

FloralNEWS

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A Selecta Cut Flowers Publication



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On The Cover:

Jairo Arango, owner of Cosmoflowers in Colombia, shares with us his views and opinions on farming. Read more on p. 4.



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Selecta Cut Flowers S. A.U.
Phone: +34 93 750 66 56
info@selectacutflowers.com



Twists and new Avenues

In this edition you can read about Amazon entering the web-shop market for flowers. If you think about where they started and what happened to the big traditional bookshop chains, you might have second thoughts. It is going to be interesting if Amazon finds a new avenue to attract customers that have so far shopped elsewhere. They might just twist their business model a bit to fit flowers, because their model is not to sell great flowers, it's to satisfy customers. Because of that, they might ask different questions and get an answer that established players do not get because they do not ask.

This is true for all of us in all the fields we are active in, whether it is breeding, producing, wholesale, or retail. Finding a twist to what we do or how we do it might just be a way to innovate our business and find new customers or market segments or in a sense new business. Let me offer a practical example: in Japan Solidago is widely used as an altar flower. Having been able to breed the world's first almost white Solidago – ESTELLE - we have seen the opportunity to position this product for wedding ceremonies. A little twist that can mean a big difference. I am sure if we put our heads together, we can find more of those twists.

Sincerely yours,

Nils Klemm n.klemm@selectaklemm.de

Fresh Idea!

This arrangement is sure to impress everyone! It is crafted from Spider™ Rodrigo gerbera, and is designed by florists from Bloom's, a life-style magazine. A spectacular way to celebrate every occasion.

Spider™ gerbera varieties have high productivity, offering a different flower texture. These varieties give you the opportunity to innovate and achieve a unique look in bouquets and floral arrangements.



Q & A

with Kenji Tanaka and Jairo Arango

The younger generation of growers thinks and acts differently from their dads. In many flower-growing families they are well-educated and looking to the future for more innovative ways to produce crops. Also, when it comes to marketing, the younger farmers tend to be more proactive. They may not believe they can grow a better crop, but they do believe they can make more money per acre than their dads.

We would like to introduce to you two young and successful cut flower growers: Kenji Tanaka from Japan and Jairo Arango from Colombia, who share with us their views and opinions on farming.

Q: Why did you choose floriculture as your career path?

Kenji Tanaka: My parents were in the business of growing flowers, so I just rolled in and followed them.

Jairo Arango: Because it is amazing to work with a live nature where you can observe fast changes. It is the case of the products that we plant. You can see in three months the complete development of a plant going from a cutting to a flower.

Q: What are the challenges the cut flowers farms are facing in Japan?

Kenji Tanaka: In people's considerations, food is bought first, and there simply is not much left for flowers. The number of people who want to have flowers in their home is declining. Costs of producing flowers are rising, and we have difficulties in keeping up with this. These are the main challenges we are facing today.



Kenji Tanaka



Jairo Arango

Jairo Arango: In my opinion the biggest challenges are: the commercialization of the product in the different markets and the introduction of new products in a saturated market of all the existing cut flowers.

Q: Which marketing strategies help your business to distinguish itself and stay ahead of the competition?

Kenji Tanaka: Like probably all marketers we have to think about supply and demand, try to find a balance in this, and on top of that, choose the best varieties that will fill in the demand, but it will always be difficult.

Jairo Arango: First, quality, and second, the differentiation in the presentation of the product. Consider differentiation as any aspect itself of the product (better spray, greater amount of flowers, higher weight) allowing us to have differentiation among our competitors.

Q: What are three things you need to be successful as a cut flower grower and marketer?

Kenji Tanaka: In my opinion there are three important points that have a big influence of company's success: First, the interaction between end user and grower. If we want to be successful going forward,

“ If we want to be successful going forward, growers must focus on creating relationships and engagement with customers.

growers must focus on creating relationships and engagement with customers. Learn what they need, what they care about, what they think about their business, markets, and challenges. At the same time the customers should know the growers' possibilities in respect to variety range, colours, etc. Therefore communication between these two groups is the key to success. Second, you have to be a reliable supplier of quality flowers to the market. And the last but not least, the need to be a reliable supplier in respect to quantities to the wholesalers so there is ample supply to the customer.

Jairo Arango: There are three things you absolutely need to achieve your company goals and to be successful on the market: First: Good and reliable genetic plant material, which allows you to grow good quality plants. Second: an efficient and solid commercial team able to run sales. And third: sustainable use of the environment; thanks to it you can lower production costs, improve productivity, and of course enhance your company reputation.

SCF

“ (...) you have to be a reliable supplier of quality flowers to the market.

Amazon Flower e-Shop

By Sabina Reiner



Some of you already may have heard that last August 2013 Amazon quietly launched its own online flower shop, offering a very limited line of six different bouquets to choose from. By the time it expanded its flower selection, it now offers 28 different bouquets. In the U.S., Amazon flowers are available via the Amazon Curated Flower Collection, under the "Grocery and Gourmet Food" department. Previously the only fresh cut flowers available on amazon.com were sold by third-party companies.

This online retail giant offers its cut flowers line for an attractive price comparing to other online flower sellers offers. For instant, a dozen red roses in a vase Amazon is currently selling for \$31.07 while the same order from competitors costs between \$44.99 and \$74.99 (all prices are before shipping and taxes). It's still unclear where Amazon is sourcing the flowers.

All Amazon bouquets are eligible for free delivery through Amazon Prime, but Amazon is strict with delivery dates – it does not deliver on Saturday, Sunday, or Monday. Another weakness is that Amazon does not currently allow customers to schedule a delivery date.

The customers who ordered Amazon's flowers online left mixed feedback, from very positive to a negative. Customer Tiffany Young wrote on March 14:

"Flowers were delivered the next day and matched

the description and picture of what I purchased. The greeting was also included accurately and meant a lot to the receiver. This is a great option with Amazon Prime compared to ordering flowers from the local flower ship because it saves so much money in delivery."

Another buyer was very disappointed with the quality of ordered roses. "The roses arrived but were already starting to brown upon arrival. You are better off sticking with a local florist" wrote A. Carhart on February 5.

If Amazon will make sure its flowers are delivered in good quality and will figure out a way to scheduled deliveries, other online flower sellers will have some serious competition. We asked Teleflora, an online flower retailer, what they think about this move. Here is their feedback on that:

Jorge Alonso, Director Vendor Relations – S&B –

Teleflora:

I consider Amazon a very serious competitor down the line knowing first how Amazon Prime members are extremely committed to the program to check them out first when looking for any item and second considering the power of the brand in the US. However, looking at their catalog as it is today, it looks like they have a very basic program with simple vases with an everyday look. They are still a relevant competitor, and it certainly has the power to make a dent in the market.

The pressure to always be the best in the market is no different from the pressure any other competitor in the market puts on us. The power of Amazon definitely gives an additional reason to keep improving our programs in search for excellence; but in the end, Teleflora's program is florist- supported, which gives us the advantage to deliver our products by a local floral shop that will arrange and quality-control the bouquet a few hours prior to delivery.



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Sabina Reiner is Marketing Manager at Selecta Cut Flowers. You can reach her at sabina.reiner@selectacutflowers.com

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By Oscar Cuartas

CARNATION NEWS FROM COLOMBIA

Last February we organized our annual Carnation Open House at Aurora farm in Palmira. Around 100 visitors, representing 40 companies, visited our showroom, where they had the opportunity to compare Selecta varieties in two different planting stages. The most prominent standard varieties this year were Jodie, PV 8525 Pink, PV 9472 Yellow, Dark Bacarat, and Pink Bacarat. Jodie is our 2014 novelty, and it has a nice pink color, tall and strong stem, good field performance, and short cycle time. The main colors, Ormea, Mandalay, and Randal, which are strong varieties with excellent performance in the field, received good feedback. Don Pedro also received a lot of great feedback. This variety is very significant for almost every Colombian grower and is very important for the buyers. Don Pedro is reliable in all the aspects: excellent growth, very good quality and productivity, and high fusarium resistance. It has big flowers in a stable red color.

In the spray carnation program, the most outstanding varieties were Blanquita and 09 M 0413 Red. Blanquita has a beautiful and pure white color, good numbers of flowers per stem, and a high tolerance to fusarium. 09 M 0413 is very promising variety with a deep stable red color. It has strong stems, with an excellent length, and very good numbers of flowers per stem. Our regular varieties, Caesar and

Romany, continue to be very popular and reliable among the Colombian growers.

This was my first Open House with Selecta, and I am very happy with the result. Almost every grower attended our invitation. Our visitors enjoyed the good time and food. But most important was that they have the opportunity to see excellent and promising varieties. A special Thank You to our host, Flores Aurora and its team, for the effort, dedication, and readiness to help, which was decisive to make this event a successful show.

Pictures on the next page:
 1. Blanquita, mini carnation
 2. PV 8525, pink standard carnation
 3. Mandalay, standard carnation
 4. Don Pedro, standard carnation
 5. Ormea, standard carnation
 6. Randal, standard carnation

Oscar Cuartas is Sales Manager at Selecta Colombia. You can reach him at o.cuartas@selectacolombia.com



What's new?

We are continuously working on new varieties, which make our program even more attractive and reliable. Selecta's Product Manager, Felipe Gomez, is doing an excellent job in trailing varieties around the world and selecting with our customers the most promising products. Let's take a closer look at some of the new highlights for this season.



Baron

Very elegant variety, selected to fit the needs of the Japanese market. It has intense red color with extraordinary vase life.



Jodie

Combination of elegance and excellent performance in the field are the factors which make this new variety outstanding.



Blanquita

It's growers' choice for productivity and pure white color in spray carnation.

Picasso

Vase life and less fading hot pink/cerise can be improved with use of Picasso in the mini carnations program. QUALITY is the best word to describe this variety.



Skadi

Remarkable green color that merges quality, very good number of flowers per stem, and vigorous growth.



Tune

Needs in peach color spray can be reached with Tune. Count on elegance and high numbers of flowers per stem to satisfy your niche markets.



Fredi

New alternative in the market of hot pink/cerise with black center standard varieties. It has superior productivity and quality: 65 cm of length and 11 cm of diameter.



Amlet

Red with black center. This variety is a complement of our red assortment, ideal for needs of big flowers: 65 cm of length and 12 cm of diameter.



Tweety Bird

Excellent option when you looking to produce high amount of yellow with green center flowers: 65 cm of length and 11.5 cm of diameter.

Ambeta

White with black center. Perfect to increase production in your field, bringing enormous large flowers. 60 cm of length and 13 cm of diameter.





KEEP CLIMBING HIGHER

By Sabina Reiner



Environmental, social, health, and safety issues play a very important role at Selecta. Therefore we are proud to announce that recently our farm Selecta Kenya in Nairobi has been awarded with MPS-A, the highest environment certificate in the three-step MPS-ABC system. The MPS-ABC system is a unique world standard and works as a benchmark in demonstrating to what extent company's operations are environmentally friendly.

Selecta Kenya (SKY) farm is located east of Nairobi between Nairobi and Thika. It has 19.5 ha (48.5 acres) and produces more than 120 million cuttings each year. It employs an average of 1150 employees. The farm is also one of the locations for Selecta's Breeding and Research department and home of several breeding programs of pot plants, bedding plants, and cut flowers, such as Solidago or Carnations. Crossing, evaluations, and selections are preformed in Kenya.

Providing social programs is a big part of cultivating a reliable, high quality workforce at the Selecta farm. The farm has an in-house nurse for daily health issues, and workers are given

lunch every day. Selecta Kenya has its own group of 40 Peer Educators who are teaching and training the whole SKY team in "Health and Women Empowerment". There is also a soccer field for recreation, and the teams from Selecta Kenya and from the farm in Uganda get together for matches. Selecta Kenya offers also extensive employee training and a clear path for advancement. The company's goal is to invest in local people and have them here for a lifetime.

"When it comes to keeping out insects and diseases, there are no shortcuts. Therefore our employees are trained extensively on defined hygiene procedures," says Ludwig Allnoch, General Production Manager at SKY. Ludwig is assigned to build up sustainable pro-

duction. The main focus of his work is to develop and implement an integrated pest management system with beneficial insects in all crops and greenhouses. This system allows the farm to minimize the use of pesticides and to produce cuttings in a sustainable way. In addition to that, all water sources at the farm are disinfected with chlorine, ultraviolet rays, and 5 micron filtration. Plants are grown in volcanic rock that is steam-sterilized at a high temperature for for re-use.

Jan Molenaar, Planning and Extra Elite Manager, manages the Quality Management System in preparation for further internationally legislated certifications. "We believe that there is always room for more, so our team keeps on working for sustainable improvements in terms of environment and social responsibility," says Jan.

"This process requires responsibility and commitment of the whole team. And it is a pleasure working with this great team. Good environmental performance reduces risk, lowers costs, improves productivity, and builds a strong team – and this is what keeps us climbing higher," adds Dries Eikens, General Manager at Selecta Kenya.

Picture on the left page: The Selecta Kenya Management Team. From left to right: Ludwig Allnoch (General Production Manager), Fidelis Makau (Head of Department Trials), Dries Eikens (General Manager), Thomas Obala (Elite Department), and Jan Molenaar (Planning and Elite Manager).



Strict sanitation protocols are practiced upon entering the greenhouses. After stepping in footbaths, workers wear smocks, sanitize their hands, and wear rubber gloves.



Selecta's choir at farm in Kenya.



The SKY soccer team.



Selecta Kenya traditional dance group.



By Dr. Yoseph Shoub

Controlling Gerbera Culture with “Sustainable Precision Agriculture” (SPA)*

Setting the “Sustainable Precision Agriculture” (SPA) system in our gerbera breeding farm (in 2005) significantly improved the growing conditions for our plants. Due to the 24-hour control, the SPA system shortens the growth-period of the seedlings to 110 days. It enables us to get 3 growth cycles in one year, 4 plants per cycle in 4-liter containers; this possibility increased the seedlings population 7 times more than before. Moreover, it reduced the resources invested per plant: water (40%), fertilizers (70%), heating (100%), and it avoid salinity problems we faced before. At the same time it increased the growth-intensity of the plants and the seed production.

The “Sustainable Precision Agriculture” principles:

1 The gerbera like any other plant is active 24 hours a day performing physiological activities such as respiration, transpiration, photosynthesis, growth, storing products, and more. The physiological activities are depending almost totally on the presence and the ability of the secondary roots to continuously supply water, oxygen, and minerals.

A REMINDER: almost all “seed-bearing plants” have the same root mechanism for absorbing the soil solution. “Soil solution” is a composition of water, soil-minerals, and dissolved atmospheric oxygen. Almost all “seed-bearing plants” absorb oxygen only via their roots. But modern agricultural techniques and conventional dripping systems do not follow in “real time” the physiological rhythms and the water-consumption of the plants. Instead, the growers follow irrigation programs planned ahead, disregarding what actually happens on a daily basis.

The SPA system reacts on time to the usage of water and oxygen needed for performing the plant activities. It does so by automatically restoring micro quantities of feeding solution in real time, when the

water was actively consumed, and brings it back to the locations it was taken from.

2 Generally saying, the mineral quantities absorbed by the plants are equivalent to the plants’ growth and to the accumulated dry matter in its structure, and in its products.

A REMINDER: the “soil-minerals” N, P, K, Ca, Mg, S, are only 10 - 15% of the total plant’s dry-matter. The rest 85 - 90% are Carbon, Oxygen, and Hydrogen, which are of air and water origin. But agricultural establishments advise using exaggerated irrigation quantities containing fertilizers way above the requirements of the plants. These extra irrigation quantities fill up the capillary structure of the soil/media, eliminate the presence of air in the root zone. At the same time the extra minerals accumulated in the root zone create and cause the well-known worldwide salinity problems that damage the plant’s development.

The SPA system always keeps free oxygen availability in the secondary roots’ environment, as it supplies micro water quantities, holding low con-



Gerbera seeds ready to detach.



Gerbera seedling on planting day.



SPA seedlings, 34 days after planting.

centration of feeding solution with the dissolved oxygen. These chemical-physical-conditions allow constant contact of the “soil solution” with the “hairy roots.” The hairy roots are sensitive plant cells, located on the secondary roots; they are responsible for absorbing the soil solution.

3 Salinity phenomenon is related to the gravity-water-movement created by conventional dripping systems. The long-term result is the “salinity fronts” developed below the drippers, around the soil-wetted-volumes. The growers are not aware of this developing process. When a grower identifies salinity symptoms in the above-soil plant organs, it is already too late to avoid it.

The SPA system is changing the gravity-water-movement in the soil/media to capillary-water-movement. The capillary-water-movement increases the area surface of the feeding solution, enriches it with dissolved oxygen, and creates optimal conditions for the secondary roots’ growth.

Epilog: Wise Agriculture will win

The above historical errors lower the level of plant activity and do not allow us to utilize the advantages of new varieties. Instead, the conventional agriculture continuously contaminates our drinking wa-



Elongation of SPA flower stems, 34 days after planting.



Secondary roots system of SPA seedlings.

ter. The SPA system managed our gerbera breeding greenhouse for nine years; long enough to verify that it is able to create ideal growing conditions for the secondary roots. It proves that the SPA system with its sensors, serves our intensive plants physiologically, practically, and economically:

- It enables them to control themselves in a way that increases their productivity and quality with reduced quantities of water and fertilizers.
- It cancels the practice of irrigation quantities advised in order to rinse-out the surplus minerals supplied by the growers.
- It minimizes the contamination of the world aquifers.

*Dr. Yoseph Shoub is an agronomist, plant physiologist, and gerbera breeder.
You can reach him at gerbera1@zahav.net.il*

* Sustainable Precision Agriculture (SPA) System is manufactured by AutoAgronom Israel Ltd.



By Felipe Gomez

Pearls® Petite vase life test

Pearls® Petite is Selecta's new gypsophila variety with small, semi-double flowers, concentrated on a dense inflorescence. It has strong and stable stems and terrific display volume. This variety is designed for the bouquets market.

Petite, like all others Pearls® varieties, was specially selected for its superior quality and longevity. In order to prove this statement, we asked Florcontrol to do their independent vase life test. Below are the results of this test.

Objective: Test the VL, comparing the varieties Petite, Mirabella, Million Stars, and Ginga Way, treating them with STS.

Methodology: After harvesting, the flowers got a treatment of the solution Chrysal AVB + Citric Acid for two hours. In the second step, all gypsophila varieties were treated with Chrysal FVB + Citric Acid + Sugar for nine days. Florcontrol received the flowers from the farm the next day after the second treatment was finished. Florcontrol placed the flowers in dry packing and stored them at 4° C for seven days, simulating in this way the transportation period. After this process, all bunches in sleeves were moved into pure water with +/- 1 ppm of chlorine at room temperature. The calcification identified two aspects of evaluation in the vase life: durability, the percentage of flowers showing some defect during the 10 days of the evaluation, and percentage of flowers dead and alive.

The conditions the evaluation room:

12 hours light/ 12 hour darkness
Temperature of the room at day: 20°C (+/- 2°C)
Temperature during the night 16°C (+/- 2°C)
RH 78%

Final test results:

Durability average Mirabella: 8 days
Durability average Million Stars: 10 days
Durability average Pearls® Ginga Way: 10 days
Durability average Pearls® Petite: > 10 days.

Pearls® Petite variety was characterized by flowers with good opening and dense clusters.

In this test the vase life of the Petite was greater than of the other tested varieties (Ginga Way, Mirabella, and Million Stars.) During this evaluation the water in the vases of each product remained clean and the flowers stems in the water did not show any deterioration.

Florcontrol is a Latin American leading company for postharvest technical assistance, training programs, process audits, quality control of flower shipments, research, bacteriological and chemical analysis, and vase life evaluations of cut flowers and foliage. For more information visit: www.florcontrol.com

Felipe Gomez is Product Manager at Selecta Cut Flowers. You can reach him at F.gomez@selectacutflowers.com



Carnation Open House in Turkey

By André Lek

On March 8 our agent ANTALYA TARIM organized the yearly Carnation Open Day in Antalya, Turkey. As usual all companies from the flower business were present, not only growers but exporters and wholesalers as well.

In the 500 m² showroom were shown 30 different varieties of standard and spray carnations.

Besides the varieties already in the program, semi-commercial and new promising novelties for the future were presented as well.

The latest Selecta introductions, Baccarat, Grace, and Vogue, are performing very well in Turkey because of good production and trendy colors. The most promising novelty this year is the new red standard variety "ORMEA." This novelty has very good color, shape, stem length, and weight. Worth mentioning also is its long vase life and nice performance after storing.

Red standard is by far the #1 color in Turkey (over 50 hectares are planted with red carnations). Mostly it is exported to Russia, Ukraine, and other former Russian republics.

Turkey is together with Kenya the most important supplier for spray carnation in Europe.

One big advantage is that transport can be realized by truck. This reduces costs, and flowers suffer less as the cool chain will not be interrupted during transport.

Turkey has a production area in the highlands (Isparta) where very good quality can be grown during summer. Thanks to that, the cut-flowers growers can achieve year-round production with

constant quality.

After having visited the showroom, everyone had the opportunity to discuss the business issues and opportunities with colleagues with a drink and a snack at the buffet in the nice garden of Antalya Tarim.



Ormea, standard carnation, was the star of this event. From left to right: Salih Durmazkan, André Lek, and Fahrettin Simsek.

André Lek is Sales Manager at Selecta Cut Flowers. You can reach him at a.lek@selectacutflowers.com

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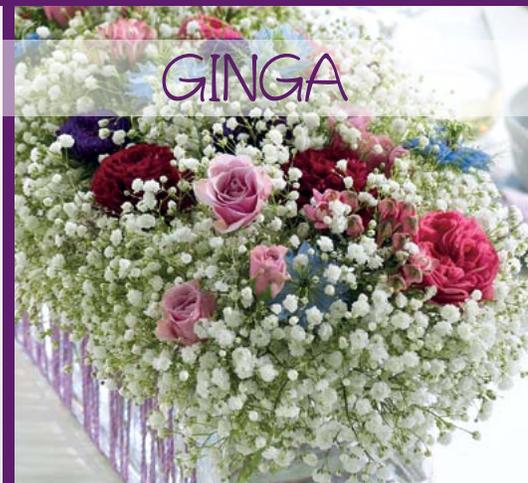
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