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(54) **ASTER PLANT NAMED ‘ZANASPARRO’**

(50) Latin Name: *Symphotrichum novi-belgii*
Varietal Denomination: **Zanasparro**

(71) Applicant: **Henricus Cornelius Maria Jacobs,**
Bleiswijk (NL)

(72) Inventor: **Henricus Cornelius Maria Jacobs,**
Bleiswijk (NL)

(73) Assignee: **Chrysanthemum Breeders Association**
Research B.V., Rijsenhout (NL)

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Primary Examiner — Keith O Robinson
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — C. A. Whealy

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of *Aster* plant named ‘Zanasparro’, characterized by its compact, upright to slightly spreading and mounding plant habit; moderately vigorous growth habit; freely branching growth habit; dense and bushy appearance; freely flowering habit; semi-double type inflorescences with violet to violet blue-colored ray florets; good postproduction longevity and good container performance.

2 Drawing Sheets

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Botanical designation: *Symphotrichum novi-belgii*.
Cultivar denomination: ‘ZANASPARRO’.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of *Aster* plant, botanically known as *Symphotrichum novi-belgii* and hereinafter referred to by the name ‘Zanasparro’.

The new *Aster* plant is a product of a planned breeding program conducted by the Inventor in Rijsenhout, The Netherlands. The objective of the breeding program is to create new compact *Aster* plants with freely branching habit and attractive semi-double type inflorescences.

The new *Aster* originated from a cross-pollination in September, 2009 in Rijsenhout, The Netherlands of a proprietary selection of *Symphotrichum novi-belgii* identified as code number 56, not patented, as the female, or seed, parent with a proprietary selection of *Symphotrichum novi-belgii* identified as code number 48, not patented, as the male, or pollen, parent. The new *Aster* plant was discovered and selected by the Inventor as a single flowering plant within the progeny of the stated cross-pollination in a controlled greenhouse environment in Rijsenhout, The Netherlands in April, 2010.

Asexual reproduction of the new *Aster* plant by terminal vegetative cuttings was first conducted in Rijsenhout, The Netherlands in May, 2010. Asexual reproduction by cuttings has shown that the unique features of this new *Aster* plant are stable and reproduced true to type in successive generations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Plants of the new *Aster* have not been observed under all possible combinations of environmental conditions and cultural practices. The phenotype may vary somewhat with

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variations in environmental conditions such as temperature, daylength and light intensity, without, however, any variance in genotype.

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be the unique characteristics of ‘Zanasparro’. These characteristics in combination distinguish ‘Zanasparro’ as a new and distinct *Aster* plant:

1. Compact, upright to slightly spreading and mounding plant habit.
2. Moderately vigorous growth habit.
3. Freely branching growth habit; dense and bushy appearance.
4. Freely flowering habit.
5. Semi-double type inflorescences with violet to violet blue-colored ray florets.
6. Good postproduction longevity and good container performance.

Plants of the new *Aster* differ primarily from plants of the female parent selection in inflorescence size as plants of the new *Aster* have larger inflorescences than plants of the female parent selection.

Plants of the new *Aster* differ primarily from plants of the male parent selection in flowering habit as plants of the new *Aster* are more freely flowering than plants of the male parent selection.

Plants of the new *Aster* can be compared to plants of *Aster novi-belgii* ‘Dynaster’, disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 15,262. In side-by-side comparisons, plants of the new *Aster* differ primarily from plants of ‘Dynaster’ in inflorescence form as plants of ‘Dynaster’ have single-type (daisy form) inflorescences.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The accompanying photographs illustrate the overall appearance of the new *Aster* plant showing the colors as true

as it is reasonably possible to obtain in colored reproductions of this type. Colors in the photographs may differ slightly from the color values cited in the detailed botanical description which accurately describe the colors of the new *Aster* plant.

The photograph on the first sheet is a side perspective view of a typical flowering plant of 'Zanasparro' grown in a container.

The photograph on the second sheet is a close-up view of a typical flowering plant of 'Zanasparro'.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The aforementioned photographs and following observations and measurements describe plants grown during the late winter and early spring in 12-cm containers in a glass-covered greenhouse in Rijsenhout, The Netherlands and under cultural practices typical of commercial *Aster* production. During the production of the plants, day temperatures ranged from 18.5° C. to 22° C., night temperatures ranged from 18° C. to 21° C. and light levels ranged from 3,500 to 7,000 lux. Plants were pinched one time and were ten weeks old when the photographs and description were taken. In the following description, color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart, 2001 Edition, except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used.

Botanical classification: *Symphotrichum novi-belgii* 'Zanasparro'.

Parentage:

Female, or seed, parent.—Proprietary selection of *Symphotrichum novi-belgii* identified as code number 56, not patented.

Male, or pollen, parent.—Proprietary selection of *Symphotrichum novi-belgii* identified as code number 48, not patented.

Propagation:

Type.—Terminal vegetative cuttings.

Time to initiate roots, summer.—About seven days at temperatures about 21° C.

Time to produce a rooted young plant, summer.—About nine to ten days at temperatures about 21° C.

Time to produce a rooted young plant, autumn.—About eleven to twelve days at temperatures about 21° C.

Root description.—Fine, fibrous; close to 155D and 199D in color.

Rooting habit.—Freely branching; dense.

Plant description:

Plant and growth habit.—Herbaceous semi-double type potted *Aster* plant; compact, upright to slightly spreading and mounding plant habit; moderately vigorous growth habit; freely branching growth habit; dense and bushy appearance; pinching enhances branching potential.

Plant height.—About 12 cm to 14 cm.

Plant width.—About 12 cm to 15 cm.

Lateral branches.—Length: About 12 cm. Diameter: About 8 mm. Internode length: About 6 mm to 10 mm. Aspect: About 45° from vertical. Strength: Strong. Texture and luster: Pubescent; semi-glossy. Color: Close to 143A.

Leaf description:

Arrangement.—Alternate, simple; sessile.

Length.—About 3 cm to 4.5 cm.

Width.—About 7 mm to 10 mm.

Shape.—Elliptic.

Apex.—Acute.

Base.—Attenuate.

Margin.—Entire.

Texture and luster, upper and lower surfaces.—Smooth, glabrous; semi-glossy.

Color.—Developing leaves, upper surface: Close to 137A. Developing leaves, lower surface: Close to 137C. Fully expanded leaves, upper surface: Close to 137A; venation, close to 138B. Fully expanded leaves, lower surface: Close to 147D; venation, 148D.

Inflorescence description:

Type and arrangement.—Semi-double type inflorescence form with lanceolate-shaped ray florets; inflorescences borne on terminal and axillary branches above and beyond the foliar plane; ray and disc florets arranged acropetally on a capitulum; inflorescences face mostly upright to slightly outwardly.

Fragrance.—None detected.

Flowering response.—Under natural conditions, plants flower during the autumn in The Netherlands; plants begin flowering about 5.5 weeks after planting.

Inflorescence longevity.—Inflorescences maintain good substance for about three weeks on the plant; inflorescences persistent.

Quantity of inflorescences.—Freely flowering habit with about five to seven inflorescences per lateral branch and about 18 to 21 inflorescence buds and inflorescences per plant at one time.

Inflorescence buds.—Height: About 4 mm. Diameter: About 5 mm. Shape: Globular. Texture and luster: Smooth, glabrous; matte. Color: Close to N87B.

Inflorescence size.—Diameter: About 3.5 cm. Depth (height): About 1.6 cm to 1.8 cm. Diameter of disc: About 1.2 cm to 1.4 cm.

Receptacles.—Height: About 2 mm. Diameter: About 3 mm. Shape: Slightly domed. Color: Close to 193A.

Ray florets.—Quantity and arrangement: About 50 to 55 arranged in about three whorls. Length: About 1.8 cm. Width: About 2 mm. Shape: Lanceolate. Apex: Bluntly acute or emarginate. Base: Attenuate. Margin: Entire. Texture and luster, upper surface: Smooth, glabrous; semi-glossy. Texture and luster, lower surface: Smooth, glabrous; matte. Orientation: Initially upright to semi-upright to eventually close to perpendicular to the peduncle. Color: When opening and fully opened, upper surface: Close to N87A; color becoming closer to 94B with development. When opening and fully opened, lower surface: Close to 94B; color becoming closer to N88B with development.

Disc florets.—Quantity and arrangement: Numerous and arranged at the center of the receptacle. Length: About 6 mm to 7 mm. Diameter: About 1 mm to 1.5 mm. Shape: Tubular, elongated; five free apices are acute. Texture and luster, inner and outer surfaces: Smooth, glabrous; slightly glossy. Color, immature and mature, inner surface: Close to 158C; color becoming closer to 186A with development. Color, immature and mature, outer surface: Close to 145C; color becoming closer to 186A with development.

Phyllaries.—Quantity and arrangement: About 30 per inflorescence arranged in about three whorls. Length: About 1.2 cm to 1.5 cm. Width: About 2 mm.

Shape: Narrowly elliptic. Apex: Acute. Base: Attenuate. Margin: Entire. Texture and luster, upper and lower surfaces: Pubescent; semi-glossy. Color, upper surface: Close to 137A. Color, lower surface: Close to 137B.

Peduncles.—Length: About 1.5 cm to 2 cm. Diameter: About 0.7 mm to 0.8 mm. Strength: Strong. Texture and luster: Pubescent; semi-glossy. Color: Close to 137A.

Reproductive organs.—Androecium: Present on disc florets only. Quantity of stamens per floret: Five. Filament length: About 2.5 mm. Filament color: Close to 150D. Anther shape: Lanceolate. Anther length: About 1 mm. Anther color: Close to 162B. Pollen amount: Scarce. Pollen color: Close to 17B. Gynoecium: Quantity of pistils per floret: One. Pistil length: About 8 mm. Stigma diameter: About 1.5

mm. Stigma shape: Bifurcate. Stigma color: Close to 12D, color becoming closer to 84C with development. Style length: About 4 mm to 5 mm. Style color: Close to 12D. Ovary color: Close to 149D.

Seeds and fruits.—Seed and fruit production have not been observed on plants of the new *Aster*.

Disease & pest resistance: Plants of the new *Aster* have not been observed to be resistant to pathogens and pests common to *Aster* plants.

Temperature tolerance: Plants of the new *Aster* have been observed to tolerate temperatures ranging from about 5° C. to about 32° C. to 33° C.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct *Aster* plant named 'Zanasparro' as illustrated and described.

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