

New Plant Forum®

Compiled and Moderated by Jack Alexander

Presenters:

Tim C. Brotzman

Brotzman's Nursery, Inc., 6899 Chapel Road, Madison, Ohio 44057 U.S.A.

Email: tim@brotzmansnursery.com

Cercis canadensis 'Vanilla Twist' ppaf

Pinus strobus 'Stowe Pillar'

Allen Bush

Jelitto Perennial Seeds, 125 Chenoweth Lane, # 301, Louisville, Kentucky 40207 U.S.A.

Email: allen.w.bush@gmail.com

Agastache aurantiaca 'Tango'

Agastache cana 'Bolero'

Eritrichium canum 'Baby Blues'

Trollius x cultorum 'New Moon'

Steve M. Castorani

North Creek Nurseries, 388 North Creek Road, Landenberg, Pennsylvania 19350 U.S.A.

Email: steve@northcreeknurseries.com

Bouteloua gracilis 'Blonde Ambition', blonde ambition blue grama

Tradescantia roseolens 'Morning Grace' morning grace piedmont roseling

Viola walteri 'Silver Gem', silver gem prostrate blue violet

Richard Olsen and Margaret Pooler

USDA/ARS U.S. National Arboretum, Floral and Nursery Plants Research Unit, 10300 Baltimore Ave., Bldg. 010A, Beltsville, Maryland 20705 U.S.A.

Email: Richard.Olsen@ars.usda.gov

Hydrangea quercifolia 'Ruby Slippers'

Hydrangea quercifolia 'Munchkin'

Camellia japonica 'Anacostia'

Loropetalum chinense 'Snow Panda'

Styrax japonicus 'Spring Showers'

Agastache aurantiaca 'Tango'

Agastache species have been a recent target for breeders who have developed interesting seed strains and cultivars. The hummingbird mints, bred principally from species native to southwestern U.S.A. and northern Mexico, have attractive features that appeal to growers and home gardeners.

'Tango' will add more fuel to the fire. Funnel-shaped blooms of fiery orange, on dense terminal spikes to 35 cm (14 in.) tall, stand out in a crowd. But don't forget the other fine selling points. 'Tango' has attractive, aromatic-scented, grey-green foliage

that blends magnificently with the orange blossoms. And growers will also appreciate the more compact habit and the short time — as little as 12 weeks — it takes to produce finished pots of this first year flowering seed strain. Hardy in Zone 5–10.

‘Tango’ is a magnet for hummingbirds and butterflies from June through October in full sun and well drained soils. Honeybees love it, too. Lovely perennial companions include *Callirhoe involucrata*, *Eriogonum allenii* ‘Little Rascal’, and *Lavandula angustifolia* ‘Hidcote Superior’.

The name *Agastache* is derived from Greek and refers to the many flowering spikes. *Agan* means: much and *stachys* means ear of grain or spike. There are over 20 *Agastache* species, principally from Western U.S.A. and northern Mexico. But there are, also, a few species from the Eastern U.S.A. and Asia.

***Agastache cana* ‘Bolero’**

The mosquito hyssop, *Agastache cana*, was the modest starting point for this breeding project. It didn’t stop there. (It could have if we’d been badly bitten by mosquitoes...)

Add a couple of other southwestern U.S.A. species, spend years evaluating seedlings — throwing out many more than are kept — for further trials — and wait to see what the stork brings — or doesn’t. Breeding efforts don’t always end-up where the guiding hand wants to take it. But this new seed strain is impressive.

Agastache ‘Bolero’ has a compact habit, grows to height and spread of 40 cm (16 in.), and is covered with rose-purple tubular blooms with purple calyxes above mounds of aromatic dark colored foliage. Ninety-nine percent of the slug-resistant plants have bronze-colored leaves — considerably darker than lesser strains.

‘Bolero’ is reliably first year flowering, tolerant of dry conditions, hardy in Zones 5–10, and magnificently suited for container production or dry gardens. This combines beautifully with *Delosperma cooperi*, *Kniphofia hirsuta* ‘Fire Dance’, and *Penstemon* ‘Sunburst Ruby’. ‘Bolero’ attracts hummingbirds, butterflies, and honeybees during its flowering period from June through October.

***Bouteloua gracilis* ‘Blonde Ambition’, blonde ambition blue grama**

Where low maintenance meets garden whimsy, ‘Blonde Ambition’ is sure to turn heads. Airy, chartreuse flowers float horizontally amidst blue-green foliage from mid-summer into fall. Seed heads extend the season providing unique winter appeal. Extremely cold hardy and adaptable to various soil types, use in sweeps for a dramatic effect. Unlike any other ornamental grass in cultivation, discovered and introduced by David Salman of High Country Gardens.

***Cercis canadensis* ‘Vanilla Twist’ ppaf**

A new selection of weeping redbud with white flowers developed by Brotzman’s Nursery, Madison, Ohio, by combining the weeping characteristic of *C. canadensis* ‘Covey’ (Lavender Twist® redbud) with the white flowers of *C. canadensis* ‘Royal White’.

This is an F2 selection of (*C. canadensis* ‘Covey’ × *C. canadensis* Royal White) × (*C. canadensis* ‘Covey’ × *C. canadensis* ‘Royal White’). The initial F1 reciprocal crosses were done about 1999 in a caged environment using natural insect pollinators. Seed was collected from both *C. canadensis* ‘Covey’ and ‘Royal White’, kept separated from each other and in time approximately 20 siblings from each parent were planted close together, keeping the two groups at a distance from each other. None of the F1 plants in either group exhibited white flowers or weeping habit, all being lavender colored and upright in habit.

Seed from open pollination within each group were sown from which nearly 900 seedlings resulted; these were outplanted together for evaluation. Approximately 175 weeping plants were produced of which approximately 17 bore white flowers. In 2008 three of each of these were budded and planted out for evaluation in 2010. Along with their respective mother plants, these were compared for growth rate, flower color and size, habit, and vigor. In 2011 'Vanilla Twist' was selected and first commercial propagation was made.

Other than having white flowers, 'Vanilla Twist' appears to be very similar to its weeping parent, 'Covey', in growth rate and leaf characteristics. However, there is suggestion that the weeping characteristic may be a little bit more "broad shouldered," and it appears lateral branch development might result in branches arching upward in an antler-like manner. Covey does not exhibit this trait.

Plant Patent protection has been sought and contracts for licensed propagation will be authorized.

***Eritrichium canum* 'Baby Blues'**

The heavenly blue flowers on 'Baby Blues' took us by surprise and won our hearts. We've fallen in love with this lovely scree plant. This short-lived perennial (best grown as an annual) will become a valuable substitute for the powdery mildew-plagued *Myosotis* species, forget me nots. 'Baby Blues' flowers more abundantly than the wild species and has dozens of intense blue corollas with throats of soft heavenly blue on evenly compact stems to 25 cm (10 in.) tall.

'Baby Blues' is a relative of the luscious *E. nanum*, a native of the European Alps. This highly desirable species was described by Will Ingwersen as "...one of the most supremely beautiful of all alpine plants..." And, as experienced growers will also admit, it is very difficult to grow in cultivation. *Eritrichium nanum* shouldn't be confused with 'Baby Blues', which can be easily grown, even as an annual, in full sun in climates with cooler summers and in soils that are gritty and well drained. One of the parents, *E. canum* var. *canum* originates on hillsides of grit, gravel, or sandy riverbanks. 'Baby Blues' is a fast germinator and can be brought to flower in 3 to 4 months.

Eritrichium is a name of Greek origin — *erion* translating to wool; *tricha* to hair. The leaves on many of the species are soft and fuzzy.

***Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Ruby Slippers'** (USDA Zones 5–8)

This oakleaf hydrangea resulted from a cross between 'Snow Queen' and 'Pee Wee' and was selected for its large flower panicles that emerge white but turn pink and then deepen to a rose color. It is a small rounded shrub that reaches a size of 3.5 ft high and 5 ft wide after 7 years of growth. An excellent choice in the shrub border, deciduous hedge, or mass planted in larger areas. Released in 2010, 'Ruby Slippers' can be propagated by softwood cuttings under mist with 4,000 ppm IBA. Expected retail availability in 2012. For more information on these and other cultivars, visit our website at <<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Newintro/index.html>>.

***Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Munchkin'** (USDA Zones 5–8)

As the name implies, this oakleaf hydrangea is smaller than the species, making it ideally suited for use in small residential landscapes. It reaches a size of 3 ft tall by 4.5 ft wide in 9 years of growth. It originated from an open-pollinated population from 'Skies Dwarf'. The abundant flower clusters are held upright above the foliage open white and gradually turn medium pink. It was released in 2010 with expected

retail availability in 2012. For more information on these and other cultivars, visit our website at <<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Newintro/index.html>>.

***Camellia japonica* ‘Anacostia’** (USDA Zones 7–9, possibly into Zone 6b)

Selected for its abundant, large, semi-double medium-pink flowers and dark glossy evergreen foliage, this hybrid was created in the 1960s from a cross between a white-flowered selection of *C. japonica* and *C. japonica* ‘Z’ (a cultivar with reportedly increased cold tolerance). It reaches 12 ft high and 7 ft wide in 30 years, making it suitable as a specimen plant, hedge, or mass planted in larger areas. It has survived several harsh winters at the National Arboretum. ‘Anacostia’ can be propagated from semi-hardwood cuttings taken mid- to late summer, or by grafting. Released in 2010, it has limited availability. For more information on these and other cultivars, visit our website at <<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Newintro/index.html>>.

***Loropetalum chinense* ‘Snow Panda’** (USDA Zones 7–9)

‘Snow Panda’ originated from seeds collected near Yan Chi He, Hubei, China in 1994. The seedlings were grown out at the National Arboretum and this plant was selected for further evaluation in 2006. It reaches 10 ft high by 8 ft wide in 15 years, with an evergreen, loosely vase-shaped habit. The leathery foliage is medium green, and flowers are creamy white with 5–8 flowers in a cluster. ‘Snow Panda’ is suitable as a sheared evergreen hedge, foundation plant, container, plant, or espalier. Softwood or semi-hardwood cuttings dipped in 1,000–3,000 ppm IBA will root readily under mist in 4–6 weeks. Released in 2011, it has limited retail availability. For more information on these and other cultivars, visit our website at <<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Newintro/index.html>>.

***Pinus strobus* ‘Stowe Pillar’**

A very narrow selection of white pine found in Vermont by Greg Williams of Kate Brook Nursery and named by Bob Fincham. Original tree was approximately 33 ft tall × 10 ft wide. This is narrower than the two other common commercial selections, *P. strobus* ‘Fastigiata’ (‘Columnaris’) and ‘Bennett’s Fastigate’. In addition, ‘Stowe Pillar’ has a slower growth rate and denser form than either of these.

Greg told me that there were a total of three narrow pines at this location and he shared scions from two of them with me. My labeled selection “Williams’ #2” is what has been called ‘Stowe Pillar’. “Williams’ #1” is also a very fine plant, superior to ‘Fastigiata’ and similar to ‘Bennett’s Fastigate’. It remains unnamed at his time.

On the plants I have propagated by grafting, both ‘Stowe Pillar’ and Williams’ #1 exhibit a characteristic I have never seen before. These are goiter-like swellings that occur on the trunk and branches at the branch unions. Cutting into them reveals a hard woody structure, not pithy or hollow. It does not appear to be caused by insects or any exterior influence.

***Styrax japonicus* ‘Spring Showers’** (USDA Zones 5–8)

Selected and evaluated by the Arboretum’s breeding program in McMinnville, Tennessee, this plant has a delayed bud break that allows it to be successfully grown in areas frequently subject to late spring freezes. It reaches a height of 12 ft and a width of 8 ft after 10 years. It is a small tree with a tight conical habit that leafs out 2–3 weeks later than most cultivars. Softwood cuttings root in 4 weeks under mist with 3,000 ppm IBA. Released in 2011, it has limited retail availability. For more

information on these and other cultivars, visit our website at <<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Newintro/index.html>>.

***Tradescantia roseolens* 'Morning Grace'**, Morning grace piedmont roseling

A beautiful cultivar that comes to us from Michael Jenkins. 'Morning Grace' has a dainty garden stature reaching just under 1 ft in height. Thin, strappy foliage remains a clean, medium green throughout the growing season. A very long bloom period, the triangular, light pink flowers have attractive gold stamens and rest just above the foliage. Flowers are very attractive to pollinating insects.

***Trollius ×cultorum* 'New Moon'**

Trollius ×cultorum 'New Moon' has a long and distinguished history. We received seed from the nurseryman Coen Jansen of the Netherlands who had been working with the legendary 'Alabaster' that originally came from the famous Georg Arends Nursery in Wuppertal, Germany. Arends, going back as far as the 1930s, had been the source of many outstanding perennial introductions including *Astilbe*, *Primula*, and *Saxifraga* taxa. *Sedum* 'Herbstfreude' ('Autumn Joy'), one of the most popular perennials of all times, originated at the Arends Nursery.

Although 'Alabaster' has an extraordinarily beautiful creamy-yellow blossom, it has not been a strong grower and has been a challenge to propagate vegetatively. Still, the majestic blooms proved irresistible to anyone who saw it. Jelitto experimented with plants grown from Jansen's seed with the desired goal of producing a seed strain with bigger blooms and more vigor. 'New Moon' is a Jelitto seed strain success!

Few wildflowers in native habitats are as endearing as globe flowers when discovered — sometimes in abundance — in the cool, moist meadows of Europe, Asia, and North America. We are certain that growers and home gardeners will find 'New Moon' just as beautiful.

'New Moon' is hardy in Zones 3–7 and looks wonderful in a cool, humus-rich garden combined with *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Pixie Fountain', *Viola sororia* 'Dark Freckles', and *Alchemilla sericata* 'Gold Strike'.

***Viola walteri* 'Silver Gem', silver gem prostrate blue violet**

From the gardens of Mt. Cuba Center, North Creek, is delighted to introduce this tough native groundcover. This selection is easily identified by trailing stems and delicate lavender flowers, 'Silver Gem' forms a dense, tidy mat of attractive silver foliage. Flowers appear in March and persist into autumn. Our plant trials have proven 'Silver Gem' to be exceptionally drought tolerant and happiest in part to full shade.