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(12) **United States Plant Patent**
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(54) **PHLOX PLANT NAMED ‘BALSUKACO’**

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

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of *Phlox* plant named ‘Balsukaco’, characterized by its light purplish-pink colored flowers, medium green colored foliage, and vigorous, upright growth habit, is disclosed.

1 Drawing Sheet

1

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

Variety denomination: ‘Balsukaco’.

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 ‘Balsukaco’.

The new cultivar originated in a controlled breeding program in Guadalupe, Calif. during July 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 cross-pollination. The female (seed) parent of the new cultivar is Coral Crème Drop ‘Ditomdre’, U.S. Plant Pat. No. 20,907, characterized by its light red colored flowers, dark green colored foliage, and moderately vigorous, upright growth habit. The male (pollen) parent of the new cultivar is ‘Jade’, U.S. Plant Pat. No. 21,878, characterized by its white colored flowers with green colored tips, medium green colored foliage, and moderately vigorous, upright-compact growth habit. The new cultivar was selected as a single flowering plant within the progeny of the above stated cross-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 West Chicago, 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 ‘Balsukaco’ as a new and distinct cultivar of *Phlox* plant:

2

1. Light purplish-pink colored flowers;
2. Medium green colored foliage; and
3. Vigorous, upright growth habit.

Plants of the new cultivar differ from plants of the female parent primarily in having a slight lighter shade of flower color and higher growth vigor. Plants of the new cultivar differ from plants of the male parent primarily in having light purplish-pink colored flowers, larger diameter corollas, and higher growth vigor.

Of the many commercially available *Phlox* cultivars, the most similar in comparison to the new cultivar is Super Ka-Pow Pink ‘Balsukapin’, U.S. Plant Pat. No. 33,188. However, in side-by-side comparisons, plants of the new cultivar differ from plants of ‘Balsukapin’ in at least the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new cultivar have a lighter flower color than plants of ‘Balsukapin’;
2. Plants of the new cultivar have smaller diameter corollas than plants of ‘Balsukapin’; and
3. Plants of the new cultivar have smaller diameter primary inflorescences than plants of ‘Balsukapin’.

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 ‘Balsukaco’. The plants were approximately five months old. The plants were grown three plants per pot in three-quart containers for approximately 9 weeks in an outdoor nursery in West Chicago, Ill. Plants were given two pinches prior to transplant and one pinch one week after transplant.

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

FIG. 2 illustrates a close-up view of an individual inflorescence of 'Balsukaco'.

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 RHS 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 2021 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 three plants per pot in three-quart containers for approximately 9 weeks in an outdoor nursery in West Chicago, Ill. Plants were given two pinches prior to transplant and one pinch one week after 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 an average high of 79.5° F. (26.4° C.) to an average low of 68.5° F. (20.3° 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* 'Balsukaco'.

Parentage:

Female parent.—Coral Crème Drop 'Ditondre', U.S. Plant Pat. No. 20,907.

Male parent.—'Jade', U.S. Plant Pat. No. 21,878.

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.

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 (−25° F. to −20° F./−31.7° C. to −28.9° C.).

Size.—Height: Approximately 25.0 cm. Width: Approximately 27.5 cm.

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

Branch.—Quantity: Approximately 4 main branches. Shape: Round. Strength: Moderately strong. Length to base of inflorescence: Approximately 8.5 cm. Diameter: Approximately 3.0 mm to 4.0 mm. Length of central internode: Approximately 2.2 cm. Texture: Sparsely pubescent. Color of young stems: 146B. Color of mature stems: 146A to 146B, becoming woody 199B with age.

Foliage description:

General description.—Quantity of leaves per main branch: Approximately 12. 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 6.5 cm. Width: Approximately 2.5 cm. Texture of upper surface: Sparsely pubescent. Texture of lower surface: Glabrous. Color of upper surface of young foliage: 137B 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: 137A with venation of 146D. Color of lower surface of mature foliage: Closest to 147B with venation of 146D.

Petioles.—Length: Approximately 2.0 mm. Width: Approximately 3.0 mm. Texture: Glabrous. Color: 146D.

Flowering description:

Flowering habit.—'Balsukaco' 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 7. Fragrance: Moderately sweet and pleasant. Height of primary: Approximately 7.0 cm. Width of primary: Approximately 10.0 cm. Quantity of fully open flowers per primary inflorescence: Approximately 15. Height of secondary: Approximately 4.0 cm. Width of secondary: 7.5 cm. Quantity of fully open flowers per secondary inflorescence: Approximately 7.

Peduncle.—Strength: Strong. Aspect: Primary erect, axillary acute angle to stem. Length of primary: Approximately 2.0 cm. Diameter of primary: Approximately 2.0 mm to 3.0 mm. Length of axillary: Approximately 3.0 cm. Diameter of axillary: Approximately 1.0 mm. Texture: Densely pubescent. Color: 146B mottled with N187A.

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 1.1 cm. Diameter: Approximately 4.0 mm. Color: Calyx of 146B with an overlay of N186A at tips and petal portion of 70A to 70B.

Corolla.—Shape: Salverform. Diameter: Approximately 2.8 cm. Depth: Approximately 2.9 cm.

Petals.—Quantity: 5 in a single whorl, base fused into a narrow tube. Lobe shape: Obovate. Margin: Entire. Apex: Obtuse. Lobe length: Approximately 1.2 cm. Lobe width: Approximately 1.5 cm. Texture of upper and lower surfaces: Smooth, glabrous. Color of upper surface when first open: 55B to 55A faintly tinted with 70B and with darkest color at petal edges, 70B at orifice. Color of lower surface when first

open: 55B to 55C with a swirl of 70B on uppermost of overlapping edges. Color of upper surface when fully open: 55C to 55A with darkest color at petal edges, 70B at orifice. Color of lower surface when fully open: 55B to 55D with a swirl of 70B on uppermost of overlapping edges.

Corolla tube.—Length: Approximately 2.1 cm. Diameter at distal end: Approximately 3.0 mm. Diameter at proximal end: Approximately 2.0 mm. Texture of outer surface: Sparsely pubescent. Texture of inner surface: Smooth, glabrous with lower 6.0 mm densely pubescent. Color of inner surface: Closest to 70A with 145D at base. Color of outer surface: 71A with 145D at base.

Calyx.—Shape: Cupped. Length: Approximately 1.1 cm. Diameter: Approximately 3.0 mm.

Sepals.—Quantity per flower: 5, lower half fused. Shape: Lanceolate. Apex: Narrowly apiculate. Length: Approximately 1.1 cm. Width: Approximately 2.0 mm. Texture of outer surface: Sparsely pubescent. Texture of inner surface: Smooth, glabrous. Color of inner surface: 146C with tip of N186A. Color of outer surface: 146C mottled with N186A.

Pedicel.—Strength: Strong, flexible. Aspect: Primary erect, axillary acute angle to peduncle. Length:

Approximately 3.0 mm. Diameter: Approximately 1.0 mm. Texture: Densely pubescent. Color: 146B mottled with N186A.

Reproductive organs.—Androecium: Stamen quantity: 5 per flower, adnate to corolla tube. Stamen length: Approximately 2.1 cm. Filament length of free portion: Approximately 1.0 mm. Anther shape: Sagittate. Anther length: Approximately 3.0 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 1.6 cm. Style color: 145D. Ovary length: Approximately 2.0 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 'Balsukaco', substantially as herein illustrated and described.

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FIG. 1



FIG. 2