

[54] ASTER PLANT NAMED BLUE BUTTERFLY

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[57] ABSTRACT

An Aster plant named Blue Butterfly particularly characterized by its cupped capitulum form; daisy capitulum type; violet-blue ray floret color; diameter across face of capitulum of 26 to 30 mm at maturity; strong, well branched flower stems; and many capitula per inflorescence on short pedicels.

1 Drawing Sheet

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The present invention comprises a new and distinct cultivar of Aster plant, hereinafter referred to by the cultivar name Blue Butterfly.

Blue Butterfly is a product of a planned breeding program which had the objective of creating new perennial Aster cultivars for year-round commercial production and having well branched flower stems, good flower size, a nice blue color, good flower form, and excellent lasting quality of the cut flowers. Such traits in combination were not present in previously available commercial cultivars.

Blue Butterfly was originated from a hybridization made by the inventors K. Sahin and P. Akerboom in a controlled breeding program in Ter Aar, The Netherlands, in 1984. The female parent of Blue Butterfly was an unnamed *Aster pringlei* seedling. The male parent was an unnamed *Aster novi-belgii* seedling.

Blue Butterfly was discovered and selected as one flowering plant within the progeny of the stated parentage by the inventors K. Sahin and P. Akerboom on Sept. 7, 1985 and 1986 in a controlled environment in Ter Aar, and identified as Seedling No. 84/893.

The first act of asexual reproduction of Blue Butterfly was accomplished when vegetative cuttings were taken from the initial selection in November 1985 in a controlled environment in Ter Aar, by a technician working under formulations established and supervised by K. Sahin and P. Akerboom.

Horticultural examination of selected units initiated in 1985 has demonstrated that the unique combination of characteristics as herein disclosed for Blue Butterfly are firmly fixed and are retained through successive generations of asexual reproduction.

Blue Butterfly has not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary significantly with variations in environment such as temperature, light intensity and daylength.

The following observations, measurements and comparisons describe plants grown in Ter Aar under greenhouse conditions which approximate those generally used in commercial greenhouse practice in The Netherlands.

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be basic characteristics of Blue Butterfly, which, in combination, distinguish this Aster as a new and distinct cultivar:

1. Cupped capitulum form.

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2. Daisy capitulum type.
3. Violet-blue ray floret color.
4. Diameter across face of capitulum of 27 to 30 mm at maturity.
5. Strong, well branched flower stems.
6. Many capitula per inflorescence on short pedicels.

The accompanying photographic drawing shows typical inflorescence of Blue Butterfly, with the colors being as nearly true as possible with illustrations of this type. The color photograph is a perspective view of Blue Butterfly shown grown as a single stem cut spray Aster.

Of the commercial cultivars known to the inventors, the most similar in comparison to Blue Butterfly is Monte Casino. Reference is made to attached Chart A, which compares certain characteristics of Blue Butterfly to the same characteristics of Monte Casino.

In comparison to Monte Casino, Blue Butterfly has thicker and greener leaves, stronger flower stems, better branching, more capitula per inflorescence, larger flowers, and better lasting quality of the cut flowers. With regard to the last mentioned characteristic, when grown under similar conditions, the blossoms of Blue Butterfly will last 2-3 days longer than the flowers of Monte Casino. In addition, the ray floret color of Blue Butterfly is blue, while the ray floret color of Monte Casino is white. Similar traits are capitulum form and type, spray formation and photoperiodic light reaction.

In the following description color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart. The color values were determined between 12:00 and 14:00 hours on Mar. 16, 1987 at Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands.

Classification:

Botanical.—*Aster pringlei* × *novi-belgii* cv Blue Butterfly.

Commercial.—Small daisy-like spray Aster perennial.

INFLORESCENCE

A. Capitulum

Form.—Cupped.

Type.—Daisy.

Diameter across face.—27-30 mm.

Arrangement.—Raceme inflorescence.

B. Corolla of Ray Florets:

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Color (general tonality from a distance of three meters).—Violet-blue.

Color (upper surface).—Closest to 92B.

Color (under surface).—Closest to 92C.

Shape of floret.—Narrow, oblong. Apex reflexing.

Size of floret: 10–12 mm long × 2–2.6 mm wide.

Number of ray florets: 27–29.

C. Corolla of disc florets:

Color (mature).—Closest to 1C to 1D.

Color (immature).—Closest to 1C to 1D.

Diameter of disc.—7–8 mm.

D. Reproductive organs:

Androecium.—Present on disc florets only; no pollen.

Gynoecium.—Present on both ray and disc florets.

PLANT

A. General appearance:

Height.—Medium to tall; depends on light conditions. Under continuous long days it can grow up to 2 meters tall heavy branching.

B. Foliage:

Color.—137A.

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Shape.—Very narrowly oblanceolate and linear, with occasional downward reflexing at the tip.

Size.—140–160 mm long × 12–13 mm wide.

Length.—Short.

Margin.—Entire.

Arrangement.—Alternate, with angle acute.

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CHART A
COMPARISON OF BLUE BUTTERFLY
AND MONTE CASINO

| | Blue Butterfly | Monte Casino |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Ray Floret Color | Violet-blue | White |
| Capitulum Form and Type | Cupped daisy | Cupped daisy |
| Spray formation | Compound | Compound |
| Pedicels | 8–18 mm long | 7 mm long |
| Diameter across face of capitulum | 27–30 mm | 20–22 mm |
| Number of ray florets | 27–29 | 27 |

Comparisons made on plants grown as single stem spray Asters in Ter Aar, The Netherlands

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We claim:

1. A new and distinct Aster plant named Blue Butterfly, as described and illustrated.

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U.S. Patent

Dec. 18, 1990

Plant 7,399

