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(12) **United States Plant Patent**  
**den Haan**

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(54) **MENTHA PLANT NAMED ‘SNOWCONES PURPLE’**  
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(57) **ABSTRACT**  
A distinct cultivar of *Mentha* plant named ‘Snowcones Purple’, characterized by its compact, outwardly spreading to cascading plant habit; freely branching growth habit; aromatic dark green foliage; and purple-colored flowers arranged in axillary verticillasters.

**1 Drawing Sheet**

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

The present Invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of *Mentha* plant, botanically known as *Mentha pulegium*, and hereinafter referred to by the name ‘Snowcones Purple’.  
The new *Mentha* is a product of a planned breeding program conducted by the Inventor in Steenberg, The Netherlands. The objective of the breeding program is to create new *Menth*as with a compact plant habit and attractive flower color. The new *Mentha* originated from a cross made by the Inventor in 1996 of a proprietary *Mentha pulegium* seedling selection identified as Men-96-S-2, not patented, as the female, or seed parent, with a proprietary *Mentha pulegium* seedling selection identified as Men-96-01-02, not patented, as the male, or pollen parent. The new *Mentha* was selected as a single plant from the resulting progeny by the Inventor in a controlled environment in Steenberg, The Netherlands in 1996, on the basis of its compact growth habit and purple-colored flowers.  
Asexual reproduction of the new cultivar by terminal cuttings taken in a controlled environment in Steenberg, The Netherlands since 1996, has shown that the unique features of this new *Mentha* are stable and reproduced true to type in successive generations.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

Plants of the cultivar Snowcones Purple have not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in environment and culture such as temperature, light intensity, daylength, water status, and/or fertilizer rate or type without, however, any variance in genotype.  
The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be the unique characteristics of ‘Snowcones Purple’. These characteristics in combination distinguish ‘Snowcones Purple’ as a new and distinct cultivar:  
1. Compact, outwardly spreading to cascading plant habit.  
2. Freely branching growth habit.  
3. Aromatic dark green foliage.  
4. Purple-colored flowers arranged in axillary verticillasters.

Plants of the new *Mentha* differ from plants of the parent selections and known cultivars of *Mentha* primarily in plant habit as plants of the new *Mentha* are more compact than plants of the parent selections and other known cultivars of *Mentha*.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS**

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. Colors in the photographs may differ slightly from the color values cited in the detailed botanical description which accurately describe the colors of the new *Mentha*.  
The photograph at the top of the sheet comprises a side perspective view of a typical plant of ‘Snowcones Purple’.  
The photograph at the bottom of the sheet comprises a close-up view of typical inflorescences and leaves of ‘Snowcones Purple’.

**DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION**

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 grown for 12-weeks in 15-cm containers and pinched once were used for the photographs and following description. Plants were grown in a polycarbonate-covered greenhouse in Lompoc, Calif. during the late winter/early spring with day temperatures ranging from 18 to 24° C., night temperatures ranging from 16 to 18° C., and light levels ranging from 4,000 to 8,000 foot-candles.  
Botanical classification: *Mentha pulegium* cultivar Snowcones Purple.  
Parentage:  
*Female parent*.—Proprietary *Mentha pulegium* seedling selection identified as Men-96-S-2, not patented.  
*Male parent*.—Proprietary *Mentha pulegium* seedling selection identified as Men-96-01-02, not patented.  
Propagation:  
*Type cutting*.—Terminal cuttings.  
*Time to initiate roots, summer and winter*.—About 5 days at 18° C.

*Time to develop roots, summer and winter.*—About 14 days at 18° C.

*Root description.*—Fine, fibrous.

*Rooting habit.*—Freely branching, dense.

Plant description:

*Form.*—Compact and outwardly spreading to cascading growth habit. Lateral branches initially upright, but tend to cascade with subsequent development. Freely branching with about 20 lateral branches developing after pinching. Vigorous.

*Plant height.*—About 24 cm.

*Plant diameter.*—About 48 cm.

*Lateral branches.*—Length: About 54 cm. Diameter: About 4 mm. Internode length: Vegetative branches: About 2 cm. Flowering branches: About 4.75 cm. Strength: Flexible, but strong. Texture: Glabrous, smooth. Color: 150D.

*Foliage description.*—Leaves simple, generally symmetrical and long-persisting; opposite; sessile. Length: About 3.3 cm. Width: About 8 mm. Shape: Narrowly elliptic to almost linear. Apex: Acute. Base: Truncate. Margin: Entire. Texture, upper surface: Smooth, glabrous. Texture, lower surface: Smooth, glabrous and glandular. Venation pattern: Pinnate to slightly arcuate. Fragrance: Pennyroyal; aromatic, pungent, kerosene-like. Color: Young foliage, upper surface: 147A. Young foliage, lower surface: 147B. Mature foliage, upper surface: 147A; venation, 147C. Mature foliage, lower surface: 147A; venation, 147B.

Flower description:

*Flower type and habit.*—Small single flowers arranged in axillary verticillasters, two verticillasters per node; individual flowers face upward or outward depending on position in verticillaster. Freely flowering; about three nodes per lateral branch in flower at one time, with about 80 flowers per verticillaster, or about 480 flowers per flowering branch. Verticillasters and individual flowers, sessile. Flower self-cleaning.

*Natural flowering season.*—Summer and fall, flowering continuous during this period.

*Flower longevity on the plant.*—About 5 to 7 days.

*Fragrance.*—Slightly fragrant, oily.

*Verticillaster height.*—About 1.5 cm.

*Verticillaster diameter.*—About 2 cm.

*Flowers.*—Appearance: Actinomorphic, somewhat salverform; four-parted, petals fused at base, separate and somewhat erect towards apex. Diameter: At petal apices: About 4 mm. At petal base, fused: About 1 mm. Height: About 8 mm.

*Flower buds (showing color).*—Length: About 4 mm. Diameter: About 1 mm. Shape: Ovoid. Color: 92A.

*Corolla.*—Petal arrangement/appearance: Single whorl of four petals, fused at base and separate towards apices. Petal length: About 6 mm. Petal width: About 1 mm. Petal shape: Ligulate. Petal apex: Rounded. Petal margin: Entire. Petal texture: Smooth, satiny. Petal color: Upper surface, when opening: 85C. Lower surface, when opening: 85B. Upper and lower surfaces, fully opened: 85A to 85B.

*Calyx.*—Quantity/arrangement: One single calyx tube per flower; four fused sepals. Length: About 3 mm. Diameter: About 1 mm. Shape: Tubular or cup-shaped. Apex: Acute. Texture: Smooth. Color, both surfaces: 147C to 147D.

*Bracts.*—Quantity/arrangement: Five per axil subtending each verticillaster or 10 per node. Initially enclosing the flower buds, then as inflorescences open, bracts recurved back towards lateral branch. Length: About 5 mm. Width: About 4 mm. Shape: Elliptic. Apex: Acute. Texture: Smooth. Color, both surfaces: 147A.

*Reproductive organs.*—Stamens: Quantity: Four per flower. Anther shape: Ovoid. Anther length: Less than 1 mm. Anther color: 155D. Pollen amount: Scarce. Pollen color: 156C. Pistils: Quantity: One per flower. Pistil length: About 7 mm. Stigma shape: Forked. Stigma color: 155D. Style length: About 5 mm. Style color: 155D. Ovary color: 144B.

*Seed.*—Seed production has not been observed.

Disease/pest resistance: Plants of the new *Mentha* have not been noted to be resistant to pathogens or pests common to *Mentha*.

Weather tolerance: Plants of the new *Mentha* have been observed to be tolerant to rain, wind and temperatures from 4 to 30° C.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of *Mentha* plant named 'Snowcones Purple', as illustrated and described.

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