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Thank You to the MNLA Foundation for their Financial Support for the Annual Flower Trial
Why Annual Flower Trials?

• Annual flowers have long been used to enhance landscapes, improve curb appeal, or simply to provide aesthetic beauty.

• Their wide variety of color and texture makes annual flowers extremely attractive to consumers; annual flower sales exceed $1.3 billion each year in just the top 15 states (Floriculture Crops Summary 2014, USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service).
Why trial with the U of MN

- The WCROC is located in west central Minnesota, which represents a very distinct climate for annual flower trials. The Morris area typically has hot, dry summers with exposure to wind, which provides a unique opportunity to compare performance of bedding-plant cultivars under regional conditions.

- The goal of evaluating this vast array of flowers is to develop recommendations for Minnesota.
Why trial with the U of MN

• Our gardens are open to the public and industry for self-guided tours throughout the growing season.
• Provides a unique opportunity to compare performance of bedding plant cultivars under regional conditions.
• Several thousand people visited these sites during the summer.
• Horticulture Display Garden selected as Best Public Display Garden in MN by WCCO/CBS viewers in August 2015.

Horticulture Display Garden at the WCROC, Morris, MN
Why trial with the U of MN

- Cultivars are grown from seed or are vegetatively propagated
- Plants are rated periodically for field and container performance
- Home gardeners and commercial bedding plant producers can identify cultivars best suited for their locations from evaluations of hundreds of annual flowers
- Each growing season, annual flowers from major plant companies from around the world are evaluated at the University of Minnesota.

Vegetative cuttings in WCROC greenhouses, May 2015
All-America Selections (AAS)

AAS continues as the oldest, most established international testing organization in North America, celebrating their 80th anniversary in 2012. Their mission is to "To promote new garden varieties with superior garden performance judged in impartial trials in North America."

- The Horticulture Display Garden has been an All-America Selections (AAS) Display Garden since 1990.
- We are also the only AAS Trial Ground site currently in Minnesota, where AAS entries are planted next to comparisons and evaluated.
Top Ten Performers

• In order to be considered a Top Ten, the plant must receive all “5” ratings (the best score). Plants were evaluated on a scale of 1-5. Plants evaluated three times during the growing season.

• 392 trial entries in 2015

• The following traits are considered when giving the ratings; uniformity of habit and flowering, flower numbers relative to others, insect resistance, disease resistance, and uniqueness.

Impatiens Interspecific Big Bounce Series, Lilac was a 2014 Top Ten winner.
Begonia *Solenia® Apricot*

- Produces large blossoms of three-inch peach frilly flowers with amazing long season color
- Cross between a tuberous begonia and a wax begonia
- Requires dead-heading to keep it looking nice
- Deer don’t particularly care for this plant, and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier plants

**Height** = 12 inches  
**Spread** = 16 inches  
**Bloom Time** = Mid Spring - Fall  
**Exposure** = Sun to Partial Shade  
**Soil Moisture** = Moist
Begonia x benariensis

**BIG® Red Green Leaf**

- Quick-blooming vigorous begonia
- Fire-engine bright crimson red flowers and the combination of the glossy green foliage are outstanding.
- Grows well in partial shade and is perfect for a mass planting or very large containers

**Height** = up to 24 inches  
**Spread** = 20 inches  
**Bloom Time** = Early Summer to Fall  
**Exposure** = Full Sun to Part Shade  
**Soil Moisture** = Moist, Well Drained
Calibrachoa Suberbells® Garden Rose

- Has abundant, small petunia-like flowers all season long
- Features distinctive, shiny, striking flowers that don’t fade in the summer heat
- Has long, trailing branches cascading over the sides of hanging baskets
- Low-maintenance compact plant with no necessary deadheading. Perks back up after a rain

**Height =** 8 inches  
**Spread =** 36 inches  
**Bloom Time =** Planting to Hard Frost  
**Exposure =** Part Sun to Sun  
**Soil Moisture =** Good Drainage
**Coleus Broad Street**

- Features burgundy leaves with a lime green edge
- Outstanding performer in our 2015 display garden
- Grow in partial shade—extremely compact and uniform
- Used as a foliage plant
- Coleus was selected as the National Garden Bureau’s Annual of the Year for 2015

**Height** = 30”  
**Spread** = 20”
Dahlia Hypnotica® Lavender

- Outstanding dahlia blooms profusely from planting into early fall
- Has vigorous plant habit, clean foliage and large flowers that were real eye catchers in our garden beds
- The lavender blooms compliment many other planting companions
- Requires occasional deadheading for a neat appearance

**Height** = 26 inches  
**Spread** = 24 inches  
**Bloom Time** = Summer until Frost  
**Exposure** = Full Sun to Partial Shade  
**Soil Moisture** = Moist, Well Drained
Dianthus Jolt™ Pink

- 2015 All-America Selections winner
- Has large, showy flower heads on strong stems that performed extremely well all summer long
- Has bright pink-fringed flowers
- Easy to grow and low maintenance

**Height** = 22”  **Spread** = 18”
**Bloom Time** = Late Spring - Fall
**Exposure** = Full Sun
**Soil Moisture** = Well Drained
Geranium Pinto™ Premium Lavender Rose

- A seed type geranium from the Pinto series
- Great garden performer with uniform plant habit and early flowering
- Most appealing feature is the disease-free clean foliage all season long
- Perhaps the best seed geranium we’ve trialed at the U of MN.

Height = 20 inches  
Spread = 20 inches  
Bloom Time = Early Spring to Fall  
Exposure = Partial to Full Sun  
Soil Moisture = Moderate
Impatiens walleriana *Lollipop™ Fruit Punch Rose*

- Outstanding impatiens from greenhouse to garden
- Exceptional uniform plant habit, growth and vigor
- Rose colored flowers provide an intense pop of color throughout the entire growing season
- The *Lollipop™* series also comes in nine other colors

**Height** = 20 inches  
**Spread** = 22 inches  
**Bloom Time** = June to Fall  
**Exposure** = Partial Shade  
**Soil Moisture** = Moist
Petunia Surfinia® Sumo™ Pink

- Offers a vigorous, full mounding habit of hot pink flowers in a landscape bed
- Buds open continuously from the center and all along the stems, so there are no "flat-topped" or empty-centered plants as the season progresses
- Perfect for large containers and hanging baskets because its unique habit changes from mounding to trailing

**Height** = 16 inches  
**Spread** = 35-55 inches  
**Bloom Time** = Late Spring until Frost  
**Exposure** = Full Sun  
**Soil Moisture** = Well Drained
Portulaca Mojave® Tangerine

- Durable and colorful flowering succulent blooms profusely all summer long without deadheading
- The flowers of Portulaca close at night and reopen with sunlight
- Performed well for us in a block wall planter next to an asphalt parking lot with limited moisture
- Great plant choice for warm climates and poor, drier soils

**Height =** 7 inches  
**Spread =** 12-16 inches  
**Bloom Time =** Spring to Late Summer  
**Exposure =** Sun  
**Soil Moisture =** Average
Honorable Mentions

- Plants receiving 4’s and 5’s are considered good or excellent
- The following plants were given honorable mention in 2015

Calibrachoa Can-Can Pink Splash
Bidens Campfire™ Fireburst

- Very easy to grow
- Vigorous and heat tolerant with striking scarlet and yellow flowers in the summer months and muted orange petals in early spring and fall
- Continuous bloom or rebloom
- Great color for fall interest
- Heat tolerant
- Deadheading not necessary
- Attracts bees
Cleome Senorita Blanca™ (Imp)

- Heat and drought tolerant plant adds dramatic height to landscape beds
- Sterile flowers and thornless, non-sticky, odorless foliage adds to the appeal for this great garden performer
- Continuous bloom or rebloom
- Heat tolerant
- Deadheading not necessary
Cuphea Sriracha™ Violet

- First time ever, a cuphea grown from seed
- Produces vibrant big purple flowers in the sun
- Flowers all summer long on 10-16” tall plants
- Tolerates heat, drought and dry soil
- Looks great in a container
- Attractive to butterflies and bees
Lantana Luscious® Pinkberry Blend

- Tones of pink, yellow and cream flowers produce a gorgeous display of color
- Light sweet fragrant foliage
- Continuous bloom or rebloom
- Heat and drought tolerant
- Deadheading not necessary
Lobularia Yolo Lavender

- Dainty lavender flowers that bloom all summer
- Has a tidy, compact growth habit with strong green foliage
- Great for edging gardens or in containers
New Guinea Impatiens Sunpatiens®
Spreading Shell Pink

- AAS winner with unique genetic background delivers unsurpassed garden performance with season long, soft pink flowers that never slow down
- Strong roots take hold quickly after transplanting and they thrive under high heat, rain and humidity
- The AAS Judges loved these vigorous plants that keep their shape all summer, plus, they do just as well in full sun as in shade
- These low-maintenance plants are perfect for gardeners looking for impatiens that are resistant to downy mildew
Petunia Supertunia® Vista Bubblegum

- Very vigorous, with mounding habit that can reach up to 2 feet in height in the garden bed
- If grown in containers they will trail up to 3 feet by end of season
- In garden beds, they will work either in the front or middle of the bed. They have medium-sized flowers
- Best seller for Proven Winners
- Heat tolerant
- Deadheading not necessary
- Drought tolerant
Verbena bonariensis Meteor Shower™

- These easy to maintain plants do not need deadheading
- An updated look for the species, Meteor Shower™ has a denser, more vigorous growth habit
- Very manageable and attractive plants that create a nice blue mass in the landscape
- The plants set little seed, it won’t become invasive like most Verbenas of this type
- Heat and drought tolerance
- Deer resistance
Vinca Cora®
Cascade Strawberry

- Produce bicolor pink blooms with a rosy center
- This hybrid series of trailing vinca has vigor translating to large overlapping flowers and thick glossy foliage
- Cora Cascade Strawberry Vinca start to spread early on, creating a nice mounded, trailing habit
- Exhibits a high tolerance to aerial Phytophthora disease

Height: 6 to 8"
Spread: 32"
http://wcroc.cfans.umn.edu

Photos credits: Esther Jordan, U of MN, WCROC

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