

Consumers Rate Poinsettias in 2007 Trials



Every winter, many floricultural researchers conduct poinsettia trials to determine consumer preferences. This year, Scotts received a sneak preview of four major university's findings, which are summarized in this article. We hope you can use this information to narrow down the many choices available in this traditional holiday plant, and focus on the most promising varieties.

NORTH CAROLINA STATE

Trial Location:
Raleigh, North Carolina

Trial Manager:
John Dole
www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/floriculture

Criteria/Methods:
Consumers were asked to rank their favorite cultivars overall, and their favorite varieties within color groups. Findings are based on 158 completed surveys.

Top Three Overall Favorites:

1. Merlot (Dummen)
2. Shimmer Surprise (Ecke)
3. White Christmas (Selecta)

Favorite Red:
Cortez Electric Fire (Fischer)

Favorite White:
Early White (Fischer)

Favorite Pink:
Polly's Pink (Ecke)

Favorite Marble:
Sonora Marble (Fischer)

Favorite Jingle:
Shimmer Surprise (Ecke)

Favorite Novelty:
Merlot (Dummen)

OHIO STATE

Trial Location:
Columbus, Ohio

Trial Manager:
Claudio Paisan
<http://floriculture.osu.edu>

Criteria/Methods:
Collaborative trials with Ohio Florists Association. Each consumer was asked to score cultivars on a scale of 1 to 5, five meaning "Like Tremendously."

Top Three Overall Favorites:

1. Christmas Carol (Selecta)
2. Orion Red (Fischer)
3. SK54 Red (Selecta)

Favorite Red:
Orion Red (Fischer)

Favorite White:
Mars White (Fischer)

Favorite Pink:
Christmas Carol (Selecta)

Favorite Marble:
Christmas Feelings Marble (Selecta)

KANSAS STATE

Trial Location:
Manhattan, Kansas

Trial Manager:
Kim Williams
www.oznet.ksu.edu/poinsettias/

Criteria/Methods:
Consumers were asked to score cultivars on a scale of 1 to 7 as well as choose their favorite variety out of each pair in four side-by-side comparisons. Findings were based on 104 complete surveys.

Top Three Overall Favorites:

1. Ice Punch (Ecke)
2. Premium Red (Ecke)(Tie)
2. Olympus Red (Fischer)(Tie)

Favorite Red:
Merlot (Dummen)

Favorite White:
Premium Polar (Dummen)

Favorite Pink:
Polly's Pink (Ecke)

Favorite Novelty:
Cinnamon Star (Fischer)
Pre-Intro 0117 (Dummen)

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Trial Location:
Urbana-Champaign, Illinois

Trial Manager:
Daniel F. Warnock
www.oznet.ksu.edu/poinsettias/

Criteria/Methods:
Cultivars were grouped by color, and consumers were asked to identify their favorites. Results are based on 42 completed surveys.

Favorite Red:
Orion Red (Fischer)

Favorite White:
Whitestar (Fischer)

Favorite Pink:
Enduring Pink (Ecke)

Favorite Marble/Novelty:
Mars Marble (Fischer)

Try these poinsettia management tips from Scotts.

- Poinsettias can be sensitive to boron (B) toxicity that results in leaf edge burn, so target growing media pH between 5.8 and 6.2. This limits high trace element availability in the root zone (e.g. B < 0.025 ppm [SME]).
- Adequate nitrogen is critical especially during rapid growth.
- Use fertilizer programs high in nitrate N and avoid fertilizers with high ammoniacal N levels (ammoniacal N plus urea N should be less than 50% of the Total N).
- To select a fertilizer program with the best fit to your irrigation water, use the Peters® A-B-C Selection System™ at www.PetersABC.com.
- Adequate calcium (Ca) must be supplied to maintain stem strength, avoid bract edge burn and help maintain media pH.
- Adequate magnesium (Mg) (>30.0 ppm) must be supplied to avoid deficiencies.
- If your water soluble fertilizer program is low in molybdenum (Mo), supplemental Mo is recommended—

for best results maintain 1.0 ppm at each watering during the fall to avoid Mo deficiency (1 gram of ammonium molybdate per 100 gallons supplies 1.22 ppm Mo).

Visit www.scottsprohort.com and click on "Grower Solutions" to download a free technical bulletin on growing poinsettias. The Scotts Company's horticulture specialist, Dr. Fred Hulme, provides tips on plant protection and nutrition, including a combination feeding program that uses both controlled release and water soluble nutrition for maximum results.