



US00PP13595P39

(12) **United States Plant Patent**
Unger

(10) **Patent No.:** **US PP13,595 P3**

(45) **Date of Patent:** **Feb. 25, 2003**

(54) **CUPHEA PLANT NAMED 'FIRECRACKER'**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **Plt./226**

(76) **Inventor:** **Michael Helmet Unger**, Rheintalstrasse
70, 79618 Rheinfelden (DE)

(58) **Field of Search** **Plt./226**

(*) **Notice:** Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this
patent is extended or adjusted under 35
U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

Primary Examiner—Bruce R. Campbell
Assistant Examiner—Susan B. McCormick
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Wood, Phillips, Katz, Clark
& Mortimer

(21) **Appl. No.:** **09/819,780**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

(22) **Filed:** **Mar. 28, 2001**

A new and distinct *Cuphea* plant named 'Firecracker',
characterized by its vigorous trailing habit, dark red flowers
with purple centers and dark green leaves.

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2002/0174465 P1 Nov. 21, 2002

(51) **Int. Cl.**⁷ **A01H 5/00**

2 Drawing Sheets

1

2

**LATIN NAME OF THE GENUS AND SPECIES
OF PLANT CLAIMED**

Cuphea hybrida.

VARIETY DENOMINATION

'Firecracker'.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention comprises a new and distinct
Cuphea plant, botanically known as *Cuphea hybrida* and
hereinafter referred to by the cultivar name 'Firecracker'.
The breeding program which resulted in the production of
the new cultivar was carried out during 1999 at Rheinfelden,
Germany. The female or seed parent of 'Firecracker' was an
unnamed *Cuphea ilavea*. The male or pollen parent of
'Firecracker' was an unnamed *Cuphea purpurea*. The
female (seed parent) is a tree-like tender perennial that has
small red, blue and black flowers. The leaves are oval and
shorter than the leaves of 'Firecracker'. The male (pollen
parent) is more soft and herb-like that has flowers smaller
than 'Firecracker'. The leaves are oval and shorter than
the leaves of 'Firecracker'. The resulting seed was collected
and germinated. 'Firecracker' was selected from flowering
progeny.

Asexual reproduction of the new cultivar by terminal or
stem cuttings taken during 2000 at West Chicago, Ill., USA
has demonstrated that the characteristics of the new cultivar
as herein described are firmly fixed and retained through
successive generations of such asexual propagation.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It was found that the cultivar of the present invention:

- (a) Exhibits a trailing habit,
- (b) Forms red flowers with purple center, and
- (c) Exhibits a vigorous growth habit.

'Firecracker' has not been observed under all possible
environmental conditions to date. Accordingly, it is possible
that the phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in the
environment, such as temperature, light intensity and day
length.

When the new cultivar of the present is compared to 'Tiny
Mice' (not patented) it exhibits a more vigorous growth
habit, smaller leaves, smaller petioles and slightly smaller
petals as described in Table 1, below.

TABLE 1

CHARACTERISTIC	'FIRECRACKER'	'TINY MICE'
PLANT HEIGHT - cm	22.6	12
LENGTH OF PLANT FROM TOP OF POT TO BOTTOM OF FOLIAGE - cm	20	18
LEAF LENGTH x WIDTH - cm	5 x 1.5	5.9 x 1.7
PETIOLE LENGTH x WIDTH - mm	2.5 x .8	5 x 1.5
PETAL LENGTH x WIDTH - cm	1.5 x 1.5	1.2 x 1.2

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

The accompanying photographs show as nearly true as it
is reasonably possible to make the color illustrations of this
type, typical flower and foliage characteristics of the new
cultivar. The plants were grown for 12 weeks in a green-
house at West Chicago, Ill., USA.

FIG. 1 illustrates the general growth habit of 'Fire-
cracker'.

FIG. 2 illustrates individual flowers.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The chart used in the identification of colors described
herein is The R.H.S. Colour Chart of The Royal Horticul-
tural Society, London, England. The color values were
determined on Mar. 6, 2001 in West Chicago, Ill. The
readings were taken between 10:00 and 11:45 a.m. under
natural daylight conditions. The plants were produced from
cuttings taken from stock plants and were grown in a double
polycarbonate covered greenhouse under conditions com-
parable to those used in commercial practice while utilizing
a soilless growth medium and maintaining temperatures of
approximately 72° F. during the day and approximately 65°
during the night.

Botanical classification: *Cuphea hybrida* cultivar 'Firecracker'.

Propagation:

Type cutting.—Terminal tip.

Time to initiate roots.—Approximately 14–21 days with the shorter times generally being experienced in the summer and the longer times in the winter.

Plant description:

General appearance and form.—Trailing.

Plant height above pot.—Approximately 22.6 cm.

Length of foliage from top of pot.—Approximately 20 cm.

Plant width.—Approximately 39.8 cm.

Branching habit.—Freely branching. Pinching helps to initiate branching.

Branch diameter.—Approximately 2 mm.

Stem.—Surface: Densely covered with short hairs.

Color: 145B.

Foliage description:

Form.—Simple.

Shape.—Lanceolate.

Margin.—Entire.

Apex.—Broadly acute.

Base.—Cuneate.

Arrangement.—Opposite.

Venation pattern.—Arcuate.

Surface.—Upper surface is rough. Sparsely covered with medium length stiff hairs; lower surface has rough hairs along veins.

Color of mature foliage.—Upper surface: Closest to 147A with veins of 145C.

Color of mature foliage.—Lower surface: Closest to 147B with veins of 145C.

Size.—Approximately 5 cm in length; approximately 1.5 cm in width.

Petiole length.—Approximately 2.5 mm.

Petiole diameter.—0.8 mm.

Petiole color.—144B.

Flower description:

Outdoor flowering habit.—'Firecracker' is freely flowering with substantially continuous blooming from spring until fall.

Flower type.—Solitary, axillary.

Flower number per plant.—Approximately 39.

Flower number per cluster.—An average of three.

Flower size.—Approximately 2 cm in diameter.

Flower fragrance.—None.

Petal.—Texture: Rugose. Shape: Obovate. Margin: Entire. Apex: Rounded. Length: Approximately 1.5 cm. Width: Approximately 1.5 cm.

Petal color.—Darker than 45A.

Calyx tube.—Surface: Hispid. Length: Approximately 3 cm. Diameter: Approximately 6 mm. Color: Closest to 145C with ribs of 144A.

Reproductive organs.—Androecium: 11. Stamens: 3 are 1 cm in length and smooth, 8 are 5 mm in length with matted hairs closest to 86A at distal end. Anthers are approximately 1.5 mm in length, closest to 86B in color. Pollen color is closest to 11D. Gynoecium: One pistil, approximately 4 cm in long. Stigma: Shape — round. Color — 87C. Style color: 150D with short stiff hairs of 86B at distal end. Ovary: Length — approximately 8 mm. Diameter — approximately 3 mm. Color — 150D.

Seed production: Seed production has not been observed.

Disease resistance: Resistance to pathogens has not been observed.

I claim:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of *Cuphea* plant named 'Firecracker' substantially as herein shown and described, which:

(a) Exhibits a trailing habit,

(b) Forms dark red flowers with purple center, and

(c) Exhibits a vigorous growth habit.

* * * * *

FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2

