their shipments. Some suppliers are working hard to make their cuttings look like the typical genetics we are used to. However, this is not the best for those genetics. My goal today is to show you what you can expect when purchasing our genetics. Will they work even if they look different? Yes, they work just because of that. Ask yourself how cars looked 10 years ago and how they look today. We are surrounded by high tech, and it is not much different for our products. It is time to move on.



The Christmas Feelings Series is the next-generation variety, delivering all that is needed to grow a profitable Poinsettia crop. The images show you our stock in Costa Rica (images taken in week 19). We grow Poinsettias following our high sanitary standards that are similar to the Geranium protocols. Insect screening, tables, drip-irrigation, gloves and coats for workers, and much more are our standard procedures, but even more important it is a dedicated team of workers who love what they do that ensures quality cuttings. The left image shows a perfect mature cutting for the Christmas Feelings Series that will deliver outstanding results.

On the following pages I will introduce to you different varieties, what the stock looks like, and what kind of cutting to expect. In general we cut a 4.5 cm long cutting (not quite 2 inches) measured from the cut to the heart of the cutting. A cutting has 2.5 to 3 developed leaves plus a healthy heart. In addition, each cutting will have a clean base for easier sticking. Average cuttings are 5 weeks of age before they are harvested. We prefer a compact habit with short leaf stems that ensure excellent branching. The size of the foliage as well as the caliber of the cutting will vary from variety to variety. For example Christmas Dream will have larger foliage and thicker caliber than Christmas Time, which has smaller foliage and a thinner caliber, but both are of the same age and maturity.

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## Cinnamon Candy



Cuttings look very similar to the Feelings Series. Other varieties with similar cuttings are the Christmas Star Series, Golden Christmas, Happy Christmas, White Christmas® evol., and Christmas Spirit.

## Christmas Dream



Cuttings are overall larger compared to the Feelings Series. Varieties besides the Christmas Dream Series with similar cuttings are Merry Christmas, Amazing Pink, Crème Caramel, Silent Night Series, and Santa Claus® Series.

## Valentine



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Valentine delivers a unique looking cutting with a thick caliber but smaller-sized foliage and short leaf stems. No other variety in our program will deliver a similar cutting.

The Christmas Time Series and Christmas Carol will deliver the smallest cutting. They will look somewhat similar to the Valentine cutting but with one significant difference, their caliber is thinner and the foliage is straight.



Silent Night = larger cuttings (like Dream)



White Christmas® evol. = medium cuttings (like Feelings)

Selecta Poinsettias are grown in state-of-the-art facilities following our strict protocols, ensuring top-quality cuttings. Our team of specialist is working for you. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions concerning our stock or about Selecta's next generation Poinsettia varieties.



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## Poinsettia Trial Varieties 2006

The 2006 Poinsettia trial package includes varieties like Christmas Carol White and Pink, Christmas Angel, Apricot Candy, and Christmas Feelings Crazy. Selecta offers you tomorrow's varieties for trials today.



Christmas Feelings Crazy



Christmas Carol Pink, and White



Apricot Candy

## Pack Trials – Review the 2<sup>nd</sup>

Our April issue was all about Pack Trials, and we thank all our readers for the great response we got. One of the questions I heard more than once was about our trial area. Readers wanted to see how we grew the material and of course wanted to see more images.



We grow as basic as it gets, and our best friend is the sun in Southern California. For all plants we used Sunshine Mix #4 and Peter's Professional 20:10:20 +Micro Nutrients (our water comes from the city and is not good). We used brown 5-inch / 6-inch / 8-inch pots, and 12-inch baskets. All plants got rooted at our rooting station in Provo, Utah, and shipped with UPS as rooted liners (72 strip-tray for Geraniums and 105 tray for all other products). We finish 20 pots per variety (plus 2 baskets if applicable) and had a total of 300 SFC program varieties, about 150 competitive varieties, and another 250 experimental varieties (total about 700 varieties and almost 15,000 pots and baskets).

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We are growing a trial that serves several purposes. It is a performance trial for our program selection, and we use plants from the trial for Pack Trials. This limits us to basic treatments, as otherwise the trial could not be used for this purpose. The technical information used in our catalog is based on many years of experience part of which comes from our spring trials. What is listed in our recommendation has been tested in our trials before. Please don't hesitate to contact us in case you have any questions or would like to receive further information.



For information, varieties, services and NEWS visit our website 'firstclassplants.com' and request our new catalogs.

Sincerely yours,  
Stefan Reiner

**First Class: Where innovation, reliability, quality, and customer service meet.**