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Heidgen

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[54] **GERANIUM PLANT NAMED 'MIDNIGHT CORAL'**
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[58] **Field of Search** **Plt./68, 87.12**

[56] **References Cited**
U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS
P.P. 7,567 6/1991 Schumann Plt. 68
P.P. 7,627 8/1991 Craig Plt. 68

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[57] **ABSTRACT**
A new and distinct variety of Geranium plant, "Midnight Rose" characterized by its cascading growth habit; its medium-sized, medium green foliage without zoning, its abundant flowers and, its unique, double, rose colored flowers and its heat tolerance.

1 Drawing Sheet

1

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention, hereinafter referred to by the cultivar name "Midnight Rose" relates to a new and distinct Geranium plant. "Midnight Rose" is a new and improved plant resulting from a planned breeding program as performed by me in my greenhouse at 821 Walnut Street, Batavia, Ill. My breeding program began in March 1977, and has been ongoing since that time. This seedling was initially identified by my records as 80×083AX, and was the result of a cross between Red Heart, an unpatented cascade Geranium as the seed parent crossed with "Indianapolis Pink", an unpatented cascade geranium as the pollen parent. Being a cross between two market class zonal Geranium plants, it is believed that the botanical classification *Pelargonium-×hortorum* would be appropriate for this plant.

Upon recognition of the outstanding characteristics of this plant, it was selected from the progeny of the stated cross, and was set aside for further observation, testing, and was subsequently named "Midnight Rose." Asexual reproduction of "Midnight Rose" has been repeatedly accomplished by the rooting of vegetative cuttings in my greenhouse in Batavia, Ill. Examination of the plants so propagated through a series of propagations has demonstrated that the combination of characteristics herein disclosed for "Midnight Rose" are firmly fixed and retained through successive generations through asexual reproduction.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The new and distinguishing characteristics of "Midnight Rose" reside primarily in its cascading growth habit, its medium-sized, medium green foliage without zonation and its abundant blooming habit. This plant also has a unique double, medium-sized rose colored semi-double flowers and unusually high heat tolerance. This plant might be seen as a novel and desirable introduction within the industry by a combination of desired traits including:

Being particularly adapted to culture in hanging baskets due to its cascading habit, tendency to prolifically branch, and dense leafy canopy. Forming a dense plant mass completely hiding the top of a basket in about 10 weeks from four plantlets, and a thick plant mass which is wider than it is tall and of mounded form.

2

Having a generous amount of matt foliage, with medium green coloration and no zonation over the leaves which are of medium size, but of higher than normal density.

Presenting a large number of well filled umbels of varied states of maturity placed well above the foliage mass, and having a pleasingly rose floret coloration which is attractively, contrastingly high-lighted over and against the medium green foliage.

Having a large number of umbels with a generous number of open, double petal florets of medium size and delicate appearance, borne on pedicels which present florets in a tightly condensed arrangement to form umbels having a fairly tightly compacted and mounded shape.

Presenting a large number of umbels which also vary in stage of maturity which gives the plant an attractive appearance for an extended period of time rather than being one which blooms in discontinuous flushes.

The color definitions to follow have been taken from *The Royal Horticultural Colour Chart* of The Royal Horticultural Society, London, where presented by the letters R.H.S. followed by a color grouping indication, the number indicating the color patch and the letter indicating the shade, except where color definitions in general terms of ordinary meaning are presented. Plant descriptions were made from specimens grown under greenhouse conditions during daylight hours in Batavia, Ill.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

The photograph depicts a market unit made up of four market stage specimens of the plant growing in a 10 inch hanging planter, in a stage of inflorescence. The assemblage is shown in side view, depicting the characteristics of branching, leaves, leaf density, leaf coloration and zonation, the number and varied stages of buds and flowers, and the positioning of the flower heads relative to the mass of the plants in the hanging basket.

BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANT

Botanical classification: *Pelargonium* × *hortorum*.
Market class: Cascading zonal geranium suitable for planting in hanging baskets.

Market name: "Midnight Rose".

Growth: "Midnight Rose" is an exceptionally prolific blooming geranium. The flowers are double and the flower head or truss is of medium size and quite resistant to shattering. The growth is generally procumbent in attitude which gives it a cascading effect.

Growth rate: Rapid, producing a typical 10 inch flowering basket in about 10 to 12 weeks from four 2¼ inch plantlets using standard commercial culture. This plant has exceptional vigor under normal conditions.

Blooming habit: Exceptionally profuse and continuously blooming plant throughout the year, outdoors during the frost-free period, or in the greenhouse; a mature 10 inch hanging basket commonly producing a range of 13 to 21 flower heads at one time, in varying stages of maturity.

INFLORESCENCE

Flower Heads:

Size.—2¼ to 3½ inches across when the florets are fully open.

Count.—13 to 21 presented at one time.

Truss:

Size.—Medium size ranges from about 2 to 2¼ inches in diameter.

Shape.—Rather tight, forming ½ of a flattened globe as it opens.

Number of florets.—Variable, range of from about 15 to 25, average 18 to 20.

Lasting quality: Average. Blooms remain 5 to 10 days and may last longer in cool, dry weather.

Buds:

Sepals.—Shape — Wide and pointed. Color — Same as leaves.

Color.—Red Group RHS 5 4 A.

Form.—Roundish, thick and elongated.

Florets:

Number.—15 to 25.

Form.—Flat to cupped.

Size.—Ranging from 1½ inch to 1¾ inches across an open floret.

Petals:

Number.—About 8 to 10.

Size.—Ranging from about 9/16 to 11/16 inches long to about 4/16 to 5/16 inches wide.

Texture.—Soft.

Appearance.—Glowing.

Petaloids:

Number.—About 10 to 14.

Shape.—Variable, often misshapen.

Color.—Similar to that of the petals.

Size.—About 7/16 to 9/16 inches long and 2/16 to 3/16 inches wide.

Sepals:

Number.—Usually 5.

Color.—About like that of the leaves.

Pedice:

Length.—about 1 5/16 to 1 7/16 inches.

Color.—RHS Greyed Purple, 183 A.

Peduncle:

Arises.—From node, opposed to leaf petiole.

Pubescence.—Normal.

Color.—RHS Greyed Purple, 183A.

Reproductive organs

Androecium:

Stamens.—Number — 5 to 7. Shape — Ribbon-like filaments jointed at bases. Color.— Rose purple.

Anther attachment — versatile.

Anthers.—Number — 5 to 7. Shape — Normal, well developed. Color — Purple.

Gynoecium:

Pistil.—Number — One, compound. Length — About within the range of 3/32 to 5/32 inch.

Stigma.—Color — Purple.

Style.—Color — Green.

Ovary.—Size — Within about 1/32 to 1/16 inches long.

Fertility: Normal, viable seed is produced rarely.

Behavior: Once the plant begins to bloom, it has an exceptionally prolific blooming habit and yields a striking display of medium-sized, double rose flowers against its medium-sized, medium green foliage without zoning.

General observations: Inflorescence is of medium size, and of somewhat tight heads which are attractive against the medium green foliage of the plant and generally rounded in shape and measure up to about 2¼ inches across. High floret, petal and petaloid counts make umbels appear as dense balls at optimum stage of opening. Flowers have very high tolerance to heat when compared to those of other varieties.

STEM

Thickness: Medium slim.

Internodes: Short.

Branching: Free breaking.

Attitude: Procumbent habit.

FOLIAGE

35 Leaves:

Quantity.—Abundant.

Shape.—Reniform.

Size.—Largest leaves range from about 1½ to about 2¼ inches wide.

40 *Margin.*—Crenate.

Texture.—Matt, lightly pubescent.

Coloration.—Leaves a slightly darker appearing green tone than normally seen in geraniums per se, RHS Green Group 137A, without zones.

Petioles:

Texture.—Lightly pubescent.

Length.—About 1½ to 1¾ inches.

Color.—Yellow Green Group RHS 147A.

50 "Midnight Rose" is comparable to "Flame Delight" with which it shares market class, but is easily distinguishable therefrom in terms of flower color; "Midnight Rose" having rose petal coloration, while the petals of "Flame Delight" are more scarlet; and by vigor, "Midnight Rose" being more vigorous. "Midnight Rose" is readily distinguished from "Midnight Blush" by having florets which are more double, and of much different coloration and by having a leaf attitude which more closely follows the shape of the plant mass.

60 I claim:

1. A new and distinct variety of Geranium plant, substantially as shown and described, characterized by its cascading growth habit; its medium-sized medium green foliage without zoning; its abundant blooming habit; its unique double rose colored flowers and its heat tolerance.

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U.S. Patent

January 12, 1993

Plant 8,100

