Ornamentals Section

Proc. Fla. State Hort. Soc. 116:179-183. 2003.

FORT LAUDERDALE WINTER TRIAL GARDEN

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Additional index words.Pelargonium × *hortorum*, annuals, New Guinea impatiens, variety trial

Abstract. **On December 6, 2002, 18 plants of 53 cultivars of New Guinea impatiens and 18 cultivars of geraniums were transplanted into a trial garden located at the University of Florida Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center. The plants were planted as three groups of six plants, with the groups being randomly placed in the garden. The New Guinea impatiens cultivars were planted under 30% shade while the geraniums were planted in full sun. Plants were watered three times per week for 30 minutes using overhead irrigation. Monthly evaluations were conducted to observe plant height and width (size), flower number, number of plants with flowers, insect and disease damage, and quality rating. Quality was rated on a scale of 0 to 5 with 5 = excellent, 1 = poor, and 0 = dead. Several of the geranium cultivars died during February and March due to *Xanthomonas*. Two consumer preference surveys also were conducted with the first survey in January and the second in March. Fifty percent or more survey respondents in January chose the following geranium cultivars Fantasia Coral, Fantasia Shocking Pink, Showcase Pink Parfait, and Showcase Purple and the following New Guinea impatiens cultivars Celebration Deep Red, Celebration Electric Rose, Celebrette Coral Light, and Super Sonic Cherry Cream as favorites.**

In 2001, bedding and garden plant sales represented 52.7% of the total US floriculture production, which totaled $4.129 billion (Miller, 2002). Of all states, Florida ranked second in floriculture production sales with 16.1% of the national total (Miller, 2002). Because of the ideal weather in Fort Lauderdale during the winter (26.1 N, 80.2 W, AHS Heat Zone 11, USDA Hardiness Zone 10a), the trial garden was developed to assist companies who wish to trial vegetatively propagated cultivars before summer trials in the rest of the nation. The winter trial garden in Fort Lauderdale is part of the Environmental Horticulture department's statewide ornamental trial program. The goal of the statewide program is to develop unbiased evaluations of cultivar performance of both vegetative and seed grown annuals and perennials. The program includes vegetative plant trials in Gainesville, seed produced annual trials in Bradenton, native plant trails in Fort Pierce, native and perennial plant trials in Monticello, tropical plant trials in Homestead, and vegetative annual trials in Fort Lauderdale. All cultivars in the Fort Lauderdale trial garden were evaluated for flower and plant performance and uniformity.

Materials and Methods

Transplant production. In Oct. 2003, rooted liners of 18 cultivars of geraniums and 53 cultivars of New Guinea impatiens were received from Ball FloraPlant (West Chicago, Ill.), Danziger Flower Farm (Israel), Paul Ecke Ranch (Encinitas, Calif.), EuroAmerican, Fides North America (Holland), and Fischer (Boulder, Colo.). Liners were transplanted into 400 mL round pots filled with Pro-mix 'BX' (Premier Horticulture, Inc., Red Hill, Pa.). Plants were placed in an open-sided greenhouse exposed to ambient air temperatures of ≈30 °C day/21 °C night. Plants were watered daily and fertilized twice a week with 150 mg·kg^{-1} of nitrogen from Peter's 21N-5P2O5-20K2O (The Scotts Company, Marysville, Ohio).

Field evaluation. The 100 ft × 100 ft garden is a Margate fine sand soil with 1.6% organic matter, a pH of 6.74, a soluble salt level of 0.30 mS/cm, a NO_3-N concentration of 9.00 mg·kg^{-1}, a NH_4-N concentration of 5.00 mg·kg^{-1}, a P concentration of 27.00 mg·kg^{-1}, and a K concentration of 3.7 mg·kg^{-1} (samples collected from top 6 inches of soil). Samples were analyzed by the University of Florida's soil testing laboratory. The area was tilled and Corral® (The Scotts Company Marysville, Ohio) a pre-emergent herbicide, was applied at a rate of 57 lb/acre (1.31 lb/1000 ft^2). A 3-inch mulch layer also was spread over the garden to help control weeds. Approximately 3000 ft^2 of the area is exposed to full sun while the remaining 7000 ft^2 is in 30% shade.

On 6 Dec. 2002, 18 plants per cultivar were planted into the trial garden. Three groups of six plants per cultivar were randomly planted in the garden. At planting, each plant was top dressed with 5 g of Nutricote 18N-6P_2O_5-8K_2O type 70 (Florikan Corp., Sarasota, Fla.). Plants were watered overhead three times a week for 30 min.

Data collection. Monthly mean temperature and rainfall were collected. Once a month plant height, width, flower number, and quality were recorded for each individual plant in the garden. Plant quality was based on the appearance of the group of six plants (three groups of six plants for each cultivar) and took into account the number of plants in flower in a group as well as uniformity in growth and appearance. Plant quality was based on a scale of 0 to 5 with 5 = excellent 4 = very good, 3 = good, 2 = fair, 1 = poor, and 0 = dead.

Three consumer preference surveys also were conducted in which participants were asked to check all cultivars that

This research was supported by the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station, and approved for publication as Journal Series No. N-02378.

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Table 1. Temperature and rainfall at the University of Florida's Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center during Winter 2002-2003.

Month/year	Avg. mean temperature (°C)	Minimum temperature (°C)	Maximum temperature (°C)	Monthly rainfall (cm)
Dec. 2002	19.89	7.60	30.17	6.79
Jan. 2003	15.97	0.93	28.60	2.09
Feb. 2003	21.51	8.67	33.14	3.75
Mar. 2003	24.92	11.07	34.08	6.67
Apr. 2003	23.42	10.35	33.75	6.44
May 2003	26.59	18.76	34.29	32.25

they liked. Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of individuals who selected a specific cultivar by the total number of respondents. The first survey was conducted in Jan. 2003 and the second survey was in Mar. 2003. A third survey was conducted with the students from Stranahan High School in May 2003. All data were analyzed using analysis of variance (SAS Systems, SAS Institute, Cary, N.C.).

Results and Discussion

Weather. Temperatures dropped in January to a low of 0.93 °C (Table 1). To protect the plants from the cold, we ran the irrigation from 2 AM until 10 AM and the ice had melted on the plants. Rainfall was high during May (Table 1).

Geraniums. Geranium plant size increased from December to February-March (Table 2). Several geranium plants died, especially the Fireworks series, due to *Xanthomonas* in-

Table 3. Average quality of geranium cultivars measured 14, 46, 72, 99 and 129 d after planting (6 Dec. 2002) during Winter 2002-2003. Plant quality was based on a scale of 0 to 5 with 5 = excellent 4 = very good, 3 = good, 2 = fair, 1 = poor, and 0 = dead. The quality was based on the general appearance of the group of six plants. Values represent the average of the three groups of each cultivar (three groups of six plants for a total of 18 plants per cultivar).

Cultivar name	Source	Avg. quality 14	46	72	99	129
Fantasia	Ball					
Cardinal Red		1.53	1.83	2.53	1.83	1.40
Coral		3.00	2.67	3.50	1.93	2.16
Flame		2.83	1.83	3.17	2.50	1.83
Pink Shell		3.00	2.50	3.07	2.00	1.25
Shocking Pink		2.60	2.67	3.23	2.33	1.67
Violet		3.00	2.00	1.93	1.67	1.17
Fireworks	EuroAmerican					
Cherry Bicolor		2.70	2.00	2.50	1.83	1.17
Pink Bicolor		3.00	2.17	1.93	0	0
Red-White		3.00	2.33	3.10	1.67	0.83
Scarlet		2.77	2.17	2.50	1.67	1.33
Showcase	Ball					
Bright Cherry		2.77	2.33	2.33	1.33	1.17
Bright Coral		2.60	2.17	2.83	1.97	1.33
Pink Parfait		2.93	2.33	2.83	1.77	1.00
Purple		2.93	2.50	2.57	1.33	1.17
Red		2.87	2.00	2.40	1.67	1.67
Salmon		2.83	2.17	2.43	2.50	1.17
Scarlet		2.60	3.00	3.40	2.00	1.17
White		2.67	2.17	2.67	2.17	1.33

Table 2. Growth and customer preference of geranium cultivars 14, 46, 72, 99, and 129 d after planting (6 Dec. 2002) during Winter 2002-2003.

Cultivar name	Source	Avg. size (cm)[z] 14	46	72	99	129	Avg. flower number[y] 14	46	72	99	129	Consumer preference[x] (%) 1/03	3/03
Fantasia	Ball												
Cardinal Red		15.7	19.7	20.2	23.9	16.7	2.50	1.67	3.00	0	2.00	20	X
Coral		19.8	21.5	20.0	27.6	20.5	0	1.33	1.67	2.33	0.67	50	X
Flame		15.9	18.0	19.8	25.7	19.3	0	0.67	1.33	2.33	1.33	15	X
Pink Shell		19.0	20.0	21.2	21.3	15.8	0	1.50	2.00	1.00	0.50	13	X
Shocking Pink		19.5	19.6	21.9	29.4	20.2	0	2.00	1.33	2.00	1.33	65	X
Violet		16.4	16.2	20.0	17.3	13.9	0	0.33	2.67	1.33	0.33	13	X
Fireworks	EuroAmerican												
Cherry Bicolor		26.1	24.2	26.3	23.1	19.2	0	1.00	3.00	0	1.33	24	X
Pink Bicolor		24.0	23.7	23.3	—	—	0	1.00	2.00	—	—	37	X
Red-White		26.9	20.8	18.8	19.8	15.8	0	2.33	3.33	0	0	31	X
Scarlet		21.7	17.2	21.7	18.7	13.5	0	2.67	2.33	0	0.33	28	X
Showcase	Ball												
Bright Cherry		18.1	15.2	16.8	17.4	10.5	0	1.00	1.67	1.00	0	24	X
Bright Coral		20.0	17.5	20.6	21.8	14.0	0	1.67	2.33	1.33	0.67	48	X
Pink Parfait		19.5	21.5	21.9	22.9	15.0	0	1.67	2.67	2.00	0	70	X
Purple		20.0	17.1	20.3	20.2	12.1	0	1.00	1.33	0.67	0.33	53	X
Red		21.0	16.7	17.8	23.8	13.8	0	1.33	1.67	0.67	0	30	X
Salmon		18.3	18.8	19.5	25.4	16.8	0	1.67	2.00	1.67	0.67	26	X
Scarlet		18.0	20.8	24.0	25.3	13.8	0	1.67	2.67	1.00	0	31	X
White		20.8	20.7	21.7	26.2	17.7	0	1.67	2.00	3.00	1.67	7	X

[z]Size is the average of plant height and plant width (N=18).
[y]Flower number is the average of 18 plants per cultivar.
[x]The consumer preference survey asked individuals to select all of the cultivars that they liked in the garden. The percentage was calculated by dividing the number of individuals who selected a specific cultivar by the total number of respondents. The survey conducted in Jan. 2003 had 54 respondents.

Table 4. Growth and customer preference of New Guinea impatiens cultivars 14, 46, 72, 99, and 129 d after planting (6 Dec. 2002) during Winter 2002-2003.

		Avg. size (cm)[z]					Avg. flower number[y]					Consumer preference[x] (%)		
Cultivar name	Source	14	46	72	99	129	14	46	72	99	129	SHS	1/03	3/03
Celebration	Ball													
Deep Red		17.4	23.8	26.5	35.2	40.2	0	6.7	17.7	11.7	13.3	17	56	23
Electric Rose		18.7	23.8	24.0	35.3	40.4	0	4.7	8.3	17.0	14.0	56	54	26
Lavender Glow		19.1	23.2	25.3	37.9	42.9	0	3.3	7.3	13.3	4.3	17	28	14
Orange		18.3	23.2	26.2	40.5	47.9	0	1.7	11.7	19.3	13.7	22	33	33
Pink		15.5	20.1	22.3	35.0	38.3	0	3.7	4.0	8.0	7.7	22	17	15
Pink Blush		17.3	21.5	23.8	35.6	44.3	0	1.3	13.0	11.0	8.3	11	4	11
Purple		17.0	22.8	23.8	38.7	42.7	0	2.0	12.0	26.0	17.7	69	11	15
Raspberry Rose		17.7	23.7	25.0	35.9	41.6	0	2.0	14.0	26.7	16.3	6	31	21
White		16.5	19.7	22.7	37.7	42.6	0	3.3	7.7	28.7	14.0	17	13	17
Celebrette	Ball													
Appleblosom		15.9	18.5	17.5	29.6	33.9	0	1.7	6.0	8.3	20.0	6	5	11
Apricot Star		16.8	19.8	19.3	29.3	34.2	0	1.3	3.0	11.0	8.7	50	31	31
Coral Light		18.3	24.4	28.1	34.8	39.9	0	1.7	3.0	5.3	8.0	33	63	36
Frost		16.2	20.5	21.4	32.5	39.0	0	1.3	5.3	10.7	11.0	6	13	9
Grape Crush		16.8	18.7	16.0	28.1	32.7	0	1.7	2.3	11.0	20.3	6	22	16
Hot Rose		18.3	22.1	21.9	31.8	36.5	0	1.7	6.0	16.3	20.3	11	24	7
Lavender		15.0	17.8	21.0	32.8	41.1	0	2.7	6.0	10.3	13.0	17	11	21
Orange Crush		16.5	19.3	20.6	35.5	37.1	0	3.0	6.7	22.0	26.0	39	30	41
Orchid		14.8	19.6	21.3	27.7	33.8	0	3.0	10.7	17.3	19.0	6	31	20
Pink Jewel		16.8	18.7	20.3	32.0	38.3	0	4.0	13.0	15.7	14.0	11	19	11
Red		16.8	22.7	23.4	32.3	40.0	0	4.7	11.0	26.3	21.3	22	30	31
Scarlet		16.4	21.2	22.2	33.0	38.4	0	4.0	6.7	14.3	16.3	11	41	31
Strawberry Star		16.6	18.4	18.8	32.9	36.5	0	1.7	2.3	16.3	19.7	44	13	52
Wild Plum		15.8	19.1	19.5	29.8	36.8	0	2.7	8.0	14.7	28.0	11	44	27
Fanfare	Ball													
Fushia		27.0	30.2	27.1	46.7	51.8	0	5.3	14.0	50.0	51.7	44	44	28
Lavender		25.8	25.8	22.4	45.1	50.2	0	5.0	13.0	48.3	46.0	11	24	26
Orange		30.8	31.0	32.7	50.3	58.8	0	2.7	14.7	58.3	63.0	44	22	28
Harmony	Danziger													
Bordeaux		18.3	18.3	21.2	33.2	33.8	0	1.3	10.0	13.7	11.0	6	13	15
Corallina		17.7	22.5	23	34.2	41.8	0	2.7	6.7	8.7	12.0	11	17	7
Magenta		18.4	21.9	20.9	33.3	33.3	0	3.0	11.7	6.6	3.7	22	19	12
Magnolia		18.4	22.8	25.3	31.7	38.8	0	1.3	9.3	17.7	15.0	17	22	28
Red		17.3	17.4	18.2	26.8	29.9	0	2.3	2.7	8.0	14.3	17	28	16
Ecke	Ecke													
NGI 00/31		14.0	19.3	21.8	30.8	37.4	0	3.7	13.0	20.7	15.7	6	15	17
NGI 01/001		15.6	19.0	22.5	31.2	32.8	0	0.7	12.7	14.7	6.3	11	15	26
NGI 01/005		13.7	15.9	19.8	31.0	36.4	0	0.7	4.0	6.7	12.0	6	15	21
NGI 01/019		16.6	19.5	22.3	32.8	37.2	0	2.3	11.7	16.0	15.3	11	44	33
NGI 01/007		15.9	18.4	22.0	33.9	38.2	0	0.3	7.0	20.3	9.0	11	5	26
Moorea White		14.0	20.5	23.2	33.5	39.8	0	1.3	2.0	20.3	17.0	17	13	16
Painted Paradise Red		13.1	17.3	21.0	32.1	40.2	0	1.0	4.3	14.7	22.7	33	20	53
Sonic	Fischer													
Light Lavender		19.4	23.8	24.3	37.7	38.5	0	1.7	7.3	15.7	14.3	11	26	15
Light Pink		18.3	22.4	21.9	31.5	36.6	0	8.7	11.0	17.3	5.3	6	30	14
Scarlet Blush		18.9	22.5	24.1	32.9	38.6	0	5.0	10.0	12.0	15.0	6	35	9
Sweet Cherry		19.1	22.0	22.4	31.9	36.9	0	3.0	10.0	10.7	13.3	39	41	41
Super Sonic	Fischer													
Cherry Cream		23.1	27.0	28.0	45.4	48.9	0	3.7	10.7	15.7	13.3	56	50	28
Coral Ice		26.8	30.0	28.3	46.8	49.0	0	1.3	2.3	3.3	7.3	6	24	15
Lavender		22.5	26.3	25.0	38.5	44.8	0	3.3	5.0	15.7	14.3	17	33	35
Magenta		18.8	24.0	26.8	38.3	42.6	0	1.3	11.7	9.7	10.0	33	44	36
White		22.8	29.6	28.5	38.8	43.8	0	1.7	5.0	18.0	13.0	6	19	15
Tamarinda	Fides													
Bicolor Purple		15.6	22.0	24.3	35.2	36.3	0	3.7	16.0	11.3	6.0	11	43	44
Blush		16.9	21.3	21.0	34.2	36.2	0	4.7	13.0	13.7	11.7	11	9	9
Cerise Pink		22.3	25.1	24.3	35.2	42.4	0	2.3	9.7	14.0	18.7	6	26	14
Cherry Red		16.9	23.9	21.3	32.6	38.0	0	3.0	2.0	8.3	14.3	6	28	15
Light Pink		18.3	22.3	22.6	35.1	37.3	0	4.0	10.7	19.0	12.0	6	13	11
Violet		20.2	24.3	21.6	31.5	35.7	0	3.0	4.3	4.0	12.0	28	41	22

[z]Size is the average of plant height and plant width (N = 18).
[y]Flower number is an average of 18 plants per cultivar.
[x]The consumer preference survey asked individuals to select all of the cultivars that they liked in the garden. The percentage was calculated by dividing the number of individuals who selected a specific cultivar by the total number of respondents. The survey conducted in Jan. 2003 had 54 respondents and the survey in March had 81 respondents. SHS stands for Stranahan High School, which had 18 student respondents.

Table 5. Average quality of New Guinea impatiens cultivars measured 14, 46, 72, 99 and 129 d after planting (6 Dec. 2002) during winter 2002-2003. Plant quality was based on a scale of 0 to 5 with 5 = excellent 4 = very good, 3 = good, 2 = fair, 1 = poor, and 0 = dead. The quality was based on the general appearance of the group of six plants. Values represent the average of the three groups of each cultivar (three groups of six plants for a total of 18 plants per cultivar).

		Avg. quality				
Cultivar name	Source	14	46	72	99	129
Celebration	Ball					
Deep Red		2.6	2.2	3.5	4.2	4.4
Electric Rose		2.7	2.7	3.2	4.2	4.3
Lavender Glow		2.6	2.0	3.0	4.0	3.2
Orange		2.6	2.3	3.8	4.3	4.5
Pink		2.7	2.2	2.8	4.1	4.2
Pink Blush		2.6	2.0	3.1	3.5	3.5
Purple		2.6	2.0	3.1	4.4	4.3
Raspberry Rose		2.6	2.0	3.7	4.3	4.6
White		2.5	2.3	3.2	4.4	4.3
Celebrette	Ball					
Appleblosom		2.5	2.0	2.8	3.0	4.3
Apricot Star		2.8	2.3	2.5	4.1	3.8
Coral Light		2.6	2.5	3.2	3.7	4.5
Frost		2.8	2.0	3.3	4.2	3.8
Grape Crush		2.5	2.0	2.7	3.9	4.3
Hot Rose		2.7	2.3	3.1	4.2	4.2
Lavender		2.9	2.2	2.5	3.8	4.4
Orange Crush		2.8	2.2	3.2	4.0	4.7
Orchid		2.9	2.5	3.3	4.2	4.7
Pink Jewel		2.5	2.5	3.1	4.2	4.7
Red		2.5	2.0	3.3	3.8	4.4
Scarlet		2.7	2.0	3.3	4.0	4.5
Strawberry Star		2.7	2.0	3.2	4.3	4.9
Wild Plum		2.6	2.3	3.3	4.4	4.6
Fanfare	Ball					
Fushia		2.7	2.8	3.7	4.7	4.6
Lavender		2.8	2.8	3.3	4.4	4.7
Orange		2.5	2.7	3.7	4.5	4.6
Harmony	Danziger					
Bordeaux		2.5	2.3	2.5	3.7	3.8
Corallina		2.7	2.3	3.1	3.9	3.7
Magenta		2.6	2.0	3.0	3.3	3.1
Magnolia		2.8	2.7	3.7	4.0	4.3
Red		2.5	2.0	2.6	3.5	3.6
Ecke	Ecke					
NGI 00/31		2.4	2.0	3.0	3.9	4.3
NGI 01/001		2.3	2.0	2.8	3.3	2.9
NGI 01/005		2.4	2.0	2.7	3.9	3.8
NGI 01/019		2.7	2.2	3.0	3.9	4.1
NGI 01/007		2.6	2.0	3.0	3.6	4.2
Moorea White		2.5	2.0	2.8	4.1	3.8
Painted Paradise Red		2.4	2.0	2.7	3.8	3.8
Sonic	Fischer					
Light Lavender		2.9	3.0	3.6	4.5	4.3
Light Pink		2.6	2.5	3.5	4.0	3.7
Scarlet Blush		2.7	2.3	2.7	3.8	4.3
Sweet Cherry		2.7	2.3	3.2	4.0	4.0
Super Sonic	Fischer					
Cherry Cream		2.8	2.8	3.8	4.4	4.2
Coral Ice		2.7	2.2	2.8	3.3	3.7
Lavender		2.7	2.0	2.7	3.5	4.2
Magenta		2.6	1.8	4.0	3.8	4.3
White		2.5	2.7	3.3	4.2	4.0
Tamarinda	Fides					
Bicolor Purple		2.5	2.5	3.3	3.5	4.2
Blush		2.5	2.0	2.8	3.3	3.3
Cerise Pink		2.9	2.0	2.8	4.2	3.9
Cherry Red		2.6	2.0	2.8	3.3	3.3
Light Pink		2.4	2.0	2.6	3.8	3.6
Violet		2.7	2.2	2.7	3.5	3.3

festation. Plant quality increased from December to February and then declined after February for most cultivars (Table 3).

In January, the cultivars that were chosen by 50% or more of survey participants were Fantasia Coral, Fantasia Shocking Pink, Showcase Pink Parfait, and Showcase Purple (Table 2). People taking the survey preferred the Fantasia and Showcase series probably because the plants were a little larger and had more flowers. Plants in these series also looked more like typical bedding geraniums than plants in the Fireworks series. Because of plant loss due to *Xanthomonas*, the geraniums were not included in the consumer preference survey in March.

New Guinea Impatiens. Size of New Guinea impatiens in the garden increased from December to April/May (Table 4). Plant quality also increased with highest quality ratings in April and May (Table 5).

Flower number in the Celebration series ranged from 8 to 28.7 flowers per plant during peak flowering in March/April (Table 4). Flower number in the Celebrette series ranged from 8 to 28 flowers per plant during peak flowering in April/May while flower number in the Fanfare series ranged from 48.3 to 63 flowers per plant. Flower number in the Harmony series ranged from 11.7 to 17.7 flowers per plant from March to May. Flower number in the Ecke series ranged from 12 to 22.7 flowers per plant. From April to May, in the Sonic and Super Sonic Series, flower number ranged from 13.3 to 17.3 and 7.3 to 18 flowers per plant, respectively. In the Tamarinda series, flower number ranged from 12 to 19 flowers per plant from March to May.

The New Guinea impatiens cultivars that were chosen by 50% or more respondents from the January survey were Celebration Deep Red, Celebration Electric Rose, Celebrette Coral Light, and Super Sonic Cherry Cream (Table 4). The cultivars chosen with 50% or more respondents from the March survey include Celebrette Strawberry Star and Ecke Painted Paradise Red. Fifty percent or more of the students from Stranahan High School selected Celebration Electric Rose, Celebration Purple, Celebrette Apricot Star and Super Sonic Cherry Cream as their favorites.

Summary

Information about bedding plant field performance is important when making recommendations for landscape use. Be-

cause of the mild climate in south Florida, early trials are useful to evaluate plant growth, plant and flower uniformity, and floral display. Consumer surveys also help producers in marketing flower colors and plants that appeal to the general public. A follow-up winter trial is planned for winter 2003-2004.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the horticulture class from Stranahan High School, Fort Lauderdale, FL for planting the garden and weeding, the Broward County Master Gardeners for weeding, and Theodora Frohne and Luci Fisher for technical support. We also thank the companies for sending plant material to evaluate in the garden.

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