

“CUTTING” REMARKS

Volume 3

MAY 2005

D'urc's Drivel

As promised to those of you visiting the trials, I am writing this newsletter as though you were reading the notes you might have taken during my presentation at the Plant Source International display. For those of you that did not attend the trials, this will serve as your personal visit to the PSI display. And, as there were not many plants ready to show (the 4 weeks prior to the trials were the coldest, darkest and wettest since dinosaurs roamed the earth), your “newsletter trial visit” will be almost the same as those who did visit. So read on to fully enjoy the perpetuation of the PSI Points to Ponder 2005.

We want to take this opportunity to thank the folks at the Jackson & Perkins research station in Somis, CA for allowing PSI to be a part of the always spectacular Suntory Pack Trial Display. As they say (and we mean it), we could not have done it without you. Thanks!

And as always, I sign off by saying thank you for support of PSI, requesting your comments and remain “unrootedly” devoted to ... whatever! Comments will be humbly received at azaeske@sbcglobal.net

CUTTING REMARKS is created for Plant Source International by Alan Zaeske of Horticultural Marketing & Management

PALTRY PRICES PREVAIL AT PSI

Despite the fact that prices at PSI have neither increased nor decreased across the board, they have changed. Confused yet? Just wait, let me try to explain this one! All patented varieties will appear to have gone down by 2 cents, because tags will no longer be automatically sent with the order. The little tiny guys (Bacopa, Bracychome, Diascia, Nemesia, Thyme and Vinca minor) appear to have increased in price when in fact, being shipped 2 for 1, the net result is the price per cutting is lower. And, some price categories have been eliminated creating ...fewer price categories. So let me see if I can clear the “fog”.

Basically, prices will remain the same as last year with fewer price categories. All patented varieties (except Lantana) will drop in price because the labels are not included this year (more on tags later). This was done to make the price comparisons between PSI and other companies more “apples to apples”. The same explanation can be applied to the new 2 for 1 pricing. The varieties listed above will be shipped 2 for every 1 ordered (you order 100, we ship 200). When making price comparisons with PSI, please consider these changes, as well as boxing, importation and shipping fees others might add on.

STATUS FOR SPECIALTY GERANIUM

The new status of which I “speak” has no roots! Yes, you heard me correctly. These specialty geraniums are now available as unrooted cuttings, making them more suitable for a wider range of programs. Although not considered geraniums for mainstream production, at least some of these should be a part of every geranium program.

Although it is the smallest member of this specialty group, the Angel Eyes were definitely the big hit of the show. This miniature Regal is diminutive in every way except its performance. Definitely designed for a 4” pot, this little beauty (4 colors) is the first Regal type recommended for bedding. Except in the most extreme heat and humidity, the Angel Eyes will be covered with flowers throughout the growing season. (continued on page 2 **STATUS...**)

NET ZERO? NO WAY!

In spite of 30 varieties failing to make the 2005-06 team, the final roster at PSI showed a net increase of 36. Some highlights of this extensive list are: more Ajugas, some very nice Argyranthemum colors, Gazanias; Heucheras, a pink Lobelia, more herbs and some additional colors Thunbergia ... and more colors of Calibrachoa and Petunias! For a complete list of new varieties, please go to the PSI web-site, www.plantsourceintl.com.

NEWSLETTER NUISANCE?

Please don't let us be ... a nuisance, that is. The “CUTTING REMARKS” is available by e-mail and on our web-site only. If you are not receiving this newsletter and would like to, please e-mail us with your request. If you are, but do not want to, please let us know that, also. We aim to please!

FOCUS ON SANITATION AT PSI

First, let me assure you that sanitation remains the number one priority at PSI. And, because of that, receiving certification from the USDA for geranium production was a breeze. Well, nothing is a breeze when the government gets involved, but I have to say that our sanitation protocols required very few adjustments to meet USDA standards. Woo-hoo!

The next issue up for discussion is the suspected TMV in Suntory product. The short answer is that we don't really know if there was TMV in the stock. What we do know is that if in fact there was TMV in the stock in Mexico, it would have wiped out the whole stock base. That didn't happen. We also know that Agdia is not certain that the positive results that occurred in testing was the TMV we know. Whatever virus caused the positive results is part of the TO-BAMO virus group, very possibly a

new strain. We also know that this did not cause wide-spread problems with the growers. The bottom line is we are not sure what the virus is (exactly), but we think we know how it got there. So, we have refined and expanded the clean stock protocols to better insure the establishment of virus-free stock.

It should be noted that all virus "issues" remained isolated to the Suntory stock houses. There were no positive tests on any of the PSI vegetative lines, including the geraniums.

HERE'S TO YA!

Enthusiasm, like success, is contagious. May you become infected by both and never be cured.

SUNTORY URC's

This second year of the Suntory URC broker program promises to be much more "grower friendly". The program information is being distributed in a more timely fashion than last year. The variety list has doubled, creating more complete variety groups. The pricing is better defined. And, it looks like there may be some availability for some early fall southern markets. For more complete information regarding this program, please check the Suntory web-site at www.suntorycollection.com.

SHIP-ITY DO DA

We continue to search for that perfect (most economical and most reliable) shipping method. US orders are FOB Houston, shipped overnight by DHL or FedEx. Canadian orders are shipped direct to Canada, cleared by the broker.

STATUS... (continued)

Other varieties that will definitely benefit by this new unrooted status are the Pelgardinis (Brocades), the Darkos, the Fireworks Collection, the Happy Face and the Saxonias. All of these varieties would fit well into any spring program and are now more economical as an unrooted cutting.

The Aristos, while also available unrooted, are best purchased as a pre-cooled rooted product. The efforts of the Regal specialist are well worth it.

TAG WE'RE IT!

By "it", I mean, we're the place for tags for all spring veg items. For the 2005-06 season, PSI will no longer automatically send a label with each patented variety (except for Lantanas). However, you and your customers will be able to order labels for ALL varieties offered by PSI, plus additional common varieties offered from other producers. This tag program will be available to anyone needing tags, even for material shipped from other producers. When completed, the information will be sent you and posted on the web-site.

WEB WALKING

"Points to Ponder" says we're up and running! Wrong! We're "up and walking". (Compared to some, perhaps just crawling.) The point is, we are! And we are useful. We are posting current availabilities that, during peak, will be refreshed several times a day, and we're adding new "information pages" as they are completed. Look for a culture and use guide by summer's end. We will also begin to build a library of pictures of all varieties offered by Plant Source International. We have to keep the "techies" busy, don't ya know.

TLALTIZAPAN = SECTION "T"

Unless your Spanish pronunciation is a whole lot better than ours (and it most likely is), we'll all benefit by calling the location Tlaltizapan, Section "T". Who really cares about the pronunciation anyway. The exciting thing is that we need to expand. Thank you, thank you, thank you! Apparently we are doing a good job for you and your customers.

The really good news for everyone is that owning this land will make it feasible for PSI to further develop infrastructure within the greenhouses to make every aspect of production better. The first block of greenhouses produced beautiful cuttings this last season and there are more greenhouses under construction as we "speak". All aspects of the greenhouses at Section T will be constructed to improve sanitation and production efficiencies. The bottom line ... Mo' cuttings and Mo' betta cuttings.

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