The Industry selects its Top Varieties and Colour Trends for 2019

Read on for the Results!

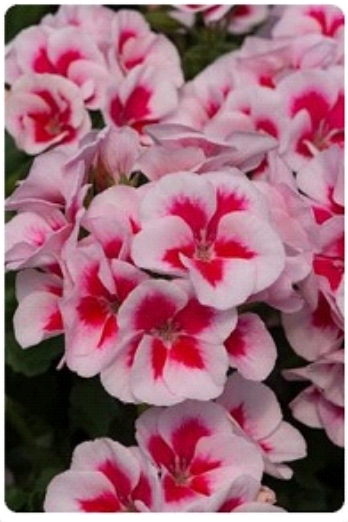
The Ball Colegrave Annual Summer Showcase is one of the UK's premier trade events. With over four acres of seasonal plant displays and variety trials, set in the heart of the Oxfordshire countryside, this event attracts an audience of over 3,500 Growers, Independent and Multiple Retailers, Parks and 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 visitors:

NEW Geranium 'Sunrise® Smokey Eye™ White (P)



A versatile interspecific Zonal with a very free-branching and spreading habit!

'Sunrise® Smokey Eye™ White' is one of two outstanding new Geraniums ideal for the fast expanding basket and patio container market (also available in Sunrise® Smokey Eye™ Pink).

The large, early and abundant flower heads with their clear 'smokey' edge and distinctive hot pink central flash make this variety really stand-out from other Geraniums at point of sale.

Its excellent balance of foliage and flower makes Sunrise® Smokey Eye™ ideal for 11-15cm pots.

Once planted, the foliage and flowers will neatly mound and gently lap just over the edge of baskets and containers to make a very desirable and tidy planter in the garden.
Height 25-30cm.

Available in a Ball 104 plug tray with high impact colour labels available.

NEW Verbena 'Showboat Mango Orange (P)'

Outstanding, all round performance!

This striking new colour addition with its large umbels of brilliant mango-orange flowers and blushes of pink brings a new colour choice to the Verbena market, extending the recently launches series of **'Showboat'** to 12 distinct colours.

The Showboat series was introduced in 2018 as a replacement for the well-known Aztec™ series with new and improved breeding and plant performance. The new series has been really well received by bedding plant producers.

For 2019, five new colours have been added to the series bringing additional warmth and breadth to the range; **Burgundy, Dark Pink with Eye, Dark Violet, Mango Orange** and **Neon Pink**.

Showboat is an early-flowering, medium vigour series of Verbena with a mounding and arching habit, holds a good plant shape and delivers great tolerance against powdery mildew. This all round performance provides a Verbena that's easy to grow and provides a fantastic, long lasting garden display in baskets and containers.

Height and spread 30-36cm.

For plant producers, Showboat suits production in 10-13cm pots and is available in a Ball 42, 84 and 142 tray or as finished baskets and containers with high impact colour labels available.

NEW Begonia 'Shooting Star (P)'

Light up your hanging baskets with the glowing colour of a 'Shooting Star'!

This adorable new Begonia with its large, single pure white flowers and tufted egg yolk coloured centre makes for a real eye-catching display in the garden.

Begonia 'Shooting Star' is perfectly shaped for a hanging baskets with its perfectly proportioned mounding and arching shape, cloaked with an abundance of those gorgeous semi-double flowers.

Height and Spread: 38-45cm (15-18")

For plant producers, 'Shooting Star' takes 9 weeks to produce a flowering plant in an 11-12cm pot or 10-11 weeks with 3 plants in a hanging pot. Available as a Ball Paper 66 plug. A high impact colour Ball label is supplied with the plants.

Results of the 2018 Summer Open Day 'Blue Flag' Trial at Ball Colegrave to identify our visitors Favourite Variety

Position		Overall Total Votes
1	**NEW 2019**	**Geranium Sunrise® Smokey Eye™ White (P)**
2	**NEW 2019**	**Verbena Showboat Mango Orange (P)**
3	**NEW 2019**	**Begonia Shooting Star (P)**
4 =		Delphinium F1 Aurora Blue
4 =		Verbena Showboat Midnight (P)
6 =		Alstroemeria Inticancha® Passion (P)
6 =		Zinnia Zahara Red
8	NEW 2019	Calibrachoa Can Can™ Double Pinkmania (P)
9	NEW 2019	Petunia Easy Wave™ Red Improved

10	NEW 2019	Petunia Ovation Purple Picotee (P)

Position		Trade Votes
1	**NEW 2019**	**Geranium Sunrise® Smokey Eye™ White (P)**
2	**NEW 2019**	**Verbena Showboat Mango Orange (P)**
3		**Delphinium F1 Aurora Blue**
4	NEW 2019	Begonia Shooting Star (P)
5		Verbena Showboat Midnight (P)
6 =	NEW 2019	Calibrachoa Can Can™ Double Pinkmania (P)
6 =	NEW 2019	Salvia Salmia Pink (P)
8 =		Zinnia Zahara Red
8 =	NEW 2019	Petunia Ovation Purple Picotee (P)
8 =		Alstroemeria Inticancha® Passion (P)

Position		Public Votes
1	**NEW 2019**	**Geranium Sunrise® Smokey Eye™ White (P)**
2	**NEW 2019**	**Petunia Easy Wave™ Red Improved**
3 =	**NEW 2019**	**Begonia Shooting Star (P)**
3 =		**Alstroemeria Inticancha® Passion (P)**
5		Zinnia Zahara Red
6 =		Verbena Showboat Midnight (P)
6 =		Rudbeckia Prairie Sun
6 =		Calocephalus Silver Cushion (P)
6 =	NEW 2019	Begonia Sweet Spice™ Bounty (P)
6 =	NEW 2019	Dahlia Gardenetta® Fireball (P)

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 2,300 blue flags were placed this year during trade and 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 54 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 25,000 Annual and Perennial plants are bedded out in the trial and display beds with in excess of 5,000 pot plants and 2,000 patio baskets/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.