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1] ASTER PLANT NAMED 'RED MONARCH'

5] Inventor: Petrus J. Akerboom, Ter Aar,
Netherlands

3] Assignee: De Nachtvliinder B.V., Ter Aar,
Netherlands

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Primary Examiner—James R. Feyrer

Assistant Examiner—Kent L. Bell

Attorney, Agent, or Firm—C. A. Whealy

[57] ABSTRACT

A distinct cultivar of Aster plant named Red Monarch, characterized by its moderately vigorous growth rate; freely branching plant habit; small daisy-type inflorescences; red purple ray florets; numerous inflorescences per plant; and good container and garden performance.

2 Drawing Sheets

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The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar Aster plant, botanically known as Aster L. and referred to the cultivar name Red Monarch.

The new cultivar is a product of a planned breeding ogram conducted by the inventor in Ter Aar, The Nether-
nds. The objective of the breeding program was to create
w Aster cultivars having desirable inflorescence colors
d good container and garden performance.

The new cultivar is a spontaneous mutation of the com-
ercial cultivar Purple Monarch, disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat.
o. 8,387. The new cultivar was discovered and selected by
e inventor in a controlled environment in Ter Aar, The
etherlands, as a single flowering plant among a population
plants of the parent cultivar Purple Monarch. This single
ant consistently formed inflorescences having red purple
y florets compared to the blue purple-colored ray florets of
ants of the cultivar Purple Monarch.

Asexual reproduction of the new cultivar by terminal
ttings taken at Ter Aar, The Netherlands, has shown that
e unique features of this new Aster are stable and repro-
iced true to type in successive generations.

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and
e determined to be the unique characteristics of Red
onarch. These characteristics in combination distinguish
ed Monarch as a new and distinct cultivar:

1. Moderately vigorous growth rate.
2. Freely branching plant habit.
3. Small daisy-type inflorescences.
4. Red purple ray florets.
5. Numerous inflorescences per plant.
6. Good container and garden performance.

The cultivar Red Monarch has not been observed under
l possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may
ry somewhat with variations in environment such as
mperature, daylength and light intensity, without, how-
ver, any variance in genotype.

Plants of the new Aster can be compared to the parent
ultivar, Purple Monarch. In side-by-side comparisons con-
ducted in Ter Aar, The Netherlands, under commercial
actice, plants of the new Aster differed from plants of the
arent cultivar, Purple Monarch, in ray floret color and
eight. Plants of the new Aster have red purple-colored ray
orets whereas plants of the cultivar Purple Monarch have
lue purple-colored ray florets. Plants of the new Aster are
llier than plants of the cultivar Purple Monarch.

The accompanying colored photographs illustrate the
verall appearance of the new cultivar, showing the colors as
ue as it is reasonably possible to obtain in colored repro-
uctions of this type.

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The first photograph comprises a top perspective view of
typical inflorescences of the new Aster.

The second photograph comprises a top perspective view
of a typical plant of the new Aster (left) and the parent
cultivar 'Purple Monarch' (right). The ray floret and foliage
colors in these photographs vary from the actual ray and
foliage colors due to light reflectance.

In the following description, color references are made to
The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart except where
general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used.
The following observations and measurements describe
plants grown in Salinas, Calif., and Ter Aar, The Nether-
lands. Measurements and numerical values represent ranges
or averages for four typical flowering plants.

Botanical classification: Aster L. cultivar Red Monarch.

Commercial classification: Garden or container Aster.

Parentage: Spontaneous mutation of the cultivar Purple
Monarch, disclosed in U.S. Plant Pat. No. 8,387.

Propagation:

Type.—Terminal tip cuttings.

Time to rooting.—Summer: About 6 days at 25C soil
temperature. Winter: About 10 days at 15C soil
temperature.

Rooting habit.—Fine, fibrous and well-branched.

Plant description:

Appearance.—Perennial herbaceous decorative con-
tainer or garden plant. Stems upright, uniform habit
and freely branching. Moderately vigorous and com-
pact growth habit.

Plant height.—17 to 22 cm.

Lateral branch length.—8 to 10 cm.

Quantity of lateral branches after removal of apical
meristem.—Usually 3.

Stem color.—147A.

Foliage description.—Number of leaves per lateral
branch: Usually 9 to 10. Leaf arrangement: Alter-
nate. Leaf size, leaves from vegetative plants:
Length: About 12 cm. Width: About 2.5 cm. Leaf
size, leaves from flowering plants: Length: About 3.5
cm. Width: About 8 mm. Leaf apex: Acuminate. Leaf
base: Attenuate. Leaf margin: Leaves from vegeta-
tive plants: Serrate. Leaves from flowering plants:
Entire. Leaf texture: Glabrous, dull, leathery. Color:
Young foliage upper surface: 147A. Young foliage
under surface: 147B. Fully expanded foliage upper
surface: 147A. Fully expanded foliage under surface:

147B. Venation upper surface: 147B. Venation under surface: 147B.

Flowering description:

Appearance.—Daisy inflorescence form. Inflorescences borne on terminals above foliage, arising from leaf axils. Disc and ray florets arranged acropetally on a capitulum.

Flowering response.—Under natural conditions, plant flower in the autumn/winter in the Northern Hemisphere. At other times of the year, inflorescence initiation and development can be induced under short day/long night conditions.

Quantity of inflorescences.—Inflorescences form at every leaf axil. Usually 9 to 10 inflorescences per flowering stem.

Inflorescence size.—Diameter: About 3 cm. Depth (height): About 1 cm. Diameter of disc: About 8 mm.

Ray florets.—Shape: Long, narrow. Size: Length: About 1.1 cm. Width: About 3 mm. Apex: Obtuse. Base: Attenuate. Margin: Entire. Texture: Satiny, smooth and glabrous. Aspect: Flat. Number of ray florets per inflorescence: About 30. Color: When opening, upper surface: 77C. When opening, under

surface: 77D. Mature, upper surface: 77A, fading to 77B/77C with subsequent development. Mature, under surface: 77C.

Disc florets.—Shape: Fluted, cylindrical. Size: Length: About 7 mm. Width: About 1 mm. Number of disc florets per inflorescence: About 30. Color: Immature: 1A. Mature: 9C.

Peduncle.—Aspect: Strong and angled about 45° to the stem. Length: About 5 cm. Texture: Glabrous. Color: 147A.

Reproductive organs.—Androecium: Present on disc florets only. Anther color: 9C. Pollen: Small amount, 9C in color. Gynoecium: Present on both ray and disc florets. Style color: 154C.

Disease resistance: No known Aster diseases observed to date on plants grown under commercial greenhouse conditions.

Seed production: Seed production has not been observed. It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of Aster plant named Red Monarch, as illustrated and described.

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