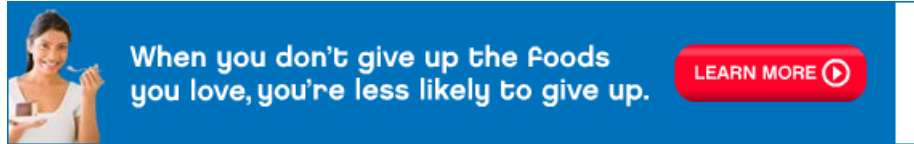


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## Color Your World with New Blooms

Posted by [Steve Bender](#), April 9, 2010 in [Annuals and Perennials](#)



How do you like my flower garden? It's just a little something I've been working on for the past couple of weekends. Those energy drinks my son keeps giving me have had a profound effect.

Actually, if you read yesterday's post, "Miami Nice," (unless you were in an earthquake, you have no excuse for not doing so), you know it's not really my garden. No, it's the trial garden at Costa Farms in south Florida. Costa is one of the biggest growers in the country and I have enjoyed visiting with them for the past couple of days working on a future

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story for *Southern Living*. But you, as a charter member of the **We Adore Grumpy Society** (WAGS -- sorry, it has nothing to do with dogs), don't have to wait. No, you get the lowdown right now.

Costa trials many up-and-coming plants of their own and those of other growers around the country to see how they'll perform in the south Florida heat. Believe me, if they can take the heat here, they can take the heat in your garden. Here are some of the new plants that Kate Santos, Director of Research & Development, is currently evaluating.



**Foxglove 'Camelot Rose'** -- This has been a real surprise, because most don't bloom this long into the spring in south Florida. So it probably takes more heat than other foxgloves. And if you cut off the spent blooms, it just keeps blooming.

The Grump is a big fan of lantanas for the South, because they love sun and heat, bloom nonstop, are great for attracting butterflies, and don't need much water. Most of the new selections are low-growing and compact, making them superior plants for smaller gardens. Here are three that I liked.

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'Bandito Red' -- Crazy color! Can't miss this in the garden unless you're Stevie Wonder.





'Bandana Red'-- Looks a lot like 'Bandito Red. Maybe all banditos wear bandanas.



'Bandana Lemon Zest' -- Really nice color combination and low growing. Yum!

Another flower Grumpy likes are the new petunias that have emerged in recent years that take the South's summer heat and rain and keep on blooming. How do you like this new one from Ball Seed?





**Petunia 'Rhythm and Blues'** is a knockout with a deep blue blossom picoteed with a white edge. It has a trailing habit and looks great in beds, containers, and hanging baskets. You can get this one now. Here's another showstopper:



**Petunia 'Shockwave Denim.'** As you can see, Grumpy's a sucker for cool blue petunias that take the heat. This one trails too, produces hundreds of flowers on a plant that can spread 3-4 feet, and the blue blooms gradually fade, just like jeans. Look for this one at garden centers now.





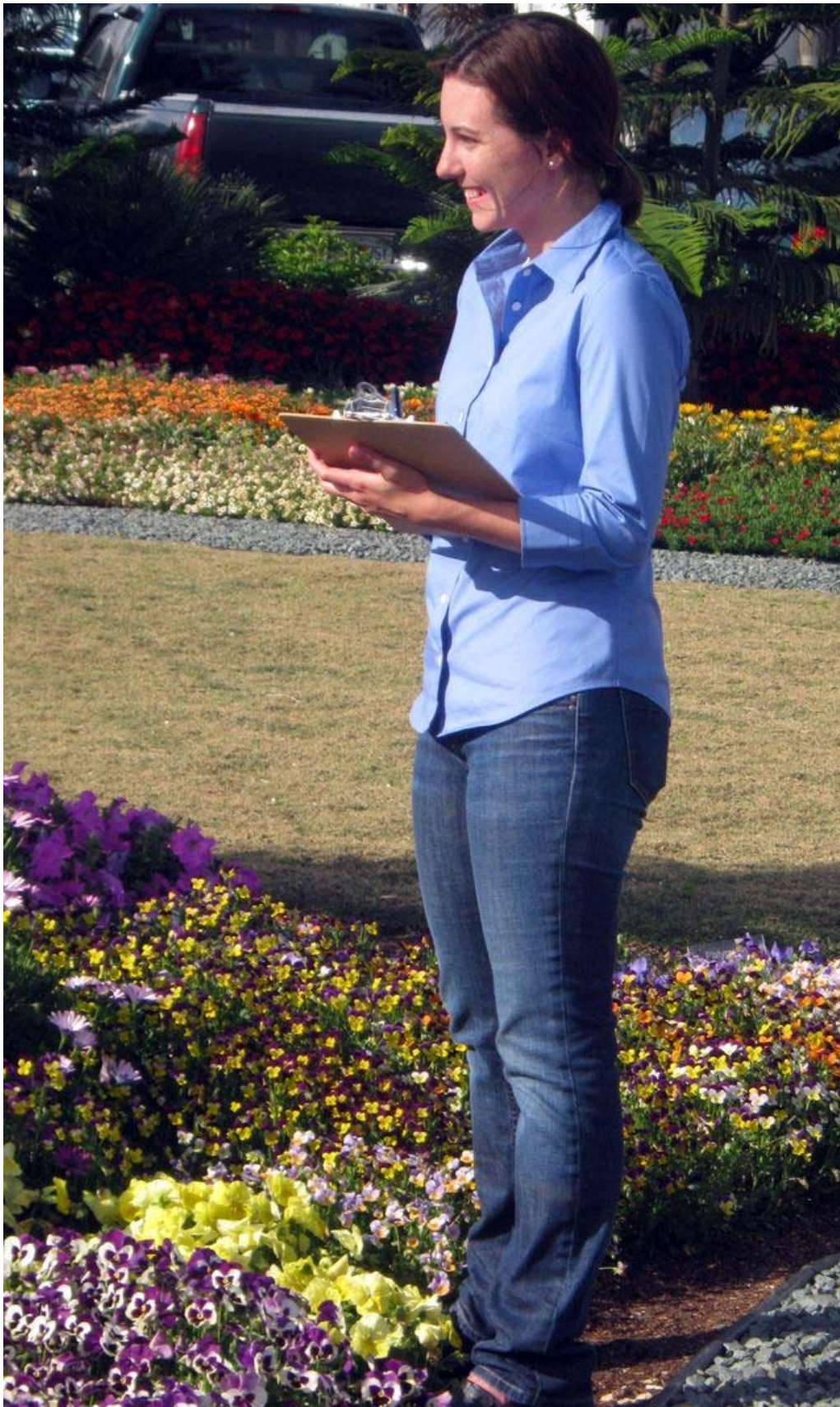
It's not a miniature petunia, but it looks like one -- '**Aloha Soft Pink**' million bells (*Callibrachoa*). This is another trailer that seems to do fine in beds, but I really recommend it for containers and hanging baskets. Give it lots of sun and moist, well-drained soil and you may not see millions of quarter-size blooms, but you will see thousands of them. Now for Grumpy's #1 annual for the South.





**Angelonia.** As I've reported before, angelonia is unsurpassed for its summer performance. It blooms nonstop, tolerates drought, doesn't need grooming, comes in several different colors, and looks spectacular. I've always been partial to 'Serena Purple,' but the one you see here at Costa is 'Carita Purple.' They look alike, they walk alike, at times they even talk alike, you can lose your mind.....(sorry, folks, I temporarily lapsed into the theme song from the old "Patty Duke Show." These flashbacks are becoming uncontrollable.). Anyhoo, I love this plant and you should plants lots of it.





And here's **Kate Santos**, the person who never sleeps, in charge of plant development for Costa. Just prior to taking this photo, we gave her an IV of Red Bull, and she really perked up. A couple of Cuban coffees would have accomplished the same thing.



Thanks to everybody at Costa Farms for being so nice and helpful during our visit. As we're usually met by outraged villagers carrying torches and screaming, "Death to the criminals!", this was quite a pleasant change.

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## Comments

Hmmm. I'm picturing a container with the yellow Lantana and the pink Callibracoa spilling over the edge. Yummy.

Posted by: [Connie](#) | [April 09, 2010 at 06:21 AM](#)

I couldnt work there. I would never get a paycheck because I would want to take it all home.  
 Beautiful! Lucky Grump

Posted by: [Jean](#) | [April 09, 2010 at 06:23 AM](#)

That petunia 'Rhythm and Blues' has a blinding contrast in colors! Need to wear shades for that one. The Foxglove really got my attention (deer resistant).

Posted by: [Cameron \(Defining Your Home\)](#) | [April 09, 2010 at 07:21 AM](#)

Your pics are amazing! What a beautiful place to be!

Posted by: [Rhonda](#) | [April 09, 2010 at 10:32 AM](#)

What can I say -- I'm just living right.

Posted by: [Grumpy Gardener \(His Grace\)](#) | [April 09, 2010 at 10:35 AM](#)

So, can I get the name of the energy drink that does all this!?

Posted by: [Dirty Girl Gardening](#) | [April 10, 2010 at 08:55 AM](#)

What a feast of colour! I love lantanas, which I grow in containers here for their riotous colour and the effect they have on pollinators such as butterflies and bees. They aren't hardy here (and sneeze at the first sign of a Nova Scotian frost) but they're far better performers for me than petunias, which turn into a mess in my fog. Callies do much better for me than petunias do.

Posted by: [jodi \(bloomingwriter\)](#) | [April 11, 2010 at 05:06 PM](#)

Gardening is always a trade-off, Jodi. I've been to your lovely island several times in summer and am always jealous of the poppies, fuchsias, tuberous begonias, and nasturtiums -- plants that quickly burn up when it gets hot here.

Posted by: [Grumpy Gardener \(His Grace\)](#) | [April 12, 2010 at 04:54 AM](#)

I'm really looking forward to trying these new plants some day...and I hope they are more available locally than angelonia which I STILL cannot find anywhere. I could and would have planted it weeks ago.  
 I'm begging you to use your great influence and speed up the arrival of some of these wonderful plants!

Posted by: [Holly/Seneca Clemson area](#) | [April 17, 2010 at 10:17 PM](#)

Good luck, Holly. I can only bring attention to great new plants. I can't make the stupid garden centers sell them. Maybe if we changed the name of angelonia to Clemsonia...

Posted by: [Grumpy Gardener \(His Grace\)](#) | [April 18, 2010 at 06:52 AM](#)

Great blog article about this topic, I have been lately in your blog once or twice now. I just wanted to say hi and show my thanks for the information provided.

Posted by: [Coach handbags](#) | [April 19, 2010 at 06:29 PM](#)

Thank you. And I would just like to say how much I enjoy your coaching and handbags.

Posted by: [Grumpy Gardener \(His Grace\)](#) | [April 20, 2010 at 04:18 AM](#)

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