



# gardencenter

SMART IDEAS FOR INDEPENDENT RETAILERS | MAGAZINE

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Special Section  
All-Industry  
Product  
Directory

Fall Plant Portfolio

## Clear the benches

Page 51

Retailers' strategies to ditch excess inventory



PROFILES PLUS

**Terra Nova Nurseries breaks the rules, and gardens benefit**

'Tomato Soup' and 'Mac 'n' Cheese' may sound like the makings of a grade-school lunch to you, but at Terra Nova Nurseries they're ingredients in a winning garden recipe. These groundbreaking echinacea are just an example of the how this grower breaks the rules to create unusual specimens for the garden.

Flaunting conventions has become a way of

life for Dan Heims, president of Terra Nova. This rebel attitude dictates which plants make the cut for the grower.

"I would say there are two overriding factors," Heims said. "The first is breaking some sort of rule. (Guess who got in trouble in high school?) For example, presenting a double flower when everyone else did a single flower — like the double echinacea. The second is what I term the 'wow' factor. It's just not another one of the pack."

In 2009, Terra Nova Nurseries will present a huge assortment of plants that meet these criteria. Unusual annual and perennial

coreopsis will be among the plants up for grabs. The company's breeding efforts have resulted in some "micro-miniature" specimens suitable for containers. They'll also be introducing some



'Tomato Soup'

standout landscape coreopsis: 'Gold Nugget,' which creates a beautiful, low mound, and 'Moonlight,' a plant featuring soft-yellow flowers slightly darker toward the center.

At the other end of the spectrum, Terra Nova will present a stately new penstemon, 'Dark Towers,' that reaches 3-4 feet tall.

"So many people are breeding for compact that the market needs taller plants," Heims said. "Things that can serve as a background for other dwarf plants."

With so many new plants coming down the pipeline, is it possible to pick one as the "next big thing"? Heims is placing his bet on



'Mac 'n' Cheese'

begonias. Breeding advances are making this virus-prone plant easier to propagate and grow. Terra Nova Nurseries will re-introduce 'Curly Fireflush' to the market soon.

"We seriously have plants 2 feet tall growing out of a 72-plug cell tray," Heims said. "The vigor blows people away ... it's just stunning."

These botanical milestones wouldn't be possible without the use of tissue culture. This high-tech procedure allows plants to be propagated under sterile laboratory conditions, then gradually acclimated to the outside world.

"Essentially it [tissue culture] allows us to bring the highest-quality, best-bred, most amazing plant at a reasonable price to the retail level."

For more: Terra Nova Nurseries, (800) 215-9450; www.terravanurseries.com.



# New Season. New Show.

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Finalize your spring sales needs at the new SNA Winter Show at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Marietta, GA (just north of Atlanta). This family friendly venue is conveniently located to numerous affordable hotels, restaurants, retail outlets and entertainment options. Outside of the congestion of downtown Atlanta, the Galleria is easily accessible by I-285 and I-75 and only 20 minutes north of downtown.

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