

‘Best of’ 2008 Annual Flower Trials
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The 2008 Annual Flower Trials at Colorado State University continues to grow in size and national stature. Over 1200 different varieties of annuals were either trialed in ground beds or in about 700 containers or in both locations. Twenty-two seed and vegetative companies from within the United States and worldwide participated in the trials. Judging was held on August 5, 2008 and again on September 5, 2008 to determine the 2008 ‘Best of’ winners.

The Best of Show and Best Zonal Geranium was, Geranium (Zonal) ‘Calliope’ from Syngenta Flowers. Its prolific, deep red flowers were strong throughout the entire season. The variety had impressive vigor with larger leaves and good uniform growth habit in both ground and containers. It is being marketed in Home Depots in 2009 under the name ‘Big Red’.

The Best New Variety Pennisetum ‘Fireworks’ developed by Creek Hill Nursery, was a standout due to its multi-colored dark red with stripes of pink, white and green. The leaf color changed depending on hot or cold weather. The plant was vigorous in both ground and in containers.

Ptilotus ‘Joey’ from Benary Seed was chosen as Best Novelty for 2008. It was a runaway in this category with a unique flower form, delicate texture and attractive coloring. The flowers appear as fuzzy arrowheads with shades of soft lavender and white. This Australian native had abundant flowers throughout the season.

Million Bells Cherry Pink Improved was voted Best Calibrochoa from Jackson and Perkins. It had consistent excellent flowering into September. The flowers opened earlier in the day than many in its class with a stunning shade of pink.

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Best Coleus was 'Henna' from Ball Flora Plant with unique foliage coloring, fringed leaf edge and impressive vigor. The foliage was ochre-chartreuse on the upper leaf surface and burnt sienna on the lower side.

'Darla Appleblossom' from Syngenta Flowers was voted Best Diascia. It was a strong bloomer during the heat of the summer of 2008 and bloomed well into September. Abundant soft pink blooms created a delicate appearance with a very uniform growth habit.

The Best Lantana is 'Bandana Pink 09' from Syngenta Flowers. The numerous long-lasting flowers balance soft pink and yellow. Plants were very vigorous and symmetrical in growth habit.

The Best Seed Propagated Spreading Petunia is 'Tidal Wave Hot Pink' from Pan American Seed. 'Tidal Wave' appropriately describes these vigorous plants with abundant bright pink flowers. It blooms late into the season with striking flowers. Plants remained healthy late into the season.

The committee picked 'Autumn Colors' as the Best Rudbeckia from Benary Seeds because of the large, striking flowers late into the season, covering the entire plant. The large petals are an attractive combination of brown, yellow and burnt sienna, against dark green foliage.

Best Zinnia was 'Profusion Knee High Red' from Sakata Seed America. The flower color was a very intense red with a hint of orange mixed in. The flower color makes a strong impact and blooms are abundant into September.

These ten plants are just a sample of the thirty four 'Best Of' winners chosen from the 2008 Annual Flower Trials at CSU. A complete listing and description and photos can be viewed at www.flowertrials.colostate.edu. These plants are available at your local nursery or garden center for the 2009 growing season.

Plan to visit the CSU 2009 Annual Flower Trials at 1401 Remington Street in Fort Collins this summer and view over 1200 different varieties of annuals including many new varieties.