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(54) **PHLOX PLANT NAMED ‘BALSUKAFUS’**

(50) Latin Name: *Phlox paniculata*
Varietal Denomination: **Balsukafus**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**
A new and distinct cultivar of *Phlox* plant named ‘Balsukafus’, characterized by its deep reddish-purple colored flowers, dark green-colored foliage, and vigorous, upright growth habit, is disclosed.

1 Drawing Sheet

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Latin name of genus and species of plant claimed: *Phlox paniculata*.

Variety denomination: ‘Balsukafus’.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of *Phlox* plant botanically known as *Phlox paniculata* and hereinafter referred to by the cultivar name ‘Balsukafus’.

The new cultivar originated in a controlled breeding program in Guadalupe, Calif. during September 2014. The objective of the breeding program was the development of *Phlox* cultivars with large sized flowers, increased powdery mildew resistance and a vigorous, upright growth habit.

The new *Phlox* cultivar is the result of open-pollination. The female (seed) parent of the new cultivar is the proprietary *Phlox paniculata* breeding selection coded nct-19188-1, not patented, characterized by its dark red-purple colored flowers, dark green-colored foliage, and moderately vigorous, upright growth habit. The male (pollen) parent of the new cultivar is unknown. The new cultivar was selected as a single flowering plant within the progeny of the above stated open-pollination during August 2015 in a controlled environment in Guadalupe, Calif.

Asexual reproduction of the new cultivar by terminal stem cuttings since August 2015 in Guadalupe, Calif. and Elburn, Ill. has demonstrated that the new cultivar reproduces true to type with all of the characteristics, as herein described, firmly fixed and retained through successive generations of such asexual propagation.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The following characteristics of the new cultivar have been repeatedly observed and can be used to distinguish ‘Balsukafus’ as a new and distinct cultivar of *Phlox* plant:

1. Deep reddish-purple colored flowers;
2. Dark green-colored foliage; and
3. Vigorous, upright growth habit.

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Plants of the new cultivar differ from plants of the female parent primarily in having a lighter shade of reddish-purple colored flowers, increased branching, and a increased growth vigor.

Of the many commercially available *Phlox* cultivars, the most similar in comparison to the new cultivar is KA-POW Pink ‘Balkapopink’, U.S. Plant Pat. No. 30,779. However, in side by side comparisons, plants of the new cultivar differ from plants of ‘Balkapopink’ in at least the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new cultivar have larger primary inflorescences than plants of ‘Balkapopink’;
2. Plants of the new cultivar have larger diameter flowers than plants of ‘Balkapopink’; and
3. Plants of the new cultivar have a deep reddish-purple flower color that is different from the rose-pink colored flowers of plants of ‘Balkapopink’.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The accompanying photographs show, as nearly true as it is reasonably possible to make the same in color illustrations of this type, typical flower and foliage characteristics of the new cultivar. Colors in the photographs differ slightly from the color values cited in the detailed description, which accurately describes the colors of ‘Balsukafus’. The plants were approximately five months old. The plants were grown in one-gallon containers for approximately 12 weeks in an outdoor nursery in West Chicago, Ill. Plants were given two pinches prior to transplant.

FIG. 1 illustrates a side view of the overall growth and flowering habit of ‘Balsukafus’.

FIG. 2 illustrates a close-up view of an individual inflorescence of ‘Balsukafus’.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The new cultivar has not been observed under all possible environmental conditions to date. Accordingly, it is possible

that the phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in the environment, such as temperature, light intensity, and day length, without, however, any variance in genotype.

The chart used in the identification of colors described herein is The R.H.S. Colour Chart of The Royal Horticultural Society, London, England, 2015 edition, except where general color terms of ordinary significance are used. The color values were determined in July 2020 under natural light conditions in Naperville, Ill.

The following descriptions and measurements describe approximately five-month old plants produced from cuttings from stock plants and grown under conditions comparable to those used in commercial practice. The plants were grown in one-gallon containers for approximately 12 weeks in an outdoor nursery in West Chicago, Ill. Plants were given two pinches prior to transplant. Prior to transplant plants were grown in liners in a poly-covered greenhouse in West Chicago, Ill. Greenhouse temperatures ranged from an average high of 69.3° F. (20.7° C.) to an average low of 63.6° F. (17.6° C.), and supplemental lighting was provided daily for five hours during short days. Measurements and numerical values represent averages of typical plants.

Botanical classification: *Phlox paniculata* 'Balsukafus'.

Parentage:

Female parent.—Proprietary *Phlox paniculata* breeding selection coded nct-19188-1, not patented.

Male parent.—Unknown.

Propagation:

Type cutting.—Terminal stem.

Time to initiate roots.—Approximately 10 to 12 days.

Time to produce a rooted cutting.—Approximately 42 to 49 days.

Root description.—Fine to medium thickness, medium density.

Rooting habit.—Freely branching, medium density.

Plant description:

Commercial crop time.—Approximately 10 to 12 weeks from a rooted cutting to finish in a 15 cm pot.

Growth habit and general appearance.—Herbaceous perennial, vigorous, upright growth habit.

Hardiness.—USDA Zone 4b (−20° F. to −25° F./−28.9° C. to −31.7° C).

Size.—Height: Approximately 37.0 cm. Width: Approximately 39.0 cm.

Branching habit.—Freely branching, pinching will improve branching.

Branch.—Quantity: Approximately 6 main branches. Shape: Round. Strength: Strong. Length to base of inflorescence: Approximately 14.0 cm. Diameter: Approximately 5.0 mm. Length of central internode: Approximately 2.0 cm. Texture: Glabrous. Color of young stems: 146B with a heavy overlay of 187A. Color of mature stems: 146B with a heavy overlay of 187A, becoming woody 199B to 199D with age.

Foliage description:

General description.—Quantity of leaves per main branch: Approximately 14. Fragrance: None detected. Form: Simple. Arrangement: Opposite, decussate.

Leaves.—Shape: Elliptic, slightly carinate. Margin: Entire, minutely ciliate. Apex: Acute. Base: Attenuate. Venation pattern: Pinnate. Length: Approximately 8.0 cm. Width: Approximately 3.5 cm. Texture of upper surface: Sparsely pubescent. Texture of lower surface: Glabrous. Color of upper surface of

young foliage: NN137B with venation of 146D. Color of lower surface of young foliage: Closest to 147B with venation of 146D. Color of upper surface of mature foliage: Closest to but darker than NN137A with venation of 146D. Color of lower surface of mature foliage: Closest to 147B with venation of 146D.

Petioles.—Length: Approximately 3.0 mm. Width: Approximately 2.0 mm to 3.0 mm. Texture: Glabrous. Color: 146D tinted with N187A.

Flowering description:

Flowering habit.—'Balsukafus' is a long day obligate and is freely flowering under outdoor growing conditions with substantially continuous blooming from late spring throughout summer.

Lastingness of individual flower on the plant.—Approximately 10 days.

Inflorescence description:

General description.—Type: Compound terminal panicle, flowers face upright and outwardly, self-cleaning. Quantity per plant: Approximately 6. Fragrance: Moderately sweet and pleasant. Height of primary: Approximately 9.0 cm. Width of primary: Approximately 14.0 cm. Quantity of fully open flowers per primary inflorescence: Approximately 37. Height of secondary: Approximately 5.5 cm. Width of secondary: 6.0 cm. Quantity of fully open flowers per secondary inflorescence: Approximately 3.

Peduncle.—Strength: Strong. Aspect: Primary erect, axillary acute angle to stem. Length of primary: Approximately 3.3 cm. Diameter of primary: Approximately 3.0 mm. Length of axillary: Approximately 3.0 cm. Diameter of axillary: Approximately 2.0 mm. Texture: Glabrous. Color: 146B with a heavy overlay of 187A.

Flower description:

Type.—Single.

Bud.—Rate of opening: Generally takes 3 to 4 days for bud to progress from first color to fully open flower.

Bud just before opening.—Shape: Oblanceolate. Length: Approximately 1.7 cm. Diameter: Approximately 4.0 mm. Color: Calyx of 146D with an overlay of N186A that is heaviest at apex and petal portion of N81A to N81B.

Corolla.—Shape: Salverform. Diameter: Approximately 3.0 cm. Depth: Approximately 2.6 cm.

Petals.—Quantity: 5 in a single whorl, base fused into a narrow tube. Lobe shape: Obovate. Margin: Entire. Apex: Obtuse to slightly notched. Lobe length: Approximately 1.2 cm. Lobe width: Approximately 1.4 cm. Texture of upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous. Color of upper surface when first open: NN78A tinted with 71A, 67A at orifice. Color of lower surface when first open: NN81D with NN78C. Color of upper surface when fully open: NN78A to NN78B tinted with 71A to 71B. Color of lower surface when fully open: N82B to N82C with NN78C to NN78D.

Corolla tube.—Length: Approximately 2.0 cm. Diameter at distal end: Approximately 3.0 mm. Diameter at proximal end: Approximately 2.0 mm. Texture of outer surface: Moderately pubescent. Texture of inner surface: Smooth, glabrous with lower 5.0 mm

densely pubescent. Color of inner surface: N82B with 145D at base. Color of outer surface: N82A to N82B, 145D at base.

Calyx.—Shape: Cupped. Length: Approximately 9.0 mm. Diameter: Approximately 3.0 mm.

Sepals.—Quantity per flower: 5, lower half fused. Shape: Lanceolate. Apex: Narrowly apiculate. Length: Approximately 9.0 mm. Width: Approximately 2.0 mm. Texture of outer surface: Sparsely pubescent. Texture of inner surface: Smooth, glabrous. Color of inner surface: 146C with tip and margins of N186A. Color of outer surface: 146D with a heavy overlay of N186A.

Pedicel.—Strength: Strong, flexible. Aspect: Primary erect, axillary acute angle to peduncle. Length: Approximately 5.0 mm. Diameter: Approximately 1.0 mm. Texture: Densely pubescent. Color: 146C typically tinted with N186A.

Reproductive organs.—Androecium: Stamen quantity: 5 per flower, adnate to corolla tube. Stamen length:

Approximately 1.9 cm. Filament length of free portion: Approximately 1.0 mm. Anther shape: Sagittate. Anther length: Approximately 2.0 mm. Anther color: 158B. Pollen amount: Abundant. Pollen color: 155D. Gynoecium: Pistil quantity: 1 per flower. Pistil length: Approximately 1.9 cm. Stigma shape: Cleft, three-parted. Stigma length: Approximately 1.0 mm. Stigma color: 145D. Style length: Approximately 1.5 cm. Style color: 145D. Ovary length: Approximately 3.0 mm. Ovary color: 144A.

Seed and fruit production: Neither seed nor fruit production has been observed.

Disease and pest resistance: Increased resistance to powdery mildew has been observed.

What is claimed is:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of *Phlox* plant named 'Balsukafus', substantially as herein illustrated and described.

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FIG. 1

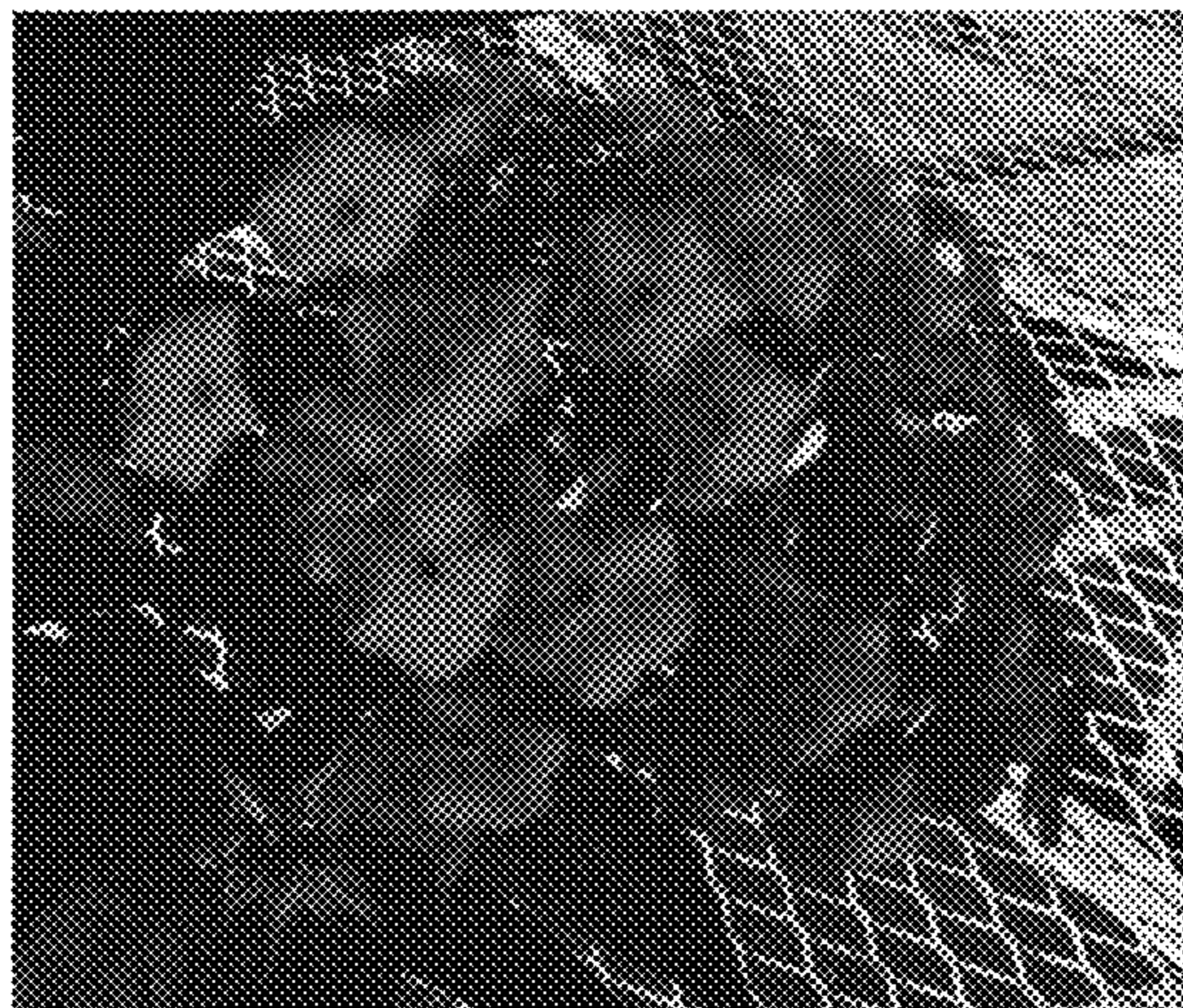


FIG. 2