The Industry selects its Top Varieties and Colour Trends for 2018

Read on for the results!

The Ball Colegrave Annual Summer Showcase is one of the UK's premier trade events. With over four acres of seasonal plant displays and variety trials, set in the heart of the Oxfordshire countryside, this event attracts an audience of over 3,500 Growers, Independent and Multiple Retailers, Parks and Landscapers, Garden Writers, Plant Breeders, Trades Associations, Students and Home Gardeners.



This year saw a record number of visitors attend, each voting for their favourite variety and colour scheme using a blue marker flag. With over 1300 catalogue varieties, 200 new varieties and 700 experimental products on display, there was certainly plenty to choose from!

However, the products which received the most flags once again leaned heavily towards "New" varieties and novelties, suggesting the market continues to hunger for innovative new plant products as Growers and Retailers look to stay one step ahead of the trend.

Here are this year's top varieties voted for by our 3,500 visitors:

NEW Petunia 'Ovation Dark Heart (P)'



New British bred, early and compact Petunia for perfect pots!

'Ovation Dark Heart' is an outstanding colour within a completely new series of Pot Petunia from one of the UK's leading Plant Breeders.

Customers to the Summer Showcase were excited to learn and see for themselves the particularly unique features of this and the other 4 colours of the Ovation series.



The plants are designed to provide early colour sales opportunities as they initiate flower in less than 10 hour days. This coupled with their naturally compact, mound forming shape and ability to be grown more economically than other Petunias as they tolerate very cool culture, makes this a 'must have' plant for bedding plant producers.

At Retail, Ovation Dark Heart provides a high impulsive plant in 13cm pots. Once in the garden, Ovation Petunias will continue to bulk up to fill containers and baskets beautifully, producing a multitude of flowers all over the plants and characteristically with all breeding from this UK breeder, gives outstanding all-weather performance!

Available in a Ball 84 plug tray with high impact colour labels available.

NEW Celosia 'Dragon's Breath™'

Celosia argentea plumose



Blazing red foliage and plumes!

The industry cannot get enough of the unique green-red foliage and blazing-red, long-lasting flowers of Dragon's Breath™ Celosia. Growers like the fact that Dragon's Breath™ is quick, easy and economical to produce with minimal need for PGRs and fertiliser.



Retailers like it for its long shelf life and adaptability - Dragon's Breath™ is great in containers, beds and planting schemes. Dragon's Breath™ exhibits even more red foliage and flowers under adverse garden conditions like heat, humidity and infrequent watering.

- Fiery, fabulous, dramatic red foliage and plumes
- Blazing red, long lasting flowers
- Ideal for premium summer colour sales with long shelf life at retail
- Strong container, bed and patio garden performer in full sun
- Quick, easy and economical to produce in 1 – 1.5 litre pots
- Height 60cm (24"), spread 40cm (16")

Available from Ball Colegrave as a Ball 104 plug, with high impact colour Ball labels

NEW Petunia 'Amore™ Queen of Hearts (P)'



Great impact, with instant appeal… A must for impulse sales!

This adorable Petunia is a visual delight that will steal the heart of all who see it. Each flower is characterised with an arrangement of perfect hearts around the edge of the blushing cream-yellow centre.

Queen of Hearts was an outstanding performer in our 2016 Summer test trials and proved equally popular with visitors at the 2017 Showcase.



This novelty has a long lasting flowering period and a strong free-branching, semi-trailing habit making it ideal for 1 litre pots, patio baskets and containers.

Height and Spread: 30-35cm (12-14")

Available as a Ball 84 plug. A high impact colour Ball label is supplied with the plants.

Results of the 2017 Summer Open Day 'Blue Flag' Trial at Ball Colegrave to identify our visitors Favourite Variety

Position		Overall Total Votes
1	**NEW**	**Petunia Ovation Dark Heart (P)**
2	**NEW**	**Celosia Dragon's Breath™**
3	**NEW**	**Petunia - Novelties Amore™ Queen of Hearts (P)**
4		Petunia - Novelties NightSky® (P)
5		Petunia - Novelties Black Velvet (P)
6	NEW	Petunia - Novelties BabyDoll® (P)
7		Canna F1 Cannova Bronze Scarlet

8		Begonia Sweet Spice English Rose (P)
9	NEW	Petunia - Novelties Cascadia™ Rim Cherry (P)
10 =		Begonia F1 Majestic™ White Pink Picotee
10 =		Coleus Campfire (P)
10 =	NEW	Verbena Showboat Midnight (P)
13 =		Begonia Sweet Spice Citrus (P)
13 =	NEW	Isotoma Fizz 'n Pop Purple (P)
15 =		Argyranthemum Grandaisy® Red (P)
15 =	NEW	Delphinium F1 Aurora Blue
15 =	NEW	Dianthus F1 Rockin' Red
15 =	NEW	Isotoma Fizz 'n Pop Dark Pink (P)
19	NEW	Calibrachoa Can Can™ Double Apricot with Red Eye (P)
20		Gerbera F1 Revolution

Position		Trade Votes
1	**NEW**	**Petunia Ovation Dark Heart (P)**
2	**NEW**	**Celosia Dragon's Breath™**
3	**NEW**	**Petunia - Novelties Amore™ Queen of Hearts (P)**
4	NEW	Petunia - Novelties BabyDoll® (P)
5		Petunia - Novelties Black Velvet (P)
6		Begonia Sweet Spice Citrus (P)
7=		Begonia Sweet Spice English Rose (P)
7 =	NEW	Calibrachoa Can Can™ Double Apricot with Red Eye (P)
9 =	NEW	Verbena Showboat Midnight (P)
9 =	NEW	Dianthus F1 Rockin' Red
11		Canna F1 Cannova Bronze Scarlet
12 =		Petunia - Novelties NightSky® (P)
12 =	NEW	Isotoma Fizz 'n Pop Purple (P)
12 =		Argyranthemum Grandaisy® Red (P)
15 =	NEW	Petunia - Novelties Cascadia™ Rim Cherry (P)
15 =		Coleus Campfire (P)
15 =		Zinnia Zahara Red
18 =	NEW	Delphinium F1 Aurora Blue
18 =	NEW	Calibrachoa Can Can™ Double Dark Lavender (P)
18 =		Nemesia Aroma Rhubarb and Custard (P)

Position		Public Votes
1		**Petunia - Novelties NightSky® (P)**
2	**NEW**	**Celosia Dragon's Breath™**
3		**Begonia F1 Majestic™ White Pink Picotee**
4	NEW	Petunia - Novelties Amore™ Queen of Hearts (P)
5		Canna F1 Cannova Bronze Scarlet
6 =	NEW	Isotoma Fizz 'n Pop Dark Pink (P)
6 =		Begonia F1 Majestic™ Orange
8 =	NEW	Petunia Ovation Dark Heart (P)
8 =		Petunia - Novelties Black Velvet (P)
8 =	NEW	Petunia - Novelties Cascadia™ Rim Cherry (P)
8 =	NEW	Impatiens - New Guinea Clockwork Salmon (P)
12 =		Coleus Campfire (P)
12 =	NEW	Ipomoea Solar Power Red (P)
12 =	NEW	Delphinium Aurora Pink Dawn (Exp 934)

12 =	NEW	Sunflower F1 SunBuzz
12 =		Ageratum F1 Champion Blue
17 =		Begonia Sweet Spice English Rose (P)
17 =	NEW	Delphinium F1 Aurora Blue
17 =		Gerbera F1 Revolution
17 =	NEW	Canna F1 Cannova Bronze Orange

What is the Blue Flag survey?

The 'Blue Flag' survey is a measurable study that identifies sales opportunities right through the supply chain and enables Ball Colegrave customers to determine what varieties are "favourites" as visitors place a blue flag beside their favourite plant. Over 2,000 blue flags were placed this year during trade and 600 on public days.

Other Facts about our Trial Grounds

Ball Colegrave has been conducting plant variety trials and customer open days from their Trial Grounds in West Adderbury for 53 years. Today's Trial Grounds not only presents the companies assortment of catalogue varieties in a rich display of settings and retail ideas, but also comprehensively evaluates hundreds of new future lines before introduction. This ensures that when a product is introduced in the Ball Colegrave catalogues, our staff and visitors have seen it and know it performs under UK growing conditions!

Over 50,000 Annual and Perennial plants are bedded out in the trial and display beds and in excess of 3,000 baskets and patio containers are planted up for the event.

Traditionally the Trial Grounds were attended by Parks and Nurserymen. Today they are joined by an ever increasing number of Garden Centres looking for new plant and retail ideas.

Top 'Trends' colour themed garden displays

We were delighted that visitors also chose to vote for their favourite 'Trends' colour theme at this year's event.



Not all the 15 Trends themes were on display, but 9 were including 3 stunning new themes; Strawberries & Cream, Neon Lights and Berry Swirl.

The Trends were displayed as both inspirational colour themed retail bench ideas, planted container and display gardens. An information sheet for each of our 15 Trends colour themes is available now to download from the Ball Colegrave website; http://www.ballcolegrave.co.uk/Retailers/_Trends.aspx. Each lists our handpicked top garden performing varieties, tried and tested in our own trial grounds, to deliver a product that delivers excitement and success for the home gardener, turning a good plant into a premium sales opportunity for Growers and Retailers.

Position		Trends Display Area
1	NEW	Neon Lights
2		Brilliant Bling
3	NEW	Strawberries & Cream
4 =	NEW	Berry Swirl
4 =		Primary Fun
6 =		Bridal Bouquet
6 =		Tangerine Twist
8		Bollywood
9		Natural Chic

