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

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(54) **VERBENA PLANT NAMED ‘BALFIREITIM’**

(50) Latin Name: **Verbena hybrid**  
Varietal Denomination: **Balfireitim**

(71) Applicant: **Ball Horticultural Company**, West Chicago, IL (US)

(72) Inventor: **Laura L. Masor**, Grover Beach, CA (US)

(73) Assignee: **Ball Horticultural Company**, West Chicago, IL (US)

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**  
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See application file for complete search history.

*Primary Examiner* — Annette H Para

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Audrey Charles

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of *Verbena* plant named ‘Balfireitim’, characterized by its bright white-colored flowers, dark green-colored foliage, and moderately vigorous, mounded-spreading growth habit, is disclosed.

**1 Drawing Sheet**

**1**

Latin name of genus and species of plant claimed: *Verbena hybrid*.  
Variety denomination: ‘Balfireitim’.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of *Verbena* plant botanically known as *Verbena hybrid* and hereinafter referred to by the cultivar name ‘Balfireitim’.

The new cultivar originated in a controlled breeding program in Arroyo Grande, Calif. during July 2017. The objective of the breeding program was the development of *Verbena* cultivars that are suited for use in hanging baskets, durable to environmental stresses, and have a mounded-spreading growth habit.

The new *Verbena* cultivar is the result of cross-pollination. The female (seed) parent of the new cultivar is the proprietary *Verbena hybrid* breeding selection coded PN10300-1, not patented, characterized by its white-colored flowers, dark green-colored foliage, and moderately vigorous, mounded-spreading growth habit. The male (pollen) parent of the new cultivar is the proprietary *Verbena hybrid* breeding selection coded PN8979-2, not patented, characterized by its white-colored flowers, medium green-colored foliage, and moderately vigorous, mounded-spreading growth habit. The new cultivar was selected as a single flowering plant within the progeny of the above stated cross-pollination during March 2018 in a controlled environment in Arroyo Grande, Calif.

Asexual reproduction of the new cultivar by terminal stem cuttings since March 2018 in Arroyo Grande, Calif. and West Chicago, Ill. has demonstrated that the new cultivar reproduces true to type with all of the characteristics, as herein described, firmly fixed and retained through successive generations of such asexual propagation.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

The following characteristics of the new cultivar have been repeatedly observed and can be used to distinguish ‘Balfireitim’ as a new and distinct cultivar of *Verbena* plant:

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1. Bright white-colored flowers;
2. Dark green-colored foliage; and
3. Moderately vigorous, mounded-spreading growth habit.

5 Plants of the new cultivar differ from plants of the female parent primarily in having slightly lighter green-colored foliage and a higher level of resistance to powdery mildew as observed in field trials. Plants of the new cultivar differ from plants of the male parent primarily in being earlier to flower.

10 Of the many commercially available *Verbena* cultivars, the most similar in comparison to the new cultivar is Firehouse Light Pink ‘Balfirelitpi’, not patented. However, in side by side comparisons, plants of the new cultivar differ from plants of ‘Balfirelitpi’ in at least the following characteristics:

- 15 1. Plants of the new cultivar are less vigorous than plants of ‘Balfirelitpi’; and
2. Plants of the new cultivar have white-colored flowers unlike the light pink-colored flowers of plants of ‘Balfirelitpi’.

25 The new cultivar can also be compared to Firehouse White ‘Balfireitim’, not patented. However, in side by side comparisons, plants of the new cultivar differ from plants of ‘Balfireitim’ in at least the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new cultivar flower one week earlier than plants of ‘Balfireitim’;
2. Plants of the new cultivar have more branches per plant than plants of ‘Balfireitim’; and
3. Plants of the new cultivar have more inflorescences per plant than plants of ‘Balfireitim’.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS**

35 The accompanying photographs show, as nearly true as it is reasonably possible to make the same in color illustrations of this type, typical flower and foliage characteristics of the new cultivar. Colors in the photographs differ slightly from the color values cited in the detailed description, which

accurately describes the colors of ‘Balfireitim’. The approximately 14-week-old plants were grown in 6-inch pots for approximately 9 weeks in a greenhouse in West Chicago, Ill. Plants were given one pinch three weeks prior to transplant.

FIG. 1 illustrates a side view of the overall growth and flowering habit of ‘Balfireitim’.

FIG. 2 illustrates a close-up view of an individual inflorescence of ‘Balfireitim’.

#### DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The new cultivar 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, without, however, any variance in genotype.

The chart used in the identification of colors described herein is The R.H.S. Colour Chart of The Royal Horticultural Society, London, England, 2015 edition, except where general color terms of ordinary significance are used. The color values were determined in January 2021 under natural light conditions in Naperville, Ill.

The following descriptions and measurements describe approximately 14-week-old plants produced from cuttings from stock plants and grown in a glass-covered greenhouse under conditions comparable to those used in commercial practice. The plants were grown in West Chicago, Ill. in 6-inch pots for approximately 9 weeks utilizing a soilless growth medium. Plants were given one pinch three weeks prior to transplant. Greenhouse temperatures were maintained at approximately 70° F. to 75° F. (21° C. to 24° C.) during the day and approximately 68° F. to 74° F. (20° C. to 23° C.) during the night. Supplemental lighting was used. Measurements and numerical values represent averages of typical plants.

Botanical classification: *Verbena* hybrid ‘Balfireitim’.

Parentage:

*Female parent*.—Proprietary *Verbena* hybrid breeding selection coded PN10300-1, not patented.

*Male parent*.—Proprietary *Verbena* hybrid breeding selection coded PN8979-2, not patented.

Propagation:

*Type cutting*.—Terminal stem.

*Time to initiate roots*.—Approximately 6 to 9 days.

*Time to produce a rooted cutting*.—Approximately 24 to 28 days.

*Root description*.—Fibrous.

*Rooting habit*.—Freely branching.

Plant description:

*Commercial crop time*.—Approximately 5 to 7 weeks from a rooted cutting to finish in a 10 cm pot.

*Growth habit and general appearance*.—Moderately vigorous, mounded-spreading.

*Size*.—Height from soil level to top of plant plane: Approximately 10.0 cm. Width: Approximately 37.0 cm.

*Branching habit*.—Freely branching, pinching enhances basal branching. Quantity of main branches per plant: Approximately 5.

*Branch*.—Shape: Square in cross section. Strength: Strong. Length: Approximately 14.5 cm. Diameter: Approximately 2.5 mm. Length of central internode: Approximately 1.4 cm. Texture: Densely pubescent with a mixture of glandular and nonglandular hairs.

Gland color: Colorless, transparent. Color of young stems: 144A. Color of mature stems: 146B.

Foliage description:

*General description*.—Quantity of leaves per main branch: Approximately 10. Fragrance: None detected. Form: Simple. Arrangement: Opposite.

*Leaves*.—Aspect: Perpendicular to stem, obtuse angle with age. Shape: Ovate to oblong. Margin: Crenate. Apex: Broadly acute. Base: Truncate. Venation pattern: Pinnate. Length of mature leaf: Approximately 3.5 cm. Width of mature leaf: Approximately 2.2 cm. Texture of upper surface: Densely pubescent. Texture of lower surface: Densely pubescent with a mixture of glandular and nonglandular hairs. Gland color: Colorless, transparent. Color of upper surface of young and mature foliage: Closest to 137A with venation of 147C. Color of lower surface of young and mature foliage: Closest to 137B with venation of 147C.

*Petiole*.—Length: Approximately 4.0 mm. Diameter: Approximately 2.0 mm. Texture: Densely pubescent with a mixture of glandular and nonglandular hairs. Gland color: Colorless, transparent. Color: 147C to 147D.

Flowering description:

*Flowering habit*.—‘Balfireitim’ is freely flowering under outdoor growing conditions with substantially continuous blooming from spring through autumn and year-round in greenhouse environment.

*Lastingness of individual flower on the plant*.—Approximately 5 to 7 days.

Inflorescence description:

*General description*.—Type: Corymb. Shape: Hemispherical. Quantity per plant: Approximately 13. Fragrance: None detected. Length or height: 3.5 cm. Width: Approximately 6.0 cm. Quantity of fully open flowers per inflorescence: Approximately 19.

*Peduncle*.—Strength: Strong. Aspect: Erect. Length: Approximately 3.5 cm. Diameter: Approximately 2.0 mm. Texture: Densely pubescent with a mixture of glandular and nonglandular hairs. Gland color: Colorless, transparent. Color: 144A.

Flower description:

*General description*.—Type: Sessile, salverform.

*Bud*.—Rate of opening: Generally takes 2 to 3 days for bud to progress from first color to fully open flower. Quantity of unopened inflorescences per plant: Approximately 4.

*Bud just before opening*.—Shape: Elongated, globular at apex. Length: Approximately 1.4 cm. Diameter: Approximately 3.0 mm. Color: Petal portion NN155A, sepal portion 137B.

*Corolla*.—Shape: Round. Diameter: Approximately 2.2 cm. Depth: Approximately 3.0 cm.

*Petals*.—Quantity: 5, fused at base forming a tube. Shape: Obovate. Appearance: Matte. Margin: Entire. Apex: Emarginate. Length of upper petals from tube: Approximately 1.0 cm. Width of upper petals: Approximately 9.0 mm. Length of lateral petals from tube: Approximately 1.1 cm. Width of lateral petals: Approximately 1.0 cm. Length of lower petal from tube: Approximately 1.1 cm. Width of lower petal: Approximately 1.0 cm. Texture of upper surface: Glabrous with glandular pubescent base. Texture of lower surface: Sparsely pubescent with a mixture of

glandular and nonglandular hairs. Gland color: Colorless, transparent. Color of upper surface when first and fully open: NN155D with 145C at throat opening. Color of lower surface when first and fully open: NN155D. Color of whiskers surrounding the opening of the corolla tube: NN155D.

*Corolla tube*.—Length: Approximately 2.1 cm. Diameter at proximal end: Approximately 1.0 mm. Diameter at distal end: Approximately 2.0 mm. Texture of outer surface: Upper half moderately glandular pubescent, lower half glabrous. Gland color: Colorless, transparent. Texture of inner surface: Upper half densely pubescent, lower half glabrous. Color of outer surface: NN155D with 145D at distal end. Color of inner surface: NN155D with 145C at throat opening.

*Calyx*.—Shape: Tubular with 5 acute tips. Length: Approximately 1.4 cm. Width: Approximately 3.0 mm.

*Sepals*.—Quantity per flower: 5, fused at base. Shape: Linear. Apex: Acute. Length: Approximately 1.4 cm. Width: Approximately 1.0 mm. Texture of inner surface: Moderately pubescent. Texture of outer surface: Densely pubescent with a mixture of glandular and nonglandular hairs. Gland color: Colorless, transparent. Color of inner and outer surfaces: 137B.

*Stipules*.—Shape: Oblanceolate. Apex: Three acute tips arranged in a cross shape. Length: Approximately

6.0 mm. Width at base: Approximately 2.0 mm. Texture of inner surface: Glabrous. Texture of outer surface: Densely pubescent with a mixture of glandular and nonglandular hairs. Gland color: Colorless, transparent. Color of inner and outer surfaces: 137A with 144A at base.

*Reproductive organs*.—Androecium: Stamen quantity: 4, didynamous. Stamen length of longer pair: Approximately 2.0 mm. Stamen length of shorter pair: Approximately 1.0 mm. Anther shape: Bilobed, ovoid. Anther length: Approximately 1.0 mm. Anther color: 145A. Pollen amount: Sparse. Pollen color: 155D. Gynoecium: Pistil quantity: 1 per flower. Pistil length: Approximately 1.8 cm. Stigma shape: Bifid. Stigma length: Less than 1.0 mm. Stigma color: 137A. Style length: Approximately 1.7 cm. Style color: 145D with 145B near stigma. Ovary diameter: Approximately 1.0 mm. Ovary texture: Glabrous. Ovary color: 144A.

Seed and fruit production: Neither seed nor fruit production has been observed.

Disease and pest resistance: Resistance to pathogens and pests common to *Verbena* has not been observed.

What is claimed is:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of *Verbena* plant named 'Balfireitim', substantially as herein illustrated and described.

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FIG. 1

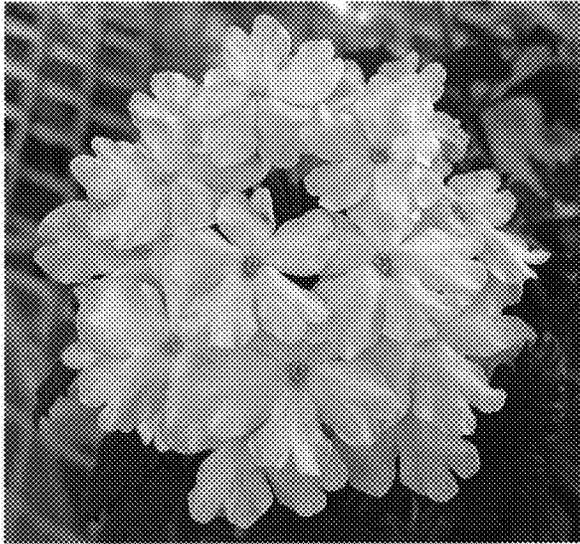


FIG. 2