

Ebert's Greenhouse Village

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Leucanthemum Superbum "Becky" 2003 Perennial of the Year

"Becky" is a Shasta daisy. Shasta daisies are perhaps the ultimate daisies, with their large, abundant cheerful blooms. Every gardener seems to have a daisy story that brings smiles to everyone around them. Daisies light up the garden day or night, especially during a full moon, and are perhaps the most shared plants from neighbor to neighbor besides coneflowers.

The Shasta daisy is part of the Aster family and is a hybrid created by Luther Burbank in 1890. The name Shasta daisy supposedly comes from the fact that the clean, white petals of this plant reminded Luther of the snow of Mount Shasta in California.

"Becky's" journey started with Jimmy and Becky Stewart of Atlanta, GA. They received a Shasta daisy from their neighbor, Mary Ann Gatlin, who in turn obtained it from her mother, Ida Mae. In 1960 Ida saw this daisy growing in an Atlanta-area garden and was so taken with it she asked the owners if she could have a clump. Ida had a successful florist / nursery business and sold "Becky" as a garden plant and cut flower. Of course it was not sold under the name of "Becky" at this time. It occurred elsewhere under the names of "Ida Mae" and "Ryan's Daisy", after Ryan Gainey of Atlanta who had also discovered this gem of a plant. After years of sorting out names and verifying all these daisies with different names had the same origin; "Becky" was the final chosen name.

"Becky" grows reliably in USDA hardiness zones 4 - 9 in full sun and well drained soil. "Becky" is tolerant of partial shade but does not tolerate excessive moisture or wet soils in winter.

"Becky" has sturdy, upright stems reaching 40 inches tall, with a similar spread. Three-inch-wide, single white flowers with contrasting yellow centers appear at the end of June or early July. Flowering continues through August and even into September if you deadhead spent blooms throughout the season. One of the longest blooming daisies on the market today, the sturdy stems ensure good garden presence, meaning the plant is not prone to flopping over.

"Becky" looks great as a specimen plant or in masses. It is an excellent plant for natural looking landscapes, attracting butterflies, cut flowers and the cottage garden look. It looks and grows well as the centerpiece in a large container. "Becky" is a must for moon or night gardens and provides a long-blooming white for the patriotic garden when it is mixed with red and blue veronicas, red daylilies, blue pincushion flower and crocosmia "Lucifer". Plant with Russian sage and purple coneflowers for a long-blooming late summer / fall garden.

"Becky" deserves a place in everyone's garden. So if you're looking for a daisy with a presence like no other, then "Becky" is the daisy for you. Happy gardening!