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'Manuela' Delphinium Wins Outstanding Varieties Competition

Alexandria, VA. — Aug. 12, 2024 — 'Manuela', a vibrant lavender delphinium presented by Valleflor, stunned judges with its strong, long stems and double-petal flowers to win the Society of American Florists' Outstanding Varieties Competition, held in conjunction with the organization's 139th annual convention in Miami.

"It was a surprise — I didn't expect that," said Roy Cisternas, commercial manager for Valleflor in Quito, Ecuador. "I'm very proud of the farm and very proud of the variety."

Valleflor not only grew the delphinium — it bred the flower, too, and is grown exclusively by the company.

Judges called the flower a showstopper. "When I walked in the room, I knew it was going to be the winner," said judge Kim Brannan, AAF, of Stems Florist and St. Louis Delivery. She was struck by the deep lavender color, the height and thickness of the stems, and how the double-petal flowers added volume to cover the stems.

'Manuela' was among the 225 entries from 33 companies in the 2024 Outstanding Varieties Competition, sponsored by Chrysal and Syndicate Sales.

Judges scored each entry based on color and commercial appeal, stem and foliage, bloom form and size, and overall presentation. The judging panel, which included three retailers, three growers and three wholesalers, evaluated specific categories of flowers, and the highest scored variety in each category entry won "Best in Class." From this elite group, judges chose their Best in Show winner.

Here is a roundup of the Best in Class recipients:

- Other Cut Flower: 'Manuela,' Valleflor
- Cut Dianthus: 'Brut,' Ayura Sas Eclipse/Pride Flowers
- Cut Alstroemeria: "White Focus,' Tessacorp
- Cut Garden Rose: 'Millicent,' Alexandra Farms
- Cut Bulb Flower: 'Cloni Ranunculus – Ginette,' Equiflor
- Cut Spray Rose: 'Fibonacci Aurens,' Tessacorp
- Decorative (Cut) Foliage & Berries: 'Eleagnus,' Salters Evergreen Supply



- Cut Rose: 'Felicity,' Agrivaldani S.A
- Cut Chrysanthemum: 'Tutu,' Dekker Chrysanten Colombia

'Felicity' a cut rose by Agrivaldani S.A, won the People's Choice Award for the growers category.

'Princess Peach' a chrysanthemum by Icon Selections from Suntory Flowers, won this year's People's Choice Award in the breeder's category.

The following SAF members served as judges.

Retail:

- Kim Brannan, AAF, Stems Florist and St. Louis Delivery
- Carrie Moore, AAF, Jenny's Floral
- Ralph Giordano, AAF, PFCI, Giordano's Floral Creations

Wholesale:

- John Burk, DV Flora
- Lani Callister, AAF, JFD Wholesale Florist
- Red Kennicott, AAF, Kennicott Brothers

Grower:

- Paige Kennicott Jacques, Kennicott Kuts
- Janet Louie, Green Valley Floral
- Sahid Nahim, Above All Flowers and New Blooms Solutions

Event photos will be available here: [SAF Photo albums | Flickr](#)

About The Society of American Florists

The Society of American Florists is the association that connects and cultivates a thriving floral community through training, education, marketing resources and advocacy. Our vision: The power of flowers in every life. For more information, visit SAFNow.org.