

FloraNEWS

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On The Cover:
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Sharing is caring

Along with REAL IPM, a Kenyan based manufacturer of bio-pesticides, predatory mites and bio-fertilizers, we have been setting up a program for our farms in Kenya and Uganda being able to reduce input of chemical crop protection by 60%. Why not try to use knowledge gained for the success of others too – since not only increasingly among retailers in Europe but also those in North America are mandating eco-friendly production methods. Hence, launching a field study seemed logical. We have hired Michele Alfano, a talented young M.Sc. in Plant Pathology and Entomology freshly graduated from Wageningen University (Netherlands) and further trained at REAL IPM. After finalizing his field trip to Colombia and Ecuador, two major areas of cut flower production, we invited him to share his experience with you. We care for you and we share with you. So, as always: have fun leafing through the magazine, and thank you very much for choosing us as your partner!

This time I would like to extend very special greetings to Sabina Reiner, our marketing manager. Sabina is currently on maternity leave and gave birth on May 1st to a beautiful baby girl named Nina Kiara. All the best to Sabina and her family.

Sincerely yours,

N. klemm

Nils Klemm n.klemm@selectaklemm.d



Pearls® Petite

Q & A with Ricardo Delgado from Latinflor.

Please tell us bit about your company, Latinflor. (When did it start, what do you do, what kind of customers do you have?)

Latinflor is a 25-year-old flower-producing and exporting company, located north of Quito in Ecuador. We currently produce and export Gypsophila and Delphinium. Our largest market is the U.S.A. and Canada, which account for 80% of our sales. Europe, Russia, and South America add up to the remaining 20%.

You are located in Ecuador, there are no seasons; do you see this as an advantage? What benefits does it bring to the flowers? What do you have to keep in mind when growing under these conditions?

Growing cut flowers in a region with no seasons is a great advantage because we can produce year-round with quality and consistency thus avoiding seasonality issues. The challenge in the case of Gypsophila, which originally came from a four-season region, is to give the plants the proper light and hormone treatment to have quality and timely production under single-season conditions.



Latinflor, with our agent Giselle and our customer from Italy Alfano.

What is your opinion about different lifestyle and economic trends that affect the floriculture industry. Which of them has the biggest impact on your business?

Economic trends have the biggest impact on Ecuadorian flower growers because Ecuador does not have its own currency. Having the U.S. dollar as our currency limits the ability of our country to adjust to the exchange rate to become price-competitive, compared to other flower-producing countries that can devalue their currency.

Ricardo Delgado, General Manager Latinflor SA
You can reach him at ricardod@latinflorfarm.com

How do you see the future for fresh cut flowers? How often do you see farms in South America which base their pest control under sustainability projects or that migrate to an ecofriendly project? What relevance does it have to your customer base, and how do you see that change in the near future?

There is growing awareness from both the private sector as well as government regulators to make flower production in Ecuador more environmentally sustainable. For many years Latinflor has been working with fungi such as *trichoderma* to control soil diseases such as *rhizoctonia* and *pythium*. Flower growers in Ecuador constantly search for the optimum balance between environment protection and quality flower production. As final consumers become increasingly aware of the benefits of ecofriendly production, they expect the same from their flower suppliers.

Which marketing strategies do you think would help your business to distinguish itself and attract new customers and/or stay ahead of the competition?

Our greatest marketing asset is our close relationship with a breeder like Selecta. Having early access to new varieties and participating in the selection, introduction, and marketing of new products and varieties gives our company a distinguishing added value to our customers.

What are the biggest challenges you're facing in your business right now?

The biggest challenges facing Ecuadorian cut flower farms today is over-production and periods of economic difficulties of our primary markets, because they both contribute to lower sales volume and a reduction in unit price.



Which opportunities do you see on the horizon, and which role do breeders play to help realize those opportunities?

Final consumer preferences, trends, and needs are in constant evolution, creating important opportunities for breeders to direct their breeding programs to meet those needs and capture and develop important segments of the market. This is why it is so important for growers, marketers, and breeders to work together to provide the cut flower market with the new products it needs and demands.



By Michele Alfano

SUSTAINABILITY

REAL-IPM AND BIO-CONTROL OF INSECTS

A WORLD OF FLOWERS WITH FEWER PESTICIDES (growing flowers naturally)

Last January I had the opportunity to take a brief training at Real IPM Ltd, in Kenya, a biological control agents and bio pesticides producer, based on Thika (50km far from Nairobi). They produce high quality predatory mites and different lines of bio-pesticides, such as several isolates of Metarhizium under license from ICIPE International Research Institute.



“The action of parasites, predators and pathogens in maintaining another organism’s activity at a lower average than would occur in their absence”

(Debach, 1964).

When Selecta proposed to me to join this project I did not expect to find as many ways and interactions in terms of applications of biological control of insects as I did. Theory always taught me that biological agents (*natural enemies*) such as parasites, predators and pathogens are used to manage pest populations below an acceptable level (economic damage threshold), or to refer at the statement I like most, “The action of parasites, predators and pathogens in maintaining another organism’s activity at a lower average than would occur in their absence” (Debach, 1964). Instead, during my stay at Real IPM, I discovered a new world, slightly away from pure theory, the practical applications of integrated pest management. I was really amazed and pleased to be a guest at their company where competence and experience in the practical application of integrated pest management in flowers, fruit, and vegetable crops are the main strengths of their success in Africa. In fact, Real IPM products are registered already in different African countries like Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa and they offer to their customer lots of crop protection solutions using predatory mites with bio-pesticides isolates combine in different programs.

As I arrived in Kenya I started wondering why an English biologist couple from the UK wanted to come here to live and invest in a business that is still not really well supported in Europe. In fact, the main reasons for the limited use worldwide of commercial biological control are related mainly to the attitude of the pesticide industry and to the specificity of the natural enemies which can often be combined with chemical control. After a couple of days the answer was clear: the mission is to develop low-cost biological solutions and IPM programs in order to reduce the use of agro-chemicals all over Africa, where their use is incredibly high. Indeed this line should be kept all over the world where farming with a bio-intensive IPM programs will become central for both large and small-scale farmers, in any crop, in any country. I understood in fact the importance of going through a Crop Specific IPM, as they suggest. I saw how they can develop and suggest different combinations of different IPM programs where growers are trained on pest and disease identification and on the use of biological control products in an IPM program.

After my training in Kenya I went to Colombia, where I investigated the different farming systems and agronomic practices currently used in the Colombian floriculture. I assessed different opportunities of the bio control products (provided by Real IPM Kenya) applied in different farms in Bogota and Medellin, focusing more on the production area of Rionegro. I applied what I had learned during my brief training and investigated how many farms are using IPM programs and which kind of predators and bio-pesticides are already in use, in order to identify the most suitable application of the products related to the Colombian environment. Finally I checked the feasibility of those different IPM solutions for floriculture in Antioquia region, to better understand what is the potential of bio-control in South America.

Michele Alfano has a MSc degree in Plant Science at Wageningen University. He has done courses on Greenhouse Horticulture such as Physiology and Development of Plants in Horticulture, Product Quality and Post-Harvest Physiology, and Greenhouse Technology. He also started a specialization in Plant Entomology.

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Now, the question is why Selecta together with Real IPM had this idea to explore the Colombian floriculture farming and check the viability to a more sustainable approach in growing flowers. The intention was to understand the status, to the use of integrated pest management systems, since the use of nematicides, combined with an increase application frequency and higher dose rates, may lead to more pest problems and result in higher residue levels, which leads to a negative environmental impact.

It is well known that pests are a problem in modern production systems due to the increase of yields, the decline of diversity at field and landscape level, and the regular use of pesticides, which leads to undesirable side effects, developing pest resistance, and bringing secondary pest outbreaks. The above mentioned reasons, are what lead Real IPM as well as Selecta, to think the transition towards sustainable pest management is absolutely needed.

Usually “Necessity is the mother of invention,” and I strongly believe that Integrated Pest Management, an important and durable method, became the only way out, in fact the biocontrol-based IPM method is the right tool and the right solution. According to the International Organization for Biological Control, Integrated Pest Management is “A system that keeps harmful organisms below the economic damage level based on ecologically, economically and toxicologically acceptable methods, taking into account the specific ecology of crops as well as harmful organisms.” It combines strategies and integrates different tactics to prevent (*hygiene, exclusion*) and to manage (*mechanical, biological, cultural, agronomic*) populations of harmful organisms. In this system, the chemical control is always the last resort, but it does not mean it cannot be taken into account. As said by Louise Labuschange at the Oxford Farming Conference last summer, IPM programs with their solutions represent “the common ground as synergy between the use of chemicals and biologicals together in order to improve yields and improve quality.” **Thus bio-control is part of an IPM program, alongside other chemical and non-chemical methods, everything should be specifically “designed” for every crop, for every farm, for every region, not fixed recipes!**



It is important to keep in mind that IPM is more than only “products”!

There are a number of reasons why we should use biocontrol-based IPM programs:

- 1** Arthropod (*pests*) **resistance to pesticides**.
- 2** **Residue demands** by food retailers and supermarket chains.
- 3** **Attitude of consumers** (*more and more demand of flowers with less chemical residue*).
- 4** **Change in attitude of governmental institutions** - forthcoming ban of EU on a range of chemical pesticides (*black list pesticides*).



So, how can we manage the future with its challenges?

Personally, I could imagine a world without or at least less of them. And it sounds beautiful, but to achieve this dream, I believe that IPM alone is not enough. Biological control specialists have to be in close synergy with plant breeders who can contribute in the creation of plants/flowers incorporating the right traits generating, partial resistance to pests, and allowing “natural enemies” better chances of reducing the pest below the economic damage threshold; or growing crops with reduced number of trichomes in order to have no interference with bio-control agent’s movement. This may be achieved with different techniques: classical breeding, marker assisted breeding or, perhaps more unlikely, by a transgenic approach. This synergy needs continuous support, not only with a constant and tight collaboration between breeding and bio-control we may bright the future. I like to keep in mind a specific challenging dogma, in order to think differently, and to stay creative - “If the only tool you know is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail”

Nowadays we have the alternative, a different option to the conventional/chemical agriculture, we have a durable and effective method: the biocontrol-based IPM.



REPORT

Focus & Differentiation

based on Plazoleta's Perfection® program as an example

By Sabina Reiner



Estelle's cream color permits perfect color absorption:
on left tinted Estelle, right – Estelle in natural color.

A couple months ago my Selecta team and I had the opportunity to visit *Plazoleta*, a flower farm in Colombia, located in the outskirts of Bogota, which specializes in growing and selling high quality fillers and focal flowers. Actually it was the last day of our 5-day trip; we were exhausted from other visits and the extensive travelling (most of us came to Colombia from Europe or Asia). I was thrilled with what I had seen so far, but what a refreshing and re-energizing visit! Amazed to see the top quality products, we started to ask the managers lots of questions and take hundreds of pictures with our mobile phones. This visit became my inspiration for writing this article about a successful marketing program based on **Focus & Differentiation**.

Finding the niche.

In 2004 *Plazoleta* introduced a program called Perfection®, the answer to the American customers' needs of purchasing excellent quality of Alstroemeria, and who were also ready to pay more for high qualities. For this reason, *Yuldamo*, now *Plazoleta Bazzani*, began to develop a product line program that fulfilled these expectations and started the process with the selection of varieties with brighter and more intense petal colors, long and strong stems, healthy foliage, large bloom size, and superior vase life. In addition to that, they developed an exclusive packaging for this program. As the program evolved and the demand increased, *Plazoleta* started to invite other grower/innovators, with a similar profile to *Plazoleta*'s, grower who were offering a superior quality, knowledgeable of the industry, and who cared about the environment and the social wellbeing of their employees. Through time, companies such as *Flores la Conchita*, *Suasque*, *Grupo Andes* and *Valleflor* became part of this project. Nowadays the market can enjoy not only Alstroemeria Perfection®, but also Snapdragon Perfection®, Gypsophila Perfection®, Limonium Perfection®, and Solidago Estelle™ Perfection®.

Learn more on *Plazoleta Bazzani* and their brand Perfection® on www.laplaleta.com

Focus & Differentiation

Focus & Differentiation are the two most important concepts in their brand strategies. The clients of Perfection® are wholesalers and importers in the United States, Russia, Italy, and the UK among others who offer this product to florists, event planners, and everyone who is looking for amazing products ready to use. *Plazoleta*'s brand promise is stated as follows: Only Perfection® delivers the highest quality of Alstroemeria, Snapdragon, Solidago, and Limonium to the floral designers and combines everything with superior customer service.

The market for Perfection® products is very wide. Their Alstroemeria is very well considered in Russia because of its quality and look. The snapdragon in the United States competes closely with the one grown in California. The target group of Perfection® brand is customers who are detail-oriented and very demanding.

Plazoleta developed new packaging for Perfection® brand that attracts customers.



You can see Estelle™ used in an exclusive way on the front cover of this magazine.

Estelle Perfection®

Solidago Estelle™ is the latest addition to the Perfection® program. During our visit, *Plazoleta*'s production manager explained to us they had lots of expectations on Estelle™ because it is a complete novelty, with excellent stem length, a spray that enhances the appearance of any bouquet, and its creamy color that almost no other flower has.



Estelle (left) vs. Tara (right) side by side.

After months of tests, *Plazoleta* was very pleased with the reaction of their clients to the first samples of Solidago Estelle™. For people who like dyed flowers it's a great option, given the fact it is a filler that can be used well all year round due to its cream color that allows perfect color absorption. And for those who prefer 100% natural products, its natural tone is what makes an arrangement stand out vs. others with a similar composition.

I often hear people saying: "our product is a commodity" or "price is all that matters in our category" or "all of the viable positions in our market have been taken." Don't let anyone convince you that your brand cannot be differentiated. It is important to differentiate your brand program in ways that are relevant and compelling to your target consumer, watch your market and its trends constantly, talk to your customers on a weekly basis, get their feedback regarding your service and products. Brands should promise relevant, differentiated benefits to their target customers.

Carefully choosing the most powerful benefits will not only result in brand preference, but brand insistence. The optimal benefits for a brand to claim are those that are first, very important to the target customers, second, supported by organizational strengths, and last, not being addressed by the competition.



PRODUCTION

By Felipe Gomez

Premier Ball

Selecta is pleased to present the new and fantastic Premierball series in the campaign 2015/2016.

Always looking for the needs of the market and our customers Selecta decided to introduce to its assortment nine varieties of Dianthus in different colors with a perfect round shape.

For those in the industry seeking a product of great uniformity and round shape in Red, Pink, Burgundy Salmon, Cherry and White color made according to their needs. The perfect round shape allows the product to be used in bouquets as a focal. **The Premier Ball series gives the opportunity to build solid color bunches or multiple-color bunches.**

“From the production point of view all the varieties of the series can be propagated from cuttings and grow all year around.”

Felipe Gomez is Product Manager at Selecta Cutflowers.
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“Complementary to texture, shape and color the product delivers an extraordinary vase life keeping it always with a fresh look.”



Southampton



Newcastle



Arsenal



Astonvilla



Leeds



Manchester



Sunderland



Blackpool



Arsenal



Astonvilla



Leeds



Manchester



Sunderland



Blackpool



Arsenal



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Sunderland



Blackpool



Arsenal



Astonvilla



Leeds



Manchester



Sunderland



Blackpool



Arsenal



Astonvilla





By Dr. Andrea Dohm

Breeding of Fusarium-resistant Carnation

The fungal disease *Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. dianthi* (Fod) belongs to one of the most important diseases of carnations and endangers commercial flower production. The economic harm for commercial carnation growers sums up to hundred thousands of Euros every year.

Typical symptoms of Fod infection start with wilting leaves and plant stems, and finally the fungus infection may kill the plant. The infection starts in the vascular tissue of the plant stem, visible as a brown ring in a cross section of the respective stem.

These symptoms may not be mixed up with symptoms caused by another fungus, *Fusarium roseum*, which also infects carnation. The transmission of both fungi mainly occurs through the growing substrate and the ground. Contaminated substrate and greenhouse areas can only be effectively cleaned through proper steaming at 100 °C for a minimum of 4 hours.



Picture 2: The Fusarium testing is performed in cooperation with the Centro di Sperimentazione e Assistenza Agricola (CERSAA) in Albenga, located in North Italy.



Dr. Andrea Dohm is Director of Selecta's Breeding and Research Department. You can reach her at a.dohm@selectaklemm.de



Picture 1: The infection starts in the vascular tissue of the plant stem, visible as a brown ring in a cross section of the respective stem.

Picture 3: Fusarium test at CERSAA in Albenga. On the left newly planted carnations, on right the same plant material affected by fusarium.



About Centro di Sperimentazione e Assistenza Agricola (Ce.R.S.A.A.):

The Centre for Agricultural Experimentation and Assistance (Ce.R.S.A.A.) is a special agency of Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Handicraft and Agriculture of Savona, in Italy. The staff consists of 16 researchers and technicians having different expertise, ranging from agronomy to plant pathology, from biology to environmental engineering, from economics to chemistry. Ce.R.S.A.A. has available, on an area of 50,000 m², climatic chambers, glasshouses, plastic houses, and open fields devoted to research and demonstration trials only. Ce.R.S.A.A. cooperates with national and European public bodies carrying out specific research and demonstrative activities, mostly implementing environmentally friendly control strategies of plant pathogens, soil disinfection techniques, management and disease control of ornamental and vegetable crops, water recycling in soilless cultivation, reduction of dosage of fertilizers, improvement of quality of substrates for potted plants, evaluation of new ornamental species and cultivars. Recently Ce.R.S.A.A. has broadened the field of interest to renewable energy sources, having approved demonstrative projects about solar and wind energy. In the last years, more than 50 national and European projects were carried out with strong attention to result extension. Further details are available on www.cersaa.it

Selecta Around the world

Turkey // CARNATION OPEN HOUSE

Last Saturday, March 14, the annual open house was held at the farm/packhouse of Selecta-agent ANTALYA-TARIM. As usual all of the companies from the flower business were present, not only growers but exporters and wholesalers as well.

In the 500-square-meter showroom, 30 different varieties of standard and spray carnation were shown. Besides the known varieties, there were semi-commercial and new promising novelties for the future, as well.

The latest Selecta introduction Standard's **BACARAT**, **GRACE**, and **ORMEA** and Mini's **PICASSO**, **HALLEY**, **BLANQUITA**, and **DRACULA**, which are performing very well in Turkey due to its good production and trendy colors.

This year exports to Russia have increased significantly, mainly due to the expensive exchange rate and higher transport cost Colombian carnations have. A big advantage of growers in Turkey is transportation, which can be realized by truck, this reduces costs, and flowers suffer less, as the cool chain will not be interrupted during transport. In addition, Turkey has a production area in highlands (Isparta) where high-quality flowers can be grown during summer, ensuring year round production with constant quality. Especially standard carnation had very high demand.

After having visited the showroom, everyone had the opportunity to discuss actual issues on the business with colleagues. There visitors heard speeches from Mr. Salih Durmazkan (Antalya Tarim), Mr Gundes, and Mr. Titiz (TITIZ-group) on the importance of keeping the farms/exporters united to have a stronger position in the business.



sel®Bacarat Pink



André Lek is Sales Manager at Selecta Cut Flowers.
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COLOMBIA// CARNATION OPEN HOUSE

From the 17th-20th of March we held our annual Selecta Carnation Open House in Flores Aurora, a farm in the northern part of the Sabana, Bogota.

Ninety-four visitors, representing 34 of the most important carnation companies visited our showroom. They had the opportunity to see the most important varieties that we have to offer currently.

This year in spray carnation we were pleased to introduce some novelties in main colors with very interesting characteristics like: DCM 11-0273 White, DCM 09-0426 Hot Pink - Skywalker, DCM 10-0997 Pink, DCM 09-0402 - Mini Bacarat. We confirmed the added value of last year's introductions like Dracula, Athena and Blanquita, and also had the opportunity to show our new "eye-catchers" from our standard-carnations: PV 9472 Yellow-Gladys, DCS 10-1243 Orange, DCS 11-1920 Green and The Bacarat series.

Almost all of the visitors agreed on good projection varieties mainly colors white, red, pink and hotpink. In spray carnations the varieties attracted attention for very strong stems, brilliance of colors and impressive productivity.

As always we would like to thank the team of Flores Aurora for their hospitality and good organization.



Oscar Cuartas is Sales Manager at Selecta Colombia.
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hyb Ormea



Ivgr Grace



DCS 10-1243



PV9472
Yellow-Gladys



sel® Bacarat Purple



news



Felipe Gomez is Product Manager at Selecta Cutflowers.
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United States // Tradewinds International Floral Exhibition

Selecta Cut flowers had the opportunity to participate in the Tradewinds International Floral Exhibition at Savannah, Georgia, U.S.A. At this show Selecta participated in company of one of our Gypsophila customers, Latinflor from Ecuador. For three days a select group of wholesalers from all parts of the United States were exposed to part of the Pearls® series assortment, with the varieties Pearls® Petite and Pearls® Ginga Way. The extraordinary vase life characteristics and beauty were represented in Pearls® Petite (small flower) and Pearls® Ginga Way (medium to large flower) in more than 16 floral arrangements, combined with other flowers.

The magnificence of the Selecta varieties was confirmed by the orders from the different wholesalers participating as buyers and, of course, it was possible due to the constant availability of flowers in Latinflor.



YouTube



Jet Fresh Flowers & JFTV
proudly introduce the new,
“Petite” Gypsophila.



Scan the QR code
with your mobile device
to get directly connected
to the video



You have to see this!



Indulge her with

pearls® *Petite*

Made mom's
Happy



gypso
pearls®
Long-Lasting Beauties



 **selecta**

www.selectacutflowers.com