

The UF Savanna Cultivar Series

A lisianthus breeding program was initiated in 1985 at the University of Florida's Gulf Coast Research and Education Center (GCREC), Bradenton, Florida. The emphasis was on development of pot or bedding plant types with heat-tolerance and basal branching. 'Maurine Blue' and 'Florida Blue' were released from our program in 1996 and to our knowledge were the first heat-tolerant lisianthus whose seedlings could be grown at 28-31 °C (82-88 °F) without rosetting.

The **UF Savanna** cultivar series also is heat-tolerant and intermediate in height between the Florida cultivar series and the Maurine cultivar series. The UF Savanna cultivar series is represented with eight colors including blue, pink, white, silver, blue rim, pink rim, blue frost, and pink frost. To our knowledge, 'UF Savanna Blue Frost' and 'UF Savanna Pink Frost' flower colors are not available in other commercial pot type lisianthus.

The most important and distinguishing attribute of all the UF Savanna cultivars was their heat tolerance when compared with commercial lines evaluated in 2005 at GCREC (see Table 1). 'Florida Blue' was an exception but it was released from our program as a semi-dwarf and heat-tolerant line and is now commercialized. None of the heat stressed UF Savanna cultivar group rosetted while 47% 'Forever Blue', 30% 'Lisa Blue', 100% 'Lizzy Blue', 40% 'Mermaid Blue', 86% 'Sapphire Blue', and 67% Tiramisu Purple' seedlings rosetted under these heat stress conditions.

UF Savanna cultivars are intended to be used as flowering potted plants in containers \geq 15-cm (6-inch) diameter pots. Plant height for Maurine cultivars average 75 to 102 cm (30 to 40 inches) and Florida cultivars 28 to 35 cm (11 to 14 inches) when flowered under our conditions in May. UF Savanna cultivars averaged 38 to 48 cm (15 to 19 inches). They have a spray-type flower display that is desirable for use as pot plants. A single treatment of B-Nine or Bonzi growth retardant may be necessary for production of UF Savanna cultivars in \leq 15-cm-diameter (6-inch) pots. Three to four plugs per 15-cm-diameter (6-inch) pot are recommended for optimal marketing display.

Table 1. Percentage rosetted plants and growth and flowering characteristics of twenty-one cultivars of lisianthus grown in 11.5-cm (4.5-inch) square pots at Bradenton, Florida.

Cultivar	Rosetted ^z (%)	Plant		Branches (no.)	Flowers and buds (no.)	Petal length (cm)	Days to flower (no.)
		ht (cm)	width (cm)				
Florida Blue	0	36	21	9	63	6.3	115
Forever Blue	47	32	25	14	62	5.1	109
Lisa Blue	30	23	15	7	33	5.0	108
Lizzy Blue	100	28	17	7	49	5.9	116
Mermaid Blue	40	24	18	10	59	5.6	112
Sapphire Blue	86	25	23	11	49	5.6	107
Tiramisu Purple	67	37	23	14	70	4.9	111
UF Savanna Blue	0	40	24	10	75	7.2	113
UF Savanna Blue Frost	0	45	22	12	75	6.3	114
UF Savanna Blue Rim	0	40	18	9	47	6.1	113
UF Savanna Pink	0	38	20	8	60	6.0	108
UF Savanna Pink Frost	0	47	22	8	69	6.3	113
UF Savanna Pink Rim	0	43	18	7	59	6.1	116
UF Savanna Silver	0	41	22	10	65	6.7	114
UF Savanna White	0	48	19	9	58	6.6	111
LSD ($\alpha = 0.05$)	25	4.6	3.0	2.2	11.6	0.4	1.7

^zSeventeen-day-old seedlings were exposed to 31 °C (88 °F) for 5 weeks in a growth chamber and then grown in a greenhouse for 4 weeks. Percentages of rosetted plants are means of three replications with eight plants each.