



The Industry selects its Top Varieties and Colour Trends for 2020

See the results of our Blue Flag survey



Ball Colegrave®

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.

Trade Visitors and Home Gardeners alike, voted for their favourite variety 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!

This year, not only saw visitors favouring "New" varieties with their choice in voting, but also many more Perennial varieties appeared in the top choices.

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

NEW Petunia 'GlacierSky (P)'

This most unique, stand-out flower 'wows' gardeners with its constellation of stars edged with an 'ice' effect margin... a great new twist on a garden favourite!



GlacierSky is a Petunia sensation with its striking and unique colour patterning.

At the 2019 Summer Showcase at Ball Colegrave, GlacierSky stole the show with its captivating colouring and strong performance in pots, baskets and containers.

This was reinforced by the 3,500 Trade and Consumer visitors to the 2019 Summer Showcase who both voted GlacierSky as their favourite variety!

GlacierSky has large violet flowers with a distinct 'ice effect' edging, decorated by white speckles. The uniqueness of the variety is also revealed in the high weather resistance, semi-trailing and strong branching habit, which in combination with a stable colour pattern and a great shelf life makes this a real 'standout' variety.

GlacierSky is a 'must have' plant variety for impulse colour sales at Retail in 10.5-13cm pots and ready planted baskets.

In the garden, GlacierSky loves a sunny location on the patios or balcony in containers, baskets and window boxes.

Available to the trade as a Ball 84 plug tray with colour labels, weeks 8 – 20. For the home gardener, we look forward to seeing this variety in many Garden Centres and Plant Retailers across the UK in 2020.

NEW Lavandula angustifolia 'Blue Spear'

The showiest English Lavender you can grow and sell!

Lavandula Blue Spear shows off bigger, taller spikes than any other seed Lavender, with more upright flower stems that stand closer to each other for an intense bluish-purple colour impact, even from a distance.

The well-branched, bushy plants are easy to grow. Their very tidy shape, early flowering and uniformity make them ideal for pot tight production in 10.5cm pots upto 1 or 2 litre pots with strong colour impact at point of sale.

Being a seed and first year flowering variety, crops of Blue Spear are particularly economical to produce and can be started in the Spring without the necessity of overwintering or heavy fungicidal programmes.

Seed can be advantageous over vegetative varieties in reducing the risk of importing diseases such as Xyllela from overseas production sites.

Blue Spear is particularly ideal for patio containers, garden beds, rock gardens, cut flowers, dried flowers, is highly attractive to pollinating insects and of course carries that special 'feel-good' Lavender fragrance.



This hardy variety (USDA 6a – 8b) is ideal for a full sun location, providing lasting pleasure and scent over a very long season. Garden height; 28 - 33cm and spread; 23 - 28cm.

Available to the trade as a Ball 40 plug tray weeks 15, 18 and 24, plus a Ball 104 tray weeks 10-18, all supplied with colour labels. For the home gardener, we look forward to seeing this variety in many Garden Centres and Plant Retailers across the UK in 2020.

NEW Geranium 'Macarda® Pink with Purple Eye (P)'

An outstanding performer for window boxes, containers and baskets!



Pink with Purple Eye is just one of the outstanding colours in the Macarda® interspecific Geranium series. It is understandable why this particular colour was chosen as this has been a real consumer favourite colour in zonal varieties.

But, the Macarda® series delivers a new twist to the market. Not only does this variety provide a strong and early proliferation of single flowers in rich colours, but its habit is to die for! The plants are strong, yet controlled in their neat semi-trailing and mounding form to provide a powerful display of colour in baskets, window boxes or patio containers. The full-looking and tight shape of the 'ivy-leaf' foliage contrasts exceptionally well against the multiple flower heads to provide an outstanding plant presentation.

In the garden, Macarda® has high weather resistance and is self cleaning, so it needs little dead-heading to stay looking good. The foliage remains clean and tidy. Height & spread 35-40cm.

At retail, Macarda® fills 11 – 17cm pots with great ease and stays neat looking for longer with its strong flower retention and clean mounded foliage. We think it looks best in 13cm (1 litre) upto 17cm (2 litre) pots. There are 6 colours in the range; Dark Red, Magenta, Orange, Pink, Pink with Purple Eye and White.

Available to the trade in a Paper 104 plug tray with colour labels, weeks 6 and 8-16. For the home gardener, we look forward to seeing this variety in many Garden Centres and Plant Retailers across the UK in 2020.

The 2019 Summer Showcase 'Blue Flag' results: Your Favourite Varieties

Position		Results – Combined (Trade and Home Gardeners)
1	NEW	Petunia GlacierSky (P)
2	NEW	Lavandula Blue Spear
3	NEW	Geranium Marcada® Pink with Purple Eye (P)
4	NEW	Coleus Flame Thrower Salsa Roja (P)
5	NEW	Osteospermum Compact FlowerPower Purple Sun (P)

6	NEW	Heuchera Black Pearl (P)
7		Petunia Black Velvet (P)
8	NEW	Petchoa BeautiCal® Cinnamon (P)
=9		Alstroemeria Summer Paradise Indian Summer® (P)
=9		Petunia NightSky® (P)
=9	NEW	Petchoa BeautiCal® Caramel Yellow (P)
=9		Verbena Santos Purple
=13		Delphinium F1 Aurora Blue
=13	NEW	Geranium Marcada® Dark Red (P)
=13	NEW	Lobelia Infinity Blue
16		Alstroemeria Inticancha® Passion (P)
17	NEW	Heuchera Lemon Love (P)
=18		Nemesia Purple Experimental (Possible Future Intro)
=18	NEW	Petunia LavenderSky (P)
=18	NEW	Petchoa BeautiCal® French Vanilla (P)

Position		Results - Trade
1	NEW	Petunia GlacierSky (P)
2	NEW	Lavandula Blue Spear
3	NEW	Coleus Flame Thrower Salsa Roja (P)
4	NEW	Geranium Marcada® Pink with Purple Eye (P)
5	NEW	Osteospermum Compact FlowerPower Purple Sun (P)
6	NEW	Heuchera Black Pearl (P)
7	NEW	Geranium Marcada® Dark Red (P)
=8		Nemesia Purple Experimental (Possible Future Intro)
=8	NEW	Petchoa BeautiCal® Caramel Yellow (P)
10	NEW	Lobelia Infinity Blue
11	NEW	Geranium Marcada® Magenta (P)
=12	NEW	Petchoa BeautiCal® Cinnamon (P)
=12	NEW	Salvia Amethyst Lips (P)
=14	NEW	Heuchera Lemon Love (P)
=14		Petunia LightningSky (P)
=14		Verbena Santos Purple
=17	NEW	Euphorbia Glamour
=17	NEW	Geranium Summer Twist Red White (P)
=17	NEW	Petchoa BeautiCal® French Vanilla (P)
=17	NEW	Vinca Tattoo Papaya

Position		Results - Home Gardeners
1	NEW	Petunia GlacierSky (P)
2		Petunia Black Velvet (P)
3	NEW	Lavandula Blue Spear
4		Nicotiana Whisper Mixed
5		Petunia NightSky® (P)
6		Begonia F1 Majestic® White Pink Picotee
=7		Alstroemeria Summer Paradise Indian Summer® (P)
=7		Alstroemeria Inticancha® Passion (P)
=7		Celosia Kimono Mixed
=7		Delphinium F1 Aurora Blue
=11		Calla Lily Festival
=11	NEW	Geranium Marcada® Pink with Purple Eye (P)

=11		Verbena Santos Purple
=14	NEW	Osteospermum F1 Akila® Sunset Shades
=14	NEW	Petchoa BeautiCal® Cinnamon (P)
=14		Petunia F1 Easy Wave® Burgundy Star
=14	NEW	Petunia LavenderSky (P)
=18		Dahlia Experimental 1495
=18		Dahlia Experimental 3219
=18		Petunia Amore™ Queen of Hearts (P)

What is the Blue Flag survey?

The 'Blue Flag' survey is a measurable study that identifies sales opportunities right through the supply chain, enabling 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 public days which are counted daily and totalled at the end of 3 weeks.

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 55 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.