

## Auction chooses best products of 2009

**The Netherlands** - The winners of the FloraHolland Award – an annual distinction for the most successful product introductions and concepts – were announced at the beginning of June. The winner in the Indoor Plants category was *Codiaeum* 'Tamara' from the Dutch nursery Ammerlaan Grondcultuur. Jury supervisor Rob Verlinden addressed the difficult image of *Croton*, which is caused by the high level of leaf loss. "But the *Codiaeum* 'Tamara' can be placed in tricky positions without any problem," he explained. The winner in the Cut Flowers category was the double-bloomed *Freesia* 'Red Beauty' from Penning Breeding. "This variety puts the *Freesia* firmly back on the map," commented Verlinden who praised the double-red



*Codiaeum* 'Tamara'



*Freesia* 'Red Beauty'



*Gaultheria* 'Winterpearls Big Berry'



'GreenBalanZ'

shade and the extra-long, heavy branch. In the Garden Plants category the winner was *Gaultheria* 'Winterpearls Big Berry' from breeder Syngenta Flowers. Verlinden called this *Gaultheria* the bestseller for the autumn: "With its beautiful, distinctive

large berries it's an asset to the product group. The overall winner in the Concepts category was the sustainably grown orchid 'GreenBalanZ' from L. van der Weijden. The jury was impressed with the story behind this concept.

## Decreasing carnation production area

**World** - In most parts of the world, the area of carnation production is decreasing. This observation was made by Arthur Koekoek, sales managers of breeder HilverdaKooij. Exceptions are Kenya and China. Koekoek estimates an area of 1,350 ha of standard and 150 ha of spray carnations in China. "The quality is improving and so, in the future, Chinese growers will be able to compete with Colombia and Kenya," Koekoek expects. In Kenya, the sales manager only sees the production of spray carnations growing. Currently, the area is 233 ha, while the area of standard carnations has been stabilising in the past years at about 67 ha.

The production in Colombia has halved

over the past 20 years to 700 ha of standard types, while the area of spray carnation is no greater than 200 ha. The area of both groups is still decreasing. Spain used to be an important carnation producer, but developments are stagnating and production has reduced.

To be successful in the declining carnation market, Koekoek advises growers to distinguish themselves by certification such as MPS and by custom-made supply. To keep the assortment attractive for consumers, Koekoek advises introducing new varieties, while the choice for more productive ones will increase the output of the grower. He estimates a total standard and spray carnation area of 5,000 ha.

## Purple Picotee wins Fleuroselect award

**The Netherlands** - The variety *Dianthus x barbatus* 'Diabunda Purple Picotee', bred by Har Stemkens from Syngenta Flowers, Enkhuizen, the Netherlands, was the winner of the first Fleuroselect Industry Award. In this first trial competition of its kind, six innovative, new bedding plants from Fleuroselect breeder members were submitted for judging by a panel of more than 25 industry-wide experts representing the horticultural press, growers, auctions, retailers, plug producers, breeders, seed distributors, pictorial packet suppliers and plug suppliers to the consumer market.



## Stricter product inspections at FloraHolland

**The Netherlands** - Flower auction FloraHolland is intensifying inspections of flowers and plants before they are auctioned. This was agreed with the association of exporters VGB. Part of the exporters is dissatisfied with the inspections; in their opinion, the information on the batches of flowers is too often incorrect. Correct information starts with the grower, who

should provide this information on quality and sorting specifications (grading codes for length, weight, stages of maturity, ripeness and opening).

To show the buyers how reliable a grower is, the auction introduced already the reliability index, called BI, which is the percentage of correct information given. The goal the auction has set is an average BI of

95%. One way of achieving this is by increasing the penalties for correcting information from € 3.50 to € 5, as of 15 June. Within one year, the penalty will be increased further to € 10. Another measure is that in Aalsmeer the BI percentage above which no penalties have to be paid is being raised from 90% to 95%.