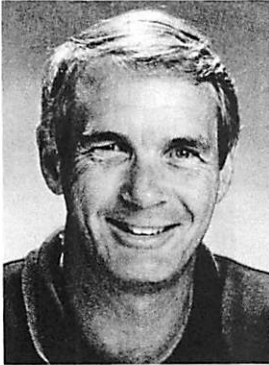


Lantana.....

Is it just me or do a lot of these things look the same?

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I do not mean to do it, it just seems to happen. Since I have been working with perennials and "unusual" annuals for the last few years, people often ask me the difference between cultivars, or differences between one yellow variety from another. Especially in the crops

which are catching on in grower and wholesale circles. The research trials at the University of Georgia have become a haven for "wannabe" plants, being the trial refuge for perennial genera like *Agastache*, *Carex*, *Heuchera* and *Pulmonaria* and for annuals such as *Duranta*, *Verbena*, *Diascia* and *Coleus*.

For all these genera, the idea is to study them in detail and then tell anyone interested about the best ones. In some genera, however, it is obvious that one of the problems is that there are too many names, often for the same plants. When plants are randomly named without knowing that essentially identical plants are already out there, everyone gets confused. We have recently tried to clarify a few genera and those interested in such information can find specifics at the end of this column. Meanwhile the question I seem to be asked by everyone these days is "Can you sort out the Lantana and Verbena." To make a long story short, I received a field full of lantanas and verbenas, and here are the results of the Lantana Story. The Verbena puzzle will be completed soon.

So what's your point? The point of the Lantana study was to tell everyone what cultivars are so similar to each other that they effectively are the same. That is, although if I studied them long enough, I probably could tell them apart, but if I stepped back ten feet, they were the same. My eyesight has declined a little

as I gracefully age, however, I would challenge anyone else to take the 10' test.

What was tested? Named plants were received from growers around the country, including those from North Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Washington and Oregon. Plants came in with exciting names like 'Yellow,' 'Bronze,' 'Clear White' and 'Yellow/white;' some with ladies names such as 'Olivia,' 'Samantha' and 'Irene' new series (Patriot) and lots of old standbys. They all arrived as small liners and were potted up, then placed in the trials in the middle and end of May. Not all plants were exactly the same size, but we allowed at least were 10 weeks of outside growth.

Who knows? We placed plants in the trials under the names received, but we had no control whether the names were correct. We checked with sources who should know, but we found out that nobody really knew if the names on their plants were actually correct or not.

How many are out there? Good question, we have no real numbers. We received 28 differently named cultivars but I am sure there are at least a dozen more we did not acquire.

What we did: We planted them by color (if we knew the color) and evaluated each clone three times. Since our objective was to try to sort

out the names more than figure out what were the best, we figured three times would be sufficient. However, we also took performance data and included comments where appropriate.

The benevolent dictator approach: I have been asked to sort the Lantana out and simply tell everyone what they should be called. "Be the dictators!" What we are demonstrating in this column are those cultivars which are essentially the same, and growers and landscapers should be aware which ones can be substituted without loss in landscape performance. I have however suggested that some names may be more appropriate from the marketing point of view than others (* in table 2).

" My eyesight has declined a little as I gracefully age, however, I would challenge anyone else to take the 10' test! "

The similar ones:

2. These cultivars/colors are remarkably similar...

Cultivar	U = Upright S = Standing	Description and Comments
Bronze	U	Both have pale coral buds opening to a soft pink to yellow flower; identical leaves, size, and habit.
Lady Olivia	U	
Gold Mound	S	Gold Mound and New Gold are indistinguishable, identical, analogous, and otherwise interchangeable (we think they look alike) Patriot Moonshine has the same flower but a more upright habit. All are incredibly floriferous and vigorous.
New Gold	S	
Patriot Moonshine	U/S	
Silver Mound	S	Creamy white flowers with a gold eye, the flowers of these two cultivars are identical, as is the habit. Again, very exuberant in both number of flowers and spreading habit.
Snowfall		
Lemon Drop	S	Another set of twins. Butter-yellow flowers; small leaves; sprawling, habit.
Yellow	S	
Confetti	U	Flowers are essentially the same - yellow/orange/pink multi. The habit is supposed to be different with Confetti much more open and tall vs. Patriot Rainbow's super-compactness. In trials, they were BOTH compact...
Patriot Rainbow	U	
Patriot Firewagon	U	Same gold to deep orange-red flowers. Radiation seems the lowest-grower of the two, while Patriot Firewagon is more upright.
Radiation	U	
Irene	U	Again, the flowers are essentially the same - bright yellow/red/pink multicolor; Irene is more upright with larger leaves, Spreading Sunset is, as the name implies, more spreading!
Spreading Sunset	S	
Patriot Bouquet	U	Orange-gold, pink, and coral. From a bug's eye view the order that these colors appear on each flower head may differ between these cultivars, but, stand back 6 feet and the effect is very similar. Both are extremely vigorous, very colorful.
Patriot Desert Sunset	U	

The distinct ones:

1. These cultivars are reasonably distinct in regards to flower color, habit, etc.

Cultivar	U = Upright S = Spreading	Description and Comments
Clear White	S	-All white flower, no "eye" -Low, spreading habit
Miss Huff	U	-Soft orange/coral/gold, less "intense" than the new introductions
New Red	U	-Actually a crimson-orange -Upright yet compact habit
Orchid ***	S	-Lovely soft lavender -Vigorous sprawling and cascading habit
Patriot Honeylove	S	-Pale pink/butter yellow/ivory - "faded" effect -Very low and spreading
Patriot Rainbow	?	-Bright gold/bright pink -Beyond "compact"
Pink Caprice	U	-Pink/yellow but few flowers -Not very vigorous
Pink Lace	U	-Strong pastel effect - lavender/pink/gold eye -Vigorous and prolific bloomer
Samantha	S	-Lemon and lime variegated foliage with bright yellow flowers - eyepopping! -Very compact habit
Tangerine	U/S	-Citrus effect of orange to gold -Small, loose flower heads, low habit
Yellow/ White	U	-The flower is quite close to Silvermound & Snowfall, but it has bigger leaves and a drastically more compact habit - we'll let it stand alone and hope for a more inspired name.

In conclusion: Lantanas are terrific plants for the spring and summer market and the color, range is remarkable. The problems with the names are not unique to this group of plants and should not be a stumbling block to sales and profitability. However, it is essential that we make growing and landscaping with "new" crops as user-friendly as possible. I think we could dispense with at least nine cultivar names and maintain the same diversity. Distributors and growers, get together so the retailers, landscapers and gardeners don't think we are selling them smoke.