



Final Report for Trial of Perpetual Flowering and Spray Carnations in Patio Containers 2008–2010

There were no recommendations for the Award of Garden Merit following assessment of the 2008-2010 trial.

Objectives:

To show the home gardener how perpetual flowering and spray carnations can be used as a decorative patio container plant. To recommend the Award of Garden Merit to cultivars that fulfil the criteria.

Judging:

Members of the Perpetual Flowering Carnation Trials Assessment Panel inspected the trial every other month from August 2008 to April 2010. They used a scoring system out of 25 points, based on the following criteria:

Flowers		Plant	
Form and Size	5	Habit (inc. stem)	5
Colour	2	Health	5
Scent	2	Impact	5
Calyx	1	Total	15
Total	10		

Cultivation:

Cuttings were taken in October 2007. They were rooted in 100% perlite although this is not essential and any other cutting compost can be used instead. These were grown on and potted into 5-8cm (2-3") pots using peat free compost. They were given mist propagation for 14 days, which was then gradually reduced and stopped.

The rooted cuttings arrived at Wisley on 13th February 2008 where they were kept under glass, just frost free.



They were potted up into standard shaped 10 litre pots in mid February, using peat free compost. They were planted 5 per pot – 1 in the centre with 4 around the edge.



The central plant in each pot was left to grow tall, but the surrounding 4 were stopped (leading shoot was broken out) when they had grown 7-8 pairs of leaves, to leave 4-6 pairs of leaves. This was done during February and March to encourage the production of side shoots, to make the plants bushier and more compact and give some variety to the height of the flowering display.

Fertiliser: one teaspoon of blood, fish and bone was added as a top dressing to each 10 litre pot and watered in at the end of March. Similarly a heaped teaspoon was added and watered in at the end of June and a teaspoon at the end of October. A liquid feed was also applied at each watering (1N:1P:1K in winter and 3N:1P:1K from spring to autumn).

The plants were not disbudded at any point.



Support rings and stakes were added to the pots at the end of April 2008.

Half of the stems on all but the central plant were stopped again at the end of May, leaving approximately 6 pairs of leaves per stem. This encourages more shoots and further variation in the height of the flowers.

The plants were moved outside in mid June 2008 and watered as necessary.

To provide a continuous flowering display through the summer months, the plants were dead-headed when necessary. Verkon was used on the secateurs before each cut to prevent spread of disease. During the trial, when all the flowers on a stem had finished, the stem was cut back to the first good side shoot to encourage further flowers.

It was decided that the plants should remain outside during the winter months in a sheltered position. The containers were supported to prevent them being blown over and damaged by the wind.

The plants seemed to relish the outside air until the severe weather conditions at the beginning of 2009. On the night of 5th January 2009, a temperature of -10°C had been recorded on the nearby Wisley Trials Field. In mid January 2009 the plants were all cut back to a side shoot approximately 40-45cm above the soil level. This would usually be done in December but had been delayed because of the very cold, frosty weather.

Wisley Garden received more cold weather in February and 40cm of snow by the morning of 2nd February 2009.



It was thought that removing the snow might damage the plants, so it was left to thaw naturally. The weather conditions caused severe stress to the plants. Both containers of Capri 'Kocapri' and one container of 'Ruby' were removed from the trial

at the meeting on 1 April 2009 as they had not survived the winter. The dead material on all the remaining containers was cut back in the hope that the plants would produce new growth.

The Trials Assessment Panel members thought that if the plants had been provided with overhead cover, they would have survived the weather but the combination of the cold and wet was too much for them.

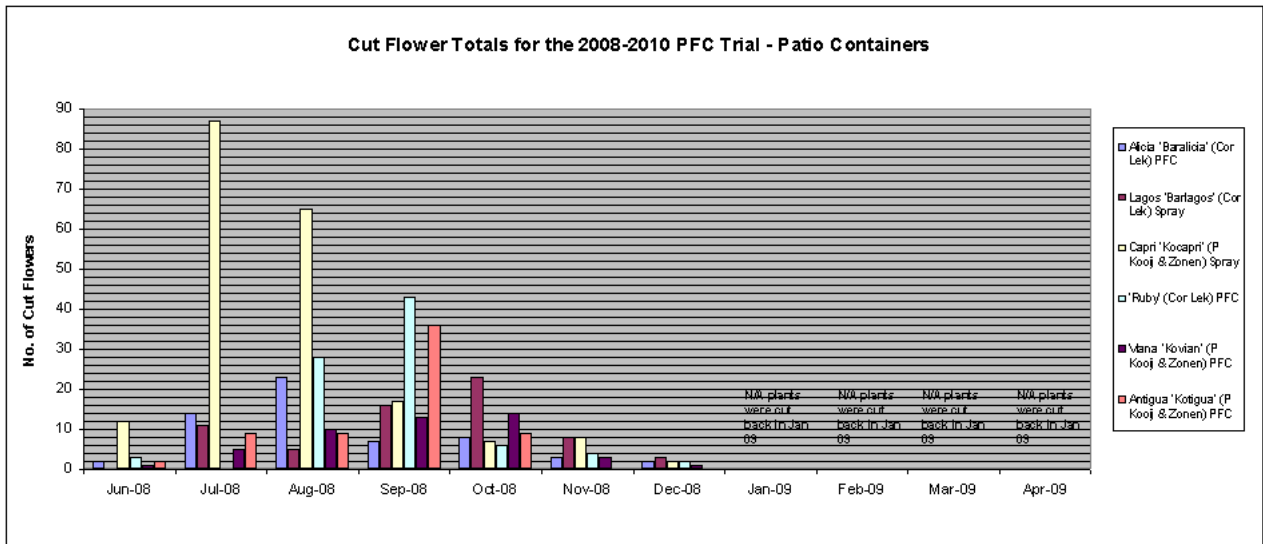
Some aphid damage was noted on Viana 'Kovian' at the meeting on 3 June 2009 and was treated accordingly. By the meeting of 12 August 2009, the plants were still not performing particularly well. Rust was seen on a number of entries during this meeting and the trial was also sprayed for tortrix moth. Despite a programme of spraying, the rust problem persisted for the rest of the year - thought to be due to the continued wet weather. Some aphids were also seen on the plants at the 9 December 2009 meeting and the trial was treated accordingly.

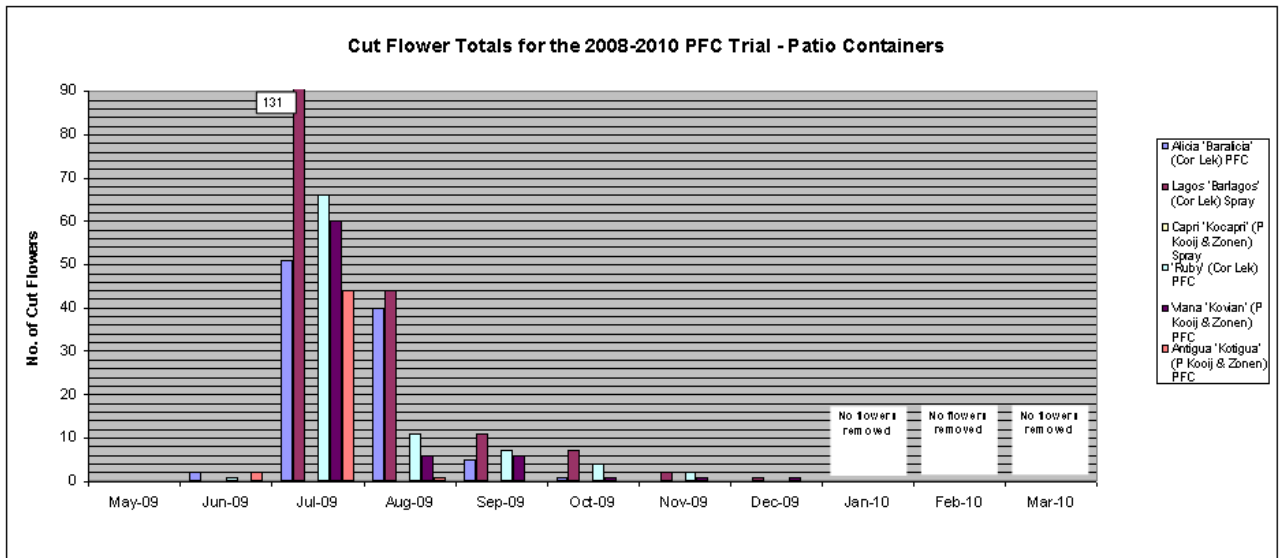
It was recommended that the plants remain outside over the winter months with overhead cover to protect them from the wet weather. Unfortunately, overhead protection could not be installed. The long spell of cold weather combined with the snow on the 6th - 8th January 2010 and 13th January 2010, the continued wet weather and rust problem had a detrimental effect on the plants. The trial was not assessed during the 10 February 2010 meeting due to the poor condition of the plants.

As the plants were in such poor condition at the meeting of 7 April 2010 it was agreed that none of them were worthy of being considered for the Award of Garden Merit.




Records:




The number of spent blooms removed each week was recorded during the course of the trial. The following charts show these records by month through the course of the trial:





Trial Index:

No.	Cultivar	Photograph	Sender
1	'Alicia' Alicia 'Baralicia'		C Lek
2	'Antigua' Antigua 'Kotigua'		P Kooij & Zonen
3	'Capri' Capri 'Kocapri'		P Kooij & Zonen

No.	Cultivar	Photograph	Sender
4	'Lagos' Lagos 'Barlagos'		C Lek
5	'Rubi' 'Ruby'		C Lek
6	'Viana' Viana 'Kovian'		P Kooij & Zonen

N.B. Names that are struck through have been corrected by RHS Botanists

Names and addresses of senders of plants to the Trial:

C Lek, M Lek V.O.F., Nieuveens Jaagpad 47, 2441 EK Nieuwveen-Holland
P Kooij & Zonen B.V., Hornweg 132 / Postbus 341, 1430 AH Aalsmeer, Holland

Further information on this trial is available from:
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More information about RHS Trials and other Trials reports can be found on the RHS
Website at www.rhs.org.uk/trials