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MARCH/APRIL 2013

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Perry Wismans

Three exciting annuals, from a man who knows them well

PERRY WISMANS IS chief business development officer for annuals breeder Dümme, which he joined in 1997. He grew up in Holland, and at age 12 he began working in a nursery to earn pocket money. He paid for his university degree in business information systems by working for a variety of plant propagation companies. His approach to the market is simple: Find gaps between consumers' desires and what's available, and breed new plant varieties to fill that need. Here are three plants recommended by Perry.

1 Great Balls of Fire ivy geraniums

Ivy geraniums are gorgeous with their trailing branches, but they are a challenge in warm climates. Working with greenhouses in hot areas like Texas and Florida, Dümme bred a unique line of ivy geraniums that takes the heat. Available in 2013, and aptly named RED FOX Great Balls of Fire, the series has large double flowers and comes in eight colors (including 'Great Balls of Fire Lavender,' shown). They are especially great for hanging baskets or larger patio containers. Snip spent blooms as needed to encourage continual blooming.



2 Confetti Garden Trio Hot Pink Jazz

It's a creative challenge to put together attractive combination planters with two or three different plant types; it's tricky getting different plants to bloom and grow nicely together. Dümme has selected plants complementary in color and type and developed a unique system for planting them simultaneously. Hot Pink Jazz is but one of more than 40 different Confetti Garden mix variations available at retailers. They perform well in large hanging baskets, and with the simplest care (an occasional feeding and watering as needed) they'll bloom right into October.



3 'Prima Red' poinsettia

Poinsettias tend to be "grab and go" products that must look nice in many indoor environments under many lighting conditions. It's actually a big challenge! Thus 'Prima Red' poinsettia came about. It has smaller bracts (the flowers, if you will) that grow mainly on the top of the plant. Perry says this makes it better for shipping to stores with more bracts intact, meaning it looks more festive when it gets to your home, office or church. The bright red bracts and medium green leaves create a nice holiday look whether you have incandescent, CFL or even LED lighting at home. ☺



MARIA ZAMPINI brings new plants to market through her own company, UpShoot LLC.