



2019 ASCFG Hardy Eucalyptus Trial Report

**John Dole, Nathan Jahnke,
Ben Bergmann, and Judy Laushman**

'Funky Monkey'

With its silvery leaves and distinctive fragrance, eucalyptus has long been a favorite of floral designers and bouquet makers. While most cut eucalyptus comes from tropical or semi-tropical environments, its popularity has led many temperate zone growers to produce fast-growing cultivars outdoors or in high tunnels. The desire to provide locally-grown eucalyptus prompted the ASCFG to conduct a cold-hardy eucalyptus trial in 2019, with the cooperation of Southern Eucs, a company that specializes in cold-hardy eucalyptus. While the program got off to a bit of a rocky start with shipping problems in the spring, we already have some results. All Trialers are growing them in the field, so we should have a good indication of cold hardiness next year.

At this point in the multi-year trial, 'Funky Monkey', with its small green leaves on reddish stems, appears to be the favorite. The foliage is variable, with some leaves more pointed than others, and some plants had a "very lovely purplish coloring". In this first year, Trialers were already getting an average of 5.3 stems, averaging 13 inches long, per plant, with responses ranging from 9 to 20 inches. Vase life is excellent, with one Trialer reporting 2+ weeks and another 10-14 days.

Next is 'Cab Sav', which produced four stems per plant, ranging in length from 10 to 15 inches. This well-branched cultivar bears dusky green leaves.

'Big O' is a well-named cultivar with large silvery leaves. It was also by far the fastest-growing cultivar in the Trial. Not surprisingly, it had the longest stem length, 14.5 inches, with an average of 4.5 stems per plant. One Trialer reported a 14-day vase life.

The most refined foliage was found on 'Angus', which had a multitude of long, narrow leaves. One Trialer reported trouble getting it to hydrate, but another noted that it had a 2+ week vase life. Trialers harvested an average of 3.9 stems per plant, which ranged in length from 10 to 18 inches.

Finishing the list is 'Sheila' with medium-sized, slightly elongated leaves. Trialers reported harvesting about 2 stems per plant that were 10 to 13 inches long.

Of the five cultivars, based on the combined ratings score (market appreciation + repeat again + ease of cultivation), the top-ranked cultivars were 'Big O', 'Cab Sav', and 'Funky Monkey'. These cultivars will be nominated for the ASCFG Cut Flower of the Year.

Interpreting the Trial results: The numbers reported are averages of all the respondents. Many factors will affect the success of any cultivar. Our participants grow and harvest trial plants using several methods. After looking at the average, check the range of responses listed below each number to see how the cultivar performed at its best and its worst. If the range of responses in the ratings is narrow and high, e.g. 3-5 or 4-5, the plant was a winner for most of the respondents and is likely to do well for you. The “Repeat Again Rating” is particularly important because it indicates if the Trialer would take the time, money, and space to actually grow the cultivar again. Review the trial results carefully. If a variety sounds interesting, but did not appear to do well, try it anyway—it may work well for you.

Acknowledgments: Thank you to each of the four evaluators who returned their Trial reports! We very much appreciate the time it takes to completely and competently participate in the ASCFG Trial Program. We want to especially thank Jamie Rohda for being the first Trialer to return her evaluations! Thank you to Southern Eucs for providing the plant materials. We also thank Sydney Ruppert and Ingram McCall for assisting with the NCSU trials. In preparing the report we did a bit of editing of the comments for space and clarity; our apologies if we’ve altered the tone or content of anyone’s comments.

Summary of Comments. Note: many respondents did not make specific comments on each cultivar and in a few cases, comments have been shortened because of limited space. The number in a parenthesis refers to the number of respondents who made the comment. If no number is present, only one person made the comment. Comments by each individual are separated with a semicolon (;).

***Eucalyptus nicholii* ‘Angus’**

Good Qualities: Loved the fine texture and slightly reddish stems; Unique structure; I love this cultivar! It is my favorite! I have florists begging for more of it already, love how it is so light, customers would argue that it is too delicate to be a eucalyptus.

Problems: Slower growth rate; Very small plant; Trouble hydrating; I hope the stems will be longer next year.

Similar Cultivars: None (2).

Comments: I truly think this is the best of the cultivars that I am growing; Because of the poor condition of these plants when shipped to us there was only one of this variety that survived to be planted out; Only one plant survived because they all were challenged from the start, this one did not grow very tall, we had high hopes because the leaves are so cool.

Participating Company

Southern Eucs
southerneucs.com

Participating Trialers

Nathan Jahnke/John Dole
NC State University
Raleigh, NC
Zone 7b

Barbara Lamborne
Greenstone Fields
Purcellville, VA
Zone 7a

Mary Royal
The Royal Gardens
Elko, GA
Zone 8a

Jamie Rohda
Harvest Home Flowers
Waverly, NE
Zone 5



‘Angus’



'Big O'

***Eucalyptus neglecta* 'Big O'**

Good Qualities: Blue-green color, sturdy stems, fastest growth rate of the varieties; Huge! I liked the color after a frost; Large leaves, great vase life, customers love it; Size, great for large arrangements, really like how the longest branches have started to make a huge fan shape, love this! have not sold any of the fans yet.

Problems: NA; Maybe too big?

Similar Cultivars: No.

Comments: A very nice addition to the 'Silver Drop' eucalyptus we grow in abundance; We received these plants in very poor condition and only one of this variety survived to be planted outside.

***Eucalyptus rubida* 'Cab Sav'**

Good Qualities: Dusty grey with reddish stems; Stem length and size of leaf are excellent, branching is also good, many customers are looking for a similarly-sized cultivar.

Problems: Very branched stems, 5 of the 6 plants I received died in the first week after I received them.

Similar Cultivars: 'Silver Drop'.

Comments: Of the six plants I received in May, only one survived to

be planted, they died within a week of arrival, this did not seem to affect any of the other cultivars, the one surviving plant has done very well, but I have not harvested as many stems, want to protect what I have, I would love to have more!

***Eucalyptus parvula* 'Funky Monkey'**

Good Qualities: Beautiful coloring on one of them; Smaller green leaves with reddish stems; Sturdy stems, customers loved the small leaves; Love the small leaves and the branching on this cultivar, of course everyone loves the name as well, this size is useful for all types of arrangements.

Problems: Very branched stems; None; Plants are still fairly small.

Similar Cultivars: 'Silver Drop'; No.

Comments: This cultivar is also one of my favorites! I have cut quite a few stems and they seem to grow back quickly, I hope the plants get larger next year; This variety was sturdy, came back well after a rough start; One variety had a very lovely purplish coloring to it that I loved, so far they also appear to be more frost tolerant than the 'Silver Drop' that we grow.

***Eucalyptus stellulata* 'Sheila'**

Good Qualities: Olive color and teardrop-shaped leaves; I like the size of the stems and leaves on this cultivar. Useful for average size arrangements and wreaths.

Problems: Slowest growth rate of all the cultivars; The leaves all have spots on them, I think it is probably a fungus, I see no signs of insects, I did use overhead watering while the plants were in pots, once they were put in the ground, I used drip irrigation, I am hoping that next year's plants will look better, I did not treat the plants with any fungicide.

Similar Cultivars: Not to my knowledge.

Comments: I really hope my next year's crop is better.



'Cab Sav'

Table 1. The first row of data for each cultivar is the average and the second row is the range of responses. Note when only one response is shown in the range line, all respondents gave the same rating.

Species Cultivar	Plant survival at fall (%)	Yield (stems/plant)	Stem length (in.) ¹	Market appreciation rating ²	Ease of cultivation rating ²	Grow again rating ²
Angus	88 50-100	3.9 2-8	12.7 10-18	3.0 1-5	4.3 3-5	2.8 1-5
Big O	100 100	4.5 2-9	14.5 14-15	4.5 4-5	4.5 4-5	4.3 3-5
Cab Sav	100 100	4.0 4	12.5 10-15	5.0 5	4.5 4-5	4.5 4-5
Funky Monkey	100 100	5.3 2-8	12.7 9-20	5.0 5	4.8 4-8	4.5 3-5
Sheila	63 25-100	2.0 2	11.3 10-13	2.0 2	2.5 2-3	2.5 2-3

¹Data shown are from the respondents who harvested stems. Some Trialers may have not harvested stems because they were too short. The stems, not the Trialers.

²1 to 5 scale with 5 being the best; market appreciation ratings are based on sales to wholesalers, retailers and/or final consumers

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