

Growing Green... in Colorado™ ADVERTISEMENT

Improved petunias better than ever

By Krystal Keistler, Echter's Garden Center

Recent petunia breeding improvements have created more bountiful blossoms, colors, versatility and better garden performance. Here's a quick primer on contemporary petunia cultivars.

"Limbo, Mambo and Picobella" cultivars naturally dwarf plants. They are prized for their compact habit and require no pinching. This moves them to the head of the class for busy gardeners. Upright, perky plants reach no more than 6-8 inches in height, spreading in a uniform, mat growth

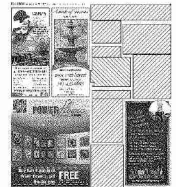


form. "Limbo" produces a large 3-inch bloom, while "Mambo" bears mid-sized 2-2 1/2 flowers. "Picobella" petunias sport 3/4-1" flowers.

Most of us are familiar with the carpet-like vigor and abundant blooms of "Wave" petunias. Did you know there are other "Wave" petunias? "Easy Wave" petunias grow taller and have a mounding form. This habit makes them more suitable for larger, graceful containers and overflowing window boxes. "Tidal Wave" petunias are the tallest variety and when planted on 12" centers, create a summer long hedge of blooms. Planted along chain link fences, they will appear to climb the links. "Tidal Wave" petunias are also a budget friendly plant for large baskets and planters.

The world of trailing petunias has blossomed profusely.

These petunias are dual purpose plants, outstanding in containers or garden beds. "Blanket" petunias drape sheets of colorful blooms from hanging baskets. Planted in ground, they aggressively carpet up to 4



feet of garden space. “Little Tunias” and “Baby Surfinias” produce cascades of mid-sized blooms in containers and mounds of color when planted in ground. “Calitunias” and “Pechoas” are a hybrid of calibrachoa and petunias, resulting in high heat tolerance and colorful cascades that self-shed spent blooms. “Surfinia” and “Supertunias” produce large blooms and may cascade up to 4 feet. This year’s most popular are sure to be “Supertunia Raspberry Blast” and “Pretty Much Picasso.” These growers can overwhelm other plants, so choose companion plants accordingly.

