

BIG RED Geranium Part of Home Depot's VIVA! Line

'Calliope Dark Red,' a new geranium variety introduced in the past year by Syngenta Flowers, will be available nationwide under a new name—Big Red—this spring through the VIVA! Program in all The Home Depot stores.

As 'Calliope Dark Red,' this variety showed outstanding performance in last year's variety trials. Its flower color is true red with dark-green foliage and a mounding habit. It is an inter-specific hybrid of a hanging basket geranium and an upright zonal type. This combination gives it the ability to perform well in both basket and garden situations.

Why the new name? Syngenta's Gary Falkenstein says that Home Depot wanted to do a big promotion with Calliope, but Syngenta did not want to make it an exclusive. So they decided to launch the plant under a different name (the Calliope name will still be on the pot, only in much smaller print).

Regardless of how it does as Big Red, Calliope cutting sales have been booming, Gary reports. Walmart and Lowes will be selling it, and lots of cuttings have been sold to IGCs, too.

"Without a doubt, it's the biggest first-year introduction of a single variety," Gary says. "We've sold over six times as much as any new, first-year geranium variety. Our sales and technical staff have visited several of the big producers and most all of the production is looking very sharp."

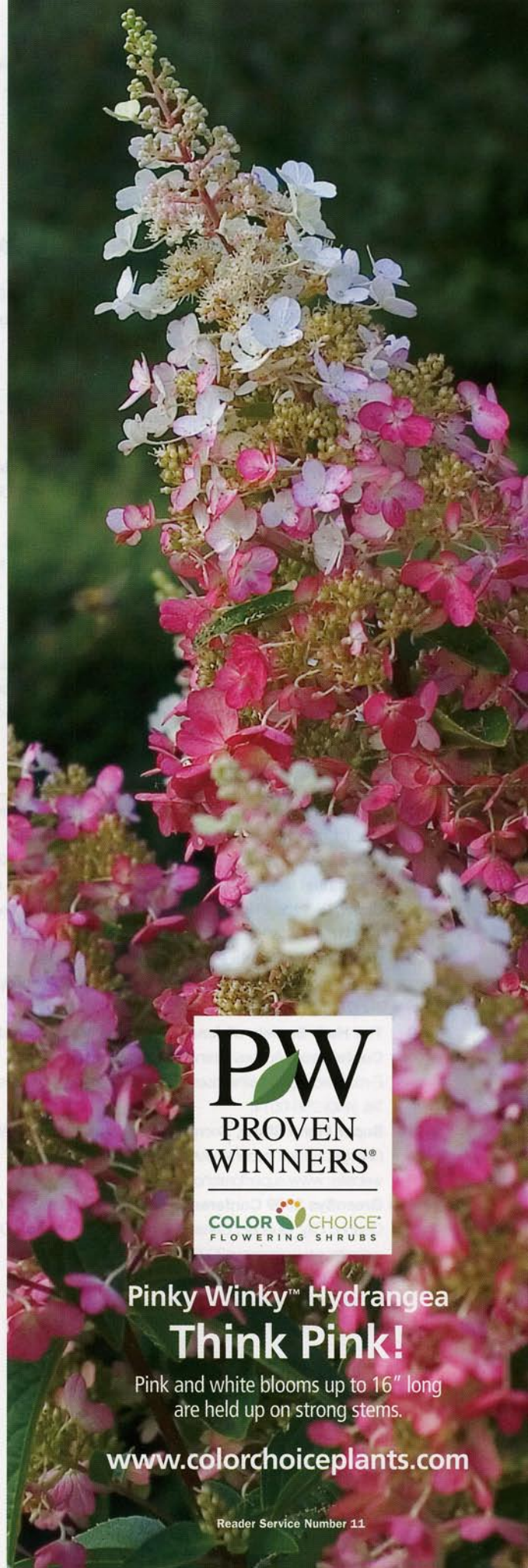
The VIVA! Program, sold exclusively through The Home Depot, introduces a variety of new plants into the U.S. and Canadian markets for use in home landscapes. Horticultural marketing firm Floragem works with The Home Depot on the VIVA! collection. For more information, visit www.vivagarden.com. **GP**

Dave's Garden Launches BirdFiles

Dave's Garden, the largest online community of gardeners, has added a new feature to its lineup. In the tradition of Dave's Garden's PlantFiles and BugFiles, where members catalog plants, insects and spiders, the newest feature focuses on birds. The new BirdFiles has spurred a flurry of activity as members add photos, comments and sighting reports.

Bird watching is a fast-growing hobby and multi-million dollar industry. According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this outdoor pursuit is enjoyed by more than 47 million Americans, and the wildlife and bird-related forums at Dave's Garden are longtime favorites among the 400,000-plus members.

"Many of our members love to attract birds to their backyard habitat, and they want to learn more about them," says Dave Whiting, founder and webmaster for Dave's Garden. "Creating BirdFiles was the obvious move in helping our members share what they know and network with other backyard birding enthusiasts." In addition to BirdFiles, Dave's Garden offers birdwatchers several forums for bird identification and discussion of their habitats, along with resources for birders looking for bird feeders and food, nest boxes, and numerous books on attracting birds and wildlife to the garden. Visitors can see BirdFiles at <http://davesgarden.com/guides/birdfiles/>. **GP**



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