

PW's perennial and shrub intros, plus floral news, scholarships and more

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PROVEN WINNERS

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Green Profit's
buzz! 
Retail news from inside and outside the green industry

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

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Keep 'Em Coming Back

Jen Polanz is back this week with the second half of her Proven Winners open house coverage.

Last week we covered the new annuals for 2025 introduced at a Proven Winners open house at Four Star Greenhouse in Carleton, Michigan. This week we'll dive into a few highlights of the new perennials via a partnership with Walters Gardens, and from Proven Winners ColorChoice Flowering Shrubs. We made videos with lots more of the intros, too, so be sure to check those out at the end!

For perennials, Andrew Jager, marketing manager at Walters Gardens, gave us the deets on a walk through the new intros. Again, these are only a few of the highlights.

Prairie Winds Brush Strokes, a cultivar of a North American native little bluestem (the 2022 Perennial Plant of the Year), ticks a lot of boxes for the consumer, providing a clump of graceful

PLANT PRIDE & PROSPER



www.AmericaInBloom.org

blueish foliage for full sun. It provides interest in multiple seasons, and is heat and drought resistant, as well as deer resistant. Brush Strokes tops out at 36-in. with a spread of 22 to 26-in., and is hardy in Zones 3-9.



A new genus for the Proven Winners perennial lineup, these Bouquet Perfect primula are sure to stand out with their dark, thick leaves and bright flowers. Great for the shoulder seasons in containers and in the landscape, these start blooming profusely in early spring, providing early color in Zones 4a – 8b. Currently there are two colors, Blue Ripples (front) and Mandarin (back).



The Living Large Big Sky salvia is the first in a new series of perennial salvia (hardy Zones 3-8!) that brings larger flowers to the table with three to four bloom cycles, Andrew said. Some of the flower spikes can reach up to 1-ft. in length, he added. This is a later bloomer, peaking in the summer (closer to late June), so you may need to sell it with some extra POP, but those who buy it will be rewarded with many types of pollinators and blooms into fall. It's also deer and rabbit resistant.



For the video of Andrew's rundown on these and other perennials, [CLICK HERE](#).



The advertisement features a green banner on the left with the text "the knock out family of roses". The main text reads "Get a low-maintenance landscape. Petite Knock Out®". Below this is a green button that says "ORDER NOW". To the right of the button, the text reads: "'Meibenhino' PP 30,811 U.S. Pat. No. 11,252,928 U.S. Pat. No. 11,917,978 CPBR 6,553". On the far right is a small image of a potted rose bush with red flowers and a tag that says "Meet Petite!".

Onto the Shrubs

Continued from above.

On the Proven Winners ColorChoice Flowering Shrub side, we had Judson LeCompte, product development assistant manager at Spring Meadow Nursery for our guide, and he has the honor of being the first person to ever get me to eat a flower on camera (in his defense it didn't take much convincing). For the record, it was the first take, and my reaction is true, the flower from Flavorette Pear'D, a new edible rose, was surprisingly tasty. This rose is from their Serbian breeding partner and is as pretty as it is tasty, starting with a white semi-double flower that warms to a creamy pink as it ages. And, true to its name, the petals have a light pear flavor. It also has good disease resistance to black spot, Judson told us.



Splendid Blue is a new hedging blueberry that resulted from breeding efforts at NC State

University. It's a full, rounded plant that can be used easily in the landscape as a hedge, starting with warmer purple leaves in the spring that mature to a dusky blue foliage later. And, of course, it offers up sweet blueberries, both without a pollinator and with, but you'll get more, larger berries when paired with another warm climate blueberry. This one is hardy to Zones 6-9.



This rose has me saying, 'Dare I say, en fuego?' (IYKYK) The Oso Easy En Fuego is engulfed in multiple colors, with summer blooms starting out more yellow and orange and maturing to a blend, providing lots of interest. Even more beneficial to the consumer, it received top scores on its disease resistance trials, with no black spot in the Florida trial. Low-maintenance and fool-proof for those in Zones 4-9, Judson said.



To see the rest of the flowering shrubs introduced (and watch me eat rose petals), [CLICK HERE](#).

[CLICK HERE](#) to see the 2025 Plants of the Year and National Recipes for Proven Winners.

Thanks, JP! I'm gonna need a hedge-worth of those blueberries!



**BRING BIG JOY
TO SMALL SPACES**



Sustainabloom's New Resources

The rest of this week's *buZZ!* items are all about the floral aspect of our industry. And this item is especially appropriate to include this week, a week in which we celebrate Earth Day. Sustainabloom, the American Floral Endowment's collaborative project to lead floriculture toward sustainable practices, has prepared a new website to help businesses embrace sustainability at every level.

Sustainabloom has partnered with NC State University to collect and analyze all sorts of research, reports and editorials regarding sustainability in floriculture. Using this information along with discovering where gaps exist in research, they've created a wealth of user-friendly guides and resources for industry use.



What'll you find on the site? Guides to composting and plastic use, for instance, as well as studies on consumer preferences and social impact. They'll update the site regularly as new research comes out.

Said AFE Executive Director Debi Chedester on the website revamp and all that can be found there, "Sustainabloom was created to bridge the gap between establishing efforts and certification. With a focus on simplicity and accessibility, Sustainabloom resources will help demystify sustainability practices, making it easier than ever before for businesses to take meaningful action towards a more sustainable future."

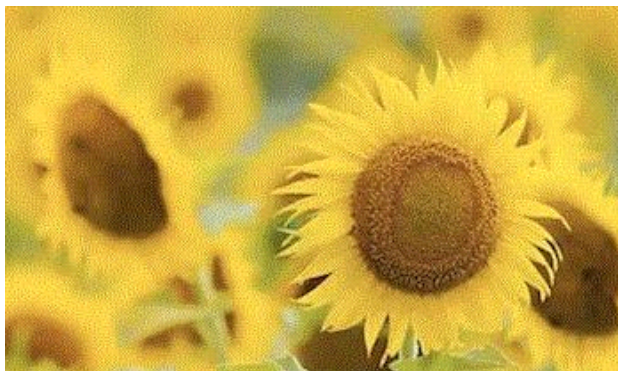
I took a few moments to dig into the site myself. I explored the [resources associated with composting](#)—simple to do, just click on the big circle labeled "compost." In there I found a [guide about composting as a floral business](#), as well as lots of research articles about various composting topics, such as an piece on consumer perceptions and willingness to pay for sustainable environmental practices.

If you are in the floral industry and want to up your game with sustainability, head over to Sustainabloom.org.

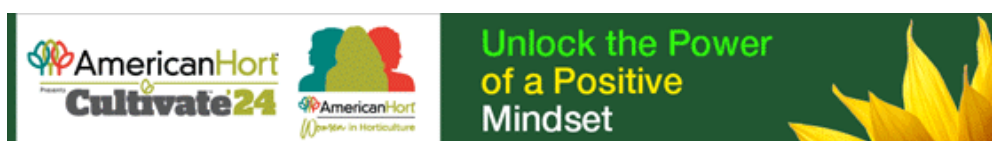


Floral Sustainability Survey

If you're in any aspect of the floral biz, the American Floral Endowment (AFE) and a research team at NC State are asking you to take a survey meant to assess sustainable practices among flower growers, wholesalers, retailers, transporters and floral suppliers. The survey, which will take about 15 minutes, will ask about scale of operations, current sustainability measures, motivations and challenges.



The survey results will help clarify gaps in new sustainability research and resources and help place resources where they are most needed for future needs. A few minutes now will help provide data and information that you can use to grow your floral business in the future. Take the survey [HERE](#)—and do it soon as the survey closes April 30!



AFE and Gloeckner

Speaking of AFE, the organization announced a new partnership with the Fred C. Gloeckner Foundation. The two organizations, both of which fund floriculture research and innovation, will be promoting these endeavors together.

This new partnership includes AFE being the new home of the Fred C. Gloeckner Foundation. The new Fred C. Gloeckner Foundation Research Fund will reside within AFE and will complement AFE's research efforts. Combining their efforts will ultimately result in even more achievements and efficiencies all in the name of floriculture research.

"AFE and the Fred C. Gloeckner Foundation have been allies for many years, sharing information on industry challenges and priorities to ensure the broadest support of research funding," said Joseph Simone, Secretary and Director of the Foundation. "This close partnership and our respect for each other's work made it an easy decision to join the American Floral Endowment."

Founded in 1960 by Frederick C. Gloeckner, the Fred C. Gloeckner Foundation provides financial aid for research and educational projects both in floriculture and in allied fields such as agricultural economics, agricultural engineering, entomology, molecular biology, plant breeding, plant pathology and plant physiology related to floriculture. I believe I owe the Gloeckner Foundation a big thank you for some funding for my own Master's program!

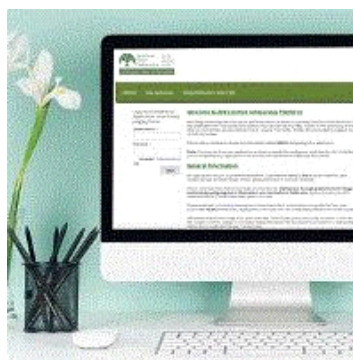


The man himself, Fred C. Gloeckner.

Members of the current Fred C. Gloeckner Foundation Board will form a committee within AFE to review and distribute annual research funds. The Gloeckner Foundation research application process will remain separate from AFE's research application process. Speaking of which, the application for the 2024 Gloeckner Foundation Research Funding cycle can be found on the [AFE website](#). The application deadline has been extended to April 30th. Proposals should be submitted as PDFs to jsimone@ednieflowerbulb.com; cc to hammer@purdue.edu for consideration.

AFE's Scholarships

AFE's trove of 30-plus undergraduate and graduate scholarships are open for application submissions, too. Floriculture and horticulture students, you have the opportunity to receive scholarships between \$500 and \$6,000 if you submit your online applications by May 1—that's next week!



Are you a U.S. or Canadian citizen? Attend an accredited institution in either of those two countries? Have a 2.0 grade point average or higher? Then find the scholarships you are eligible for [HERE](#). And good luck!

Floral Design Survey

We're back on the topic of sustainability with this next item. The folks at the Floral Marketing Fund and their Mississippi State University and Texas State University partners are asking that you participate in a survey to help out with their new research study. "Perceptions of Environmentalism and the Use of Sustainable Floral Design Practices within the Floral Industry" has as its goals to explore the scope of sustainable practices currently in use at retail floral businesses, as well as to understand barriers, determine customer feedback and concerns.



Sounds similar to the survey I mentioned above, but it's not the same survey! This FMF survey, in cooperation with AFE and co-sponsored by BloomNet and Syndicate Sales, is open to retail professionals who work as floral designers and folks who own/manage a retail floral business. Just to clarify some of what the survey will be asking about, the topics included are:

- buying fair-trade local and organically grown flowers;
- recycling flower waste and cardboard;
- using energy-efficient light bulbs, floral coolers, and/or electric vehicles;
- reducing the use of plastic sleeves and floral foam.

Do you participate in any of these practices? Even if you don't, the answers you submit on the survey will help the study researchers inform folks in the floral industry on how they can adjust their business models' sustainability and profitability.

Folks who take the 5-10 minute survey are eligible to win one of three \$500 gift cards, too. I like those chances. Take the survey [HERE](#)—and do it before the May 18th deadline.

The Floral Conference

Our last floral-themed item for this issue is all about The Floral Conference—Miami, put on by the International Fresh Produce Association on June 18. The conference connects everyone along the floral supply chain in order to help everyone be more successful. As part of that effort, the

Conference will be offering a deep dive into six critical shifts that will influence the floral industry over the next five years.

"We wanted to give attendees access to future-facing opportunities for floral," said IFPA Floral Director Deb Zoellick. "Building on this research, attendees will explore six key growth areas shaping their future."



Through this interactive session covering six areas, participants will discuss strategies to boost consumption. Those six areas include:

- **Blossoming Everywhere:** Tap new channels and partnerships to make sure flowers are always within reach of the shopper.
- **Flower Power:** Use flowers as a natural way to combat anxiety and boost mood, helping people feel and perform their best.
- **Experience Ambassadors:** Reimagine the role of the employee and create a long-term career path that rewards ambition and artistry.
- **Augmented Arrangements:** Leverage digital tools to equip consumers with greater knowledge and insight.
- **Flowers for All:** Reach out to untapped consumer groups and bring the beauty of flowers to a more diverse set of consumers.
- **Sustainable Stems:** Provide compelling evidence of industry-wide commitment to sustainability through storytelling and clear-impact labeling.

It all sounds compelling—and beneficial to your floral business. But don't wait on it—this is a limited attendance conference. You can find out more about the conference, as well as register and book a hotel [HERE](#).

Questions, comments, suggestions? Drop me a line if you'd like at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



Ellen Wells
Senior Editor
Green Profit

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