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Adolph

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[54] **PETUNIA PLANT NAMED 'ALBERT'**
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A distinct cultivar of Petunia plant named 'Albert', characterized by its purple flowers with reddish purple veins; flowers that do not close at night; floriferous with numerous flowers per plant; vigorous growth habit and rapid growth rate; spreading plant habit and freely branching; and weather tolerance.

2 Drawing Sheets

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The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of Petunia plant, botanically known as *Petunia axillaris*, and hereinafter referred to by the cultivar name 'Albert'.

The new cultivar is a product of a planned breeding program conducted by the inventor in Scharrachbergheim, France. The objective of the breeding program was to create new Petunia cultivars having a spreading plant habit, desirable flower colors and strong plants.

The new cultivar originated from a cross made by the inventor of the inventor's proprietary Petunia selection No. 94H, as the male or pollen parent, with the inventor's Petunia cultivar 'Isidore' (U.S. Plant patent application Ser. No. 08/718,088 filed Sep. 19, 1996), as the female or seed parent, in June, 1994.

The cultivar Albert was discovered and selected by the inventor in March, 1995, as a flowering plant within the progeny of the stated cross in a controlled environment in Scharrachbergheim, France. Asexual reproduction of the new cultivar by terminal cuttings taken at Scharrachbergheim, France, has shown that the unique features of this new Petunia are stable and reproduced true to type in successive generations.

The cultivar 'Albert' has not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in environment such as temperature and light intensity, without, however, any variance in genotype. The following observations, measurements and comparisons describe plants grown in Scharrachbergheim, France, under commercial production conditions.

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be the unique characteristics of 'Albert'. These characteristics in combination distinguish 'Albert' as a new and distinct cultivar:

1. Purple flowers with reddish purple veins.
2. Flowers that do not close at night.
3. Floriferous with numerous flowers per plant.
4. Vigorous growth habit and rapid growth rate.
5. Spreading plant habit and freely branching.
6. Good weather resistance: tolerant to rain, drought and temperature extremes.
7. Slightly resistant to phytopathological mildews.

Plants of the cultivar 'Albert' are similar in flower color to plants of the cultivar 'Surfinia Pink Vein' (not patented). Plants of the cultivar 'Albert' differ from plants of the cultivar 'Surfinia Pink Vein' in the following characteristics:

1. Flowers are larger on plants of the cultivar 'Albert' compared to plants of the cultivar 'Surfinia Pink Vein'.
2. The petal venation on plants of the cultivar 'Albert' is darker than the petal venation on plants of the cultivar 'Surfinia Pink Vein'.

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3. Flowers of plants of the cultivar 'Albert' do not close at night whereas flowers of plants of the cultivar 'Surfinia Pink Vein' close at night.

4. Leaves of the cultivar 'Albert' are larger than leaves of the cultivar 'Surfinia Pink Vein'.

5. Plants of the cultivar 'Albert' do not have an odor whereas plants of the cultivar 'Surfinia Pink Vein' have a distinctive odor.

The accompanying colored photographs illustrate the overall appearance of the new cultivar, showing the colors as true as it is reasonably possible to obtain in colored reproductions of this type.

The first photograph comprises a top perspective view of a typical hanging basket plant of the cultivar 'Albert'.

The second photograph comprises a close-up view of individual flowers of the cultivar 'Albert'.

Flower and foliage colors in the photographs may appear different than the actual 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. Plants used for the description were grown in glass-covered greenhouses during the summer in Scharrachbergheim, France. Measurements are averages or ranges from ten specimens selected at random from five plants.

Botanical classification: *Petunia axillaris* cultivar 'Albert'.
Parentage:

Male or pollen parent.—Inventor's *Petunia axillaris* proprietary selection No. 94H.

Female or seed parent.—Inventor's *Petunia axillaris* cultivar 'Isidore' (U.S. Plant patent application Ser. No. 08/7176,088 filed Sep. 19, 1996).

Propagation:

Type cutting.—Terminal vegetative cuttings.

Time to initiate and develop roots.—About ten days at 20° C. soil temperature.

Rooting habit.—Numerous, fine, fibrous, and well-branched.

Plant description:

Form.—Indeterminate, decumbent, diffuse spreading, viscid, glandular pubescent.

Branching habit.—Freely branching, usually 6 to 8 branches per stem.

Plant height (soil level to top of plant plane).—6.5 to 7.5 cm.

Spreading area of plant.—13 to 15 cm.

Vigor.—Vigorous, rapid growth rate.

Crop time.—10 to 12 weeks from an unrooted cutting to produce a finished and flowering specimen in a 12.5-cm container.

Foliage description.—Leaves simple, generally symmetrical and long persisting. Leaves at first whorled, later alternate, somewhat fleshy. Size: Juvenile: Length: 3 to 4 cm. Width: 2 to 2.5 cm. Mature: Length: 5 to 6 cm. Width: 3.5 to 4 cm. Shape: Ovate. Apex: Acute. Base: Acute. Margin: Entire. Texture: Smooth. Color: Young foliage upper side: 137C. Young foliage under side: 137D. Mature foliage upper side: 137B. Mature foliage under side: 137C.

Stem description.—Diameter: 2 to 3 mm. Internode length: 2 to 4 cm. Color: 137B. Texture: Very pubescent.

Flower description:

Flower type and habit.—Large, single, salverform flowers, facing upwards, axillary. Calyx five-parted, petals united into a flower tube.

Natural flowering season.—Long day responsive, continuously flowers from spring through fall. Flowers self-cleaning.

Quantity.—Numerous flowers per plant.

Flower bud.—Length: 2.5 to 3.5 cm. Diameter: About 8 mm.

Corolla.—Diameter: 5.5 to 7 cm. Height: 3.5 to 4.5 cm. Petal quantity: Five, fused. Petal apex: Rounded.

Margin: Entire, slightly serrated and undulating. Texture: Velvety and smooth. Color: Petal color, adaxial surface: 72B/72C. Petal color, abaxial surface: 74C. Petal vein color, adaxial surface: 74A. Petal vein color, abaxial surface: 80B. Throat: 74A. With extended exposure the outer portion of the petals fade to a lighter purple.

Sepals.—Quantity: Five. Shape: Linear. Apex: Obtuse. Margin: Entire. Aspect: Upright. Color: Abaxial surface: 137C. Adaxial surface: 137D.

Peduncle.—Aspect: Erect. Size: Length: 2 to 2.5 cm. Width: About 1 mm. Color: Green with reddish tint at distal end.

Reproductive organs.—Stigma above anthers, superior ovary. Stamens: Stamen number: Five. Anther size: About 1 mm. Anther color: 94D. Pistils: Stigma color: 137D. Style length: About 1.9 cm. Style color: Yellow green.

Disease Resistance: Slightly resistant to phytopathological mildews.

Seed production: Rarely observed.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of *Petunia* plant named 'Albert', as illustrated and described.

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