

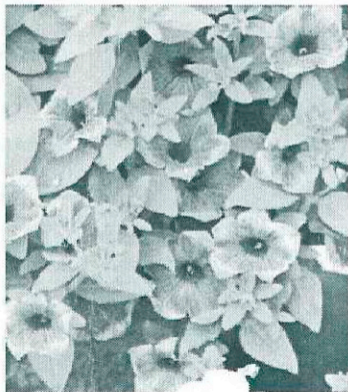
# Winter is perfect time to anticipate spring's new, unusual blooms

By **NORMAN WINTER**  
McClatchy-Tribune News Service

It may be only the early part of winter, but it's fun to look at new plants heading our way, and new petunia colors and patterns will stretch our comfort zones.

A new Supertunia called Pretty Much Picasso tops the list of unusual petunias coming this spring. I wasn't quite sure how to describe its distinctive color, so I went to the Proven Winners Web site and saw they list the color as "various."

In ones I'm familiar with the Picasso looked purple with hints of magenta and margins that were a little lighter green than the leaves. I am a big fan of Supertunias as they are vigorous and spreading, reaching about 12 inches tall and spread-



A new Supertunia called Pretty Much Picasso is a petunia with unusual colors and markings.

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ing outward 3 feet.

Pan American is not to be outdone with unusual petunias. It is introducing the Sophistica Collection that includes one called Lime Bicolor, which is one of the most exotic petunias you'll ever see. It has lime green, cream and hot pink in somewhat irregular patterns. A Sophistica Antique has the same petals with shades of rose and cream, and a third variety is Sophistica Blue Morn. All are mounding petunias reaching about 14 inches tall.

Pan American also is introducing a multiflora Debonair Collection. The Debonair Dusty Rose is beautiful, with a nostalgic combination of rose and creams. The young flowers have a rich, saturat-

ed rose with a yellow-cream center. As the flowers age, they turn to a softer rose with a whiter cream.

These varieties have an abundance of all colors on one plant. It will definitely be a hit in containers on your porch, patio or deck.

Another popular one is Pan American Seed's Shock Wave Denim Blue. The Shock Wave petunias have smaller flowers but they are mounding with a slight spread.

Blue petunias are among the hottest sellers every year, and demand always makes them disappear first. Shock Wave Denim Blue flowers start off a rich, deep blue but then fade to various hues of blue, depending on their age. The result is a sea or carpet of several

blue shades that really stands out in the landscape.

No matter what petunia you choose, your success will lie with bed preparation. Petunias prefer fertile, well-drained soil; tight, compacted clay will not produce the results you want. Take the time to work in compost, peat or humus so the roots of the plant will expand quickly, and then, when any spring deluge occurs, they will not be in standing water.

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