

An Intersectional Point of View, Column #1 (APS Bulletin No. 331, September 2004, pages 172-173)

An Intersectional Point of View

By Don Smith

This is the first in what I hope will be a regular feature in the Bulletin on topics related to intersectional hybrids. This “column” will contain news and information along with my comments and thoughts on a wide range of intersectional peony topics. I believe there is a sizable group within the APS who are already growing one or many intersectional hybrids and are, therefore, very interested in learning more about these plants and in keeping up with the latest news and trends from the World of Intersectional Peonies. I will try my best to disseminate information that is both useful and accurate. Whether you are interested in trying your hand at creating new hybrids of your own or merely looking to purchase and grow one or more of these special plants in your own garden, I hope you will find some useful tidbits here in each issue to help satisfy your intersectional appetite.

As many of you already know, I attended my first APS meeting this June, which was an enjoyable and rewarding experience. It was very encouraging for me to see so many intersectional hybrids on display at the show. There were many outstanding specimens of Hollingsworth’s GARDEN TREASURE and Anderson’s BARTZELLA. I was especially impressed with the extremely large size (8½ - 9”) of many of these flowers. One of these huge flowers (GARDEN TREASURE) was truly outstanding and was awarded the ribbon for Best in Show. I came with almost three dozen flowers from over 20 different varieties including my new reverse cross hybrid, IMPOSSIBLE DREAM. These were all displayed in the new varieties section and the majority were unnamed and unregistered seedlings. Of the few registered varieties shown, SMITH FAMILY JEWEL looked especially nice and was awarded an Honorable Mention ribbon.

Somewhat overlooked at the show was a new almost pure white intersectional variety from Don Hollingsworth called LOVE AFFAIR, which I thought was very pretty. Since I had never heard of this one prior to the show, I asked Don about it after the meeting. He explained that LOVE AFFAIR is a mutation that appeared on an unnamed and unregistered yellow variety that he has been trying to isolate for the last several years. Apparently, it is not only a different color, but also has a better flower than the original yellow from which it came. If Don can complete the isolation process, he may register it in the future. You might remember a similar case some years ago with a white intersectional variety registered by Bill Seidl that was called WHITE EMPEROR. It was isolated from a sport that occurred on one of the original Itoh hybrids, YELLOW EMPEROR.

As an update to my article in the June issue of the Bulletin, I am happy to report that many cultures of IMPOSSIBLE DREAM are now growing in vitro and are currently undergoing multiplication phase testing. In addition, last week I received conclusive photographic evidence from Germany that several clones of IMPOSSIBLE DREAM were produced from grafts made last August and that at least one has bloomed there this spring. Both of these early reports provide encouraging news for the future distribution schedule of this remarkable new intersectional hybrid. I am also quite delighted to report that IMPOSSIBLE DREAM bloomed much more double in its second year of bloom than in its maiden bloom season. As I have reported in the past, this is a common characteristic of the intersectional hybrid group as a whole. This year several flowers were fully double with numerous central petals that completely obscured the carpels and anthers. Although some flowers retained the full-petaled (45-50 petals), open-center, semi-double form from last year, I believe that the more double form will become the predominant flower type as this plant reaches full maturity.

Questions, suggestions and comments on the information and material in this column should be addressed directly to me at paeonianews@aol.com