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HISTORICAL horticulture

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Echinacea

Delightful series

Bred to remain tight for a hardy, perennial pot crop



Tropics

All photos courtesy of Terra Nova Nurseries.

BY CHUCK PAVLICH

The market for echinaceas is crowded and becoming more so each year. Recent strides in color breakthroughs have pushed some older varieties out in favor of the latest novelty. Terra Nova Nurseries has separated itself from the crowd by introducing a new class of echinacea specifically aimed at the pot crop market: echinacea Delightful series.

The varieties in the Delightful series make excellent garden plants and pair well with sun-loving perennials like sedums, agastache and coreopsis.

Currently comprising six best-of-breeding varieties, the company has plans to continue growing the Delightful collection. The company launched the series in 2024 with the introduction of echinacea 'Delightful Gold,' 'Delightful Lace' and 'Delightful Sangria.' Varieties in the series have long-lasting flowers that are fully double.

'Delightful Gold' set the standard high for others in the series with its perfectly manicured habit and bright yellow

petals that contrast against its emerald-green eye.

The constant flower production with multiple layers in succession will give this plant a long shelf life.

'Delightful Lace' features tubular petals that form a star at the end, giving it a distinctly lacy look. Lace attracts pollinators with its sweet-scented flowers and is a great addition to mixed borders due to the plant's neat habit.

'Delightful Sangria' is dense and displays its wine-red flowers like a crown. This perennial branches right from the ground and offers multiple double, anemone-type flowers per stem. Young flowers have a deep maroon eye that gradually changes to bright wine-red. Perfectly sized for container use, Sangria looks great at retail centers and is ideal for summer displays.

NEWEST TO THE SERIES

The innovative breeding team with Terra Nova Nurseries recently introduced three new varieties to the Delightful

series in 2025: Garnet, Sunshine and Tropics.

'Delightful Garnet' has dark green foliage and ruby-garnet, double anemone-type flowers. It displays a compact, bowl-shaped habit — one of the hallmarks of the Delightful series. The foliage is dense right to the base of the plant, adding a finished look to it.

'Delightful Sunshine' lives up to its namesake with bright, sunny-yellow flowers that will not fade from the first bloom until the last. This variety is a little larger than the rest of the varieties in the series, and its superb habit and great vigor give it dual purpose for containers and landscapes.

'Delightful Tropics' rounds out the current variety lineup in the Delightful series. Tropics boasts fully double, fragrant flowers that are a vibrant blend of orange, mango and ruby grapefruit; the flower color deepens as the variety matures. This echinacea is an upright, dense plant that is very well-foliated with matte green leaves.

PROPAGATION

The Delightful series is tissue culture propagated and available as finished liners from Terra Nova Nurseries and its licensed growers and propagators. Double-flowered echinaceas produce few seeds, so tissue culture propagation is the best method for multiplication.

FINISH TIMES

From a finished liner to a finished trade gallon, allow 10 to 12 weeks. One of the many attractive features of the Delightful series is its ability to hold color for weeks rather than just days, so there is less of a need to rush the varieties to the market.

LIGHT LEVELS

Day length should be 12 to 14 hours of 4000- to 5000-foot candles. Photoperiods of less than 11.5 hours will keep plants vegetative and slow the crop. Light quality is important when producing echinacea.

MEDIA AND FERTILIZATION

Use a well-draining, soilless mixture in the container. Water plants in well after planting, and make sure the crown of the plant is not buried. Planting too deep is the chief cause of failure in echinaceas. After watering, check to see if loose soil washed over the crown.

Fertigate with 100 to 150 ppm of soluble fertilizer. Let the soil dry slightly between waterings. Echinaceas are intolerant of soggy soils. Soil pH should be 5.8 to 7.3.

PINCHING AND GROWTH REGULATORS

Pinching and growth regulators are not recommended for the Delightful series, which is another cost and labor-saving feature. Delightfuls branch naturally from the base.

PESTS AND DISEASES

The typical insects to watch out for on an echinacea crop are thrips, aphids, whiteflies and mites. The Delightful varieties respond to a well-managed integrated pest management (IPM) program. There are few foliage diseases, but watch for botrytis, pseudomonas and septoria leaf spot. Disease problems are more likely to show up in water-logged soil and at cooler temperatures. [gpn](#)

Chuck Pavlich is the director of new product development at Terra Nova Nurseries. Learn more about Terra Nova's Delightful echinaceas at terranovanurseries.com.



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