

HOT TIP

Happy trails

A pansy for hanging baskets is the new plant in town

Remember the clamor that greeted Wave petunias when they were introduced? My trial plants lived through the winter and spread more than 2 feet in every direction for a glorious spring show. Never mind that the heat that summer killed them. Petunias are annuals; no big deal.

If I could buy Wave petunias for fall planting, I'd do so. Most winters here they would fare well, but try finding them locally in autumn.

There's another potential blockbuster in town, a new pansy called Plentifall. It is touted by Ball Horticulture as the first trailing pansy grown from seed. It also purports to bloom through the winter, so its ornamental value is high for months.

Plentifall's individual medium-size blooms are bigger than violas, but they copy violas' flower power. Their flat, spreading habit of up to 18 inches means they are suitable for hanging baskets, as the spiller in mixed containers, as a low, front-of-the-border annual in landscape beds and as a frothy ruffle tumbling over low walls.

Jimmy Turner, senior director of gardens at the Dallas Arboretum, talked excitedly about the new

pansy at the annual Plant Trials Field Day. "It is a true trailing pansy and it is constantly flowering."

Plentifall will have a big presence in the public garden this fall through spring.

The arboretum's research and greenhouse manager, Jenny Wegley, says four years of trials there bear out the marketing hype.

"It's a perfect plant to push," she says. "All the varieties performed the same," making Plentifall ideal for a setting where uniformity is important.

The arboretum will line the Paseo de Flores, its main artery, with combo containers of Plentifall in different colors mixed with other cool-season annuals such as stock, Iceland poppies, linaria or wall-flower. Hanging baskets are slated for other areas.

Furthermore, the Plentifall pansies were fairly undeterred by last winter's snows and deep freezes.

"We saw a slight stunting in growth, but as soon as the snow melted they started putting on new growth and new buds. It was really impressive to see how they recovered," Wegley says.

Of the 432 pansies and violas evaluated in the trial gardens last winter, Plentifall's bloom lasted the longest — "until April, May if we had pushed them."

You'll get there before me, but North Haven Gardens in Dallas received its first shipment of Plentifall pansies in 4-inch pots this week. Hanging baskets in white, 'Purple Wing' and mixed colors are due there Tuesday, says Leslie Halleck, general manager, in 8-inch hanging baskets for \$16.99 each.

Mariana Greene



PanAmerican Seed

Fragrant pansies with a trailing habit are great for baskets.

