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Takamura et al.

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(54) **CATHARANTHUS PLANT NAMED**
‘SUNNICHIOHO’

(50) Latin Name: *Catharanthus roseus*
Varietal Denomination: **Sunnichihoho**

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See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of *Catharanthus* plant named
‘Sunnichihoho’, characterized by its trailing plant habit; vig-
orous growth habit; freely branching habit; freely flowering
habit; long flowering period; large pinkish white-colored
flowers with red purple-colored centers; and good garden
performance.

1 Drawing Sheet

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Botanical designation: *Catharanthus roseus*.
Cultivar denomination: ‘Sunnichihoho’.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar
of *Catharanthus*, botanically known as *Catharanthus roseus*
and hereinafter referred to by the name ‘Sunnichihoho’.

The new *Catharanthus* is a product of a planned breeding
program conducted by the Inventors in Higashiomi, Shiga,
Japan. The objective of the breeding program is to develop
new freely branching and flowering *Catharanthus* cultivars
with trailing plant habit and attractive and unique flower
coloration.

The new *Catharanthus* originated from a self-pollination
conducted by the Inventors in Higashiomi, Shiga, Japan in
2003 of a proprietary selection of *Catharanthus roseus* iden-
tified as code number 03CAT-20, not patented. The new
Catharanthus was discovered and selected by the Inventors as
a flowering plant from within the progeny of the stated self-
pollination in a controlled greenhouse environment in
Higashiomi, Shiga, Japan in 2004.

Asexual reproduction of the new *Catharanthus* by vegeta-
tive cuttings in a controlled greenhouse environment in
Higashiomi, Shiga, Japan since 2004, has shown that the
unique features of this new *Catharanthus* are stable and
reproduced true to type in successive generations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The new *Catharanthus* has not been observed under all
possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary
somewhat with variations in environment and cultural prac-
tices such as temperature, daylength and light intensity with-
out, however, any variance in genotype.

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are
determined to be the unique characteristics of ‘Sunnichi-
hoho’. These characteristics in combination distinguish ‘Sun-
nichihoho’ as a new and distinct cultivar of *Catharanthus*:

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1. Trailing plant habit.
2. Vigorous growth habit.
3. Freely branching habit.
4. Freely flowering habit.
5. Long flowering period.
6. Large pinkish white-colored flowers with red purple-
colored centers.
7. Good garden performance.

Plants of the new *Catharanthus* can be compared to plants
of the parent selection. Plants of the new *Catharanthus* differ
from plants of the parent selection in the following charac-
teristics:

1. Plants of the new *Catharanthus* are smaller than plants of
the parent selection.
2. Plants of the new *Catharanthus* are more trailing in plant
habit than plants of the parent selection.
3. Plants of the new *Catharanthus* are more freely branch-
ing than plants of the parent selection.
4. Plants of the new *Catharanthus* have pinkish white-
colored flowers whereas plants of the parent selection
have pure white-colored flowers.

Plants of the new *Catharanthus* can also be compared to
plants of ‘Nirvana Cascade White’, not patented. In side-by-
side comparisons conducted in Higashiomi, Shiga, Japan,
plants of the new *Catharanthus* and ‘Nirvana Cascade White’
differed in the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new *Catharanthus* were taller than and not
as broad as plants of ‘Nirvana Cascade White’.
2. Plants of the new *Catharanthus* were more freely
branching than plants of ‘Nirvana Cascade White’.
3. Plants of the new *Catharanthus* had longer and narrower
petals than plants of ‘Nirvana Cascade White’.
4. Plants of the new *Catharanthus* and ‘Nirvana Cascade
White’ differed slightly in flower color as plants of ‘Nir-
vana Cascade White’ had pure white-colored flowers.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The accompanying colored photographs illustrate the over-
all appearance of the new *Catharanthus*, 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 *Catharanthus*.

The photograph at the top of the sheet comprises a side perspective view of a typical flowering plant of 'Sunnichi-hoho' grown in a container.

The photograph at the bottom of the sheet comprises a close-up view of typical flowers and leaves of 'Sunnichi-hoho'.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The aforementioned photographs and following observations, measurements and values describe plants grown in 13 cm containers in Higashiomi, Shiga, Japan, under commercial practice during the summer in an outdoor nursery. During the production of the plants, day temperatures averaged 25° C. and night temperatures averaged 15° C. Plants used for the description had been growing for four months. Plants used for the photographs had been growing for six months. In the following description, color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart, 2001 Edition, except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used.

Botanical classification: *Catharanthus roseus* 'Sunnichi-hoho'.

Parentage:

Female, or seed, parent.—Proprietary selection of *Catharanthus roseus* identified as code number 03CAT-20, not patented.

Male, or pollen, parent.—Proprietary selection of *Catharanthus roseus* identified as code number 03CAT-20, not patented.

Propagation:

Type.—By vegetative cuttings.

Time to initiate roots, summer.—About two weeks at 30° C.

Time to initiate roots, winter.—About three weeks at 25° C.

Time to produce a rooted young plant, summer.—About five weeks at 30° C.

Time to produce a rooted young plant, winter.—About six weeks at 25° C.

Root description.—Fibrous; white in color.

Rooting habit.—Freely branching; moderately dense.

Plant description:

Plant and growth habit.—Trailing plant habit. Freely branching with about twelve primary lateral branches developing per plant. Vigorous growth habit.

Plant height.—About 16.6 cm.

Plant diameter.—About 34.2 cm.

Lateral branch description:

Length.—About 21 cm.

Diameter.—About 2.8 mm.

Internode length.—About 1.7 cm.

Strength.—Strong.

Aspect.—Outward.

Texture.—Pubescent.

Color.—Close to 145C.

Foliage description:

Arrangement.—Opposite, simple.

Length.—About 6.3 cm.

Width.—About 2.1 cm.

Shape.—Narrowly elliptic.

Apex.—Acute.

Base.—Obtuse.

Margin.—Entire.

Texture, upper and lower surfaces.—Sparsely pubescent.

Venation pattern.—Pinnate; reticulate.

Color.—Developing leaves, upper surface: Close to 143A. Developing leaves, lower surface: Close to 137C. Fully expanded leaves, upper surface: Close to 137A; venation, close to 145D. Fully expanded leaves, lower surface: Close to 137C; venation, close to 145D.

Petiole.—Length: About 4.6 mm. Diameter: About 1.5 mm. Texture, upper and lower surfaces: Sparsely pubescent. Color, upper and lower surfaces: Close to 145D.

Flower description:

Flower arrangement and habit.—Single salverform flowers arising from upper leaf axils. Freely flowering habit with usually about 25 flowers per plant at one time. Flowers face upright or outwardly.

Fragrance.—Not detected.

Natural flowering season.—Long flowering period; flowering commences naturally during the spring and plants flower continuously throughout the summer until late autumn in Japan.

Flower longevity.—Individual flowers last about two to three days on the plant. Flowers not persistent.

Flower diameter.—About 5.1 cm.

Flower length (depth).—About 4.2 cm.

Throat diameter.—About 2 mm.

Tube length.—About 3.1 cm.

Tube diameter, at the base.—About 1.9 mm.

Flower bud.—Shape: Cylindrical. Length: About 2.7 cm. Diameter: About 3.2 mm. Color: Close to 159C.

Corolla.—Arrangement: Five petals fused at the base and flaring outwardly forming a star-shaped flower. Petal length from throat: About 2.7 cm. Petal width: About 2.1 cm. Petal shape: Obovate. Petal apex: Mucronate with emarginate tendencies. Petal base: Attenuate. Petal margin: Entire. Petal texture, upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous; velvety. Throat texture: Smooth, glabrous. Tube texture: Sparsely pubescent. Color: Petal, when opening and fully opened, upper surface: Close to 56D; "eye", close to 60B. Color becoming closer to N155C with development. Petal, when opening and fully opened, lower surface: Close to N155B. Throat: Close to 145C. Tube: Close to 145C.

Calyx.—Arrangement: One star-shaped calyx tube with five sepals fused at the base per flower. Sepal length: About 4.4 mm. Sepal width: About 1 mm. Sepal shape: Lanceolate. Sepal apex: Acute. Sepal margin: Entire. Sepal texture, upper and lower surfaces: Sparsely pubescent. Color, immature and mature, upper surface: Close to 143A. Color, immature and mature, lower surface: Close to 143A.

Peduncles.—Length: About 3 mm. Diameter: About 1.6 mm. Angle: Upright to outward. Strength: Strong. Texture: Smooth, glabrous. Color: Close to 145B.

Reproductive organs.—Stamens: Quantity/arrangement: Five per flower. Stamen length: About 2.8 mm. Anther shape: Ellipsoidal. Anther size: About 2.9 mm by 1.1 mm. Anther color: Close to 154C. Pollen

amount: Moderate. Pollen color: Close to 1D. Pistils:
Quantity: One per flower. Pistil length: About 2.6 cm.
Style color: Close to 145D. Stigma shape: Narrowly
ellipsoidal. Stigma color: Close to 145A. Ovary color:
Close to 145A. Seed/fruit: Seed and fruit develop- 5
ment have not been observed on plants of the new
Catharanthus.
Garden performance: Plants of the new *Catharanthus* have
been observed to have good garden performance and to
tolerate wind, rain and temperatures ranging from about 5° 10
C. to about 35° C. to 40° C.

Pathogen/pest resistance: Plants of the new *Catharanthus*
have not been observed to be resistant to pests and patho-
gens common to *Catharanthus*.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct *Catharanthus* plant named ‘Sun-
nichihoho’ as illustrated and described.

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