

2/26/2015

What's the Buzz?

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At one point or another, at least one member of our editorial team is on the road either visiting green industry members or reporting on or speaking at an industry event. Aside from pounding out stories, it's just what we do, and January and February are particularly busy ones for trade shows and conferences (before the spring craze truly begins). We hit up MANTS, TPIE, IPM Essen and New England Grows (there's no good acronym for New England Grows) to get you the 411 ASAP (okay, we're done now).

Here's what we found.



MANTS

English pottery: A new line of hand-crafted pottery from the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew is now available to American retailers via exclusive wholesaler Botanical Collections. The collection is created by the same people who made the Smith & Hawken pottery many years ago. The collection features pottery in 19 distinct colors and 30 different dimensions and sizes, varying from terrace to tabletop.

Living gifts: Customers can give the gift of roses with David Austin's new bare root rose gift program. Retailers purchase a case that includes four different colors of #1 grade bare root roses in a decorative gift box with ribbon. The roses have a 4-week shelf life and can be a great way to pull in early season sales before canned roses come in. David Austin suggests a retail price of \$24.95 and to display these gift options by the cash wrap or cross merchandised with books, lotions and other gifts around Valentine's Day, Mother's

Day and Easter, depending on your location.

Color printing, fast: WestHort had a new EPSON TM-C7500 printer on display at MANTS and it printed multi-color labels at a rate of 12 in. per second at 1,200 DPI. While the printer couldn't do thick tags, it could do thinner ones for hanging baskets and provided vibrant color with super-fast results.

Premium plant food: The new Liquid Plant Food and Worm Castings from Happy Cat Farm, a sustainable farm in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, features premium packaging and branding to create an upscale, yet earthy appeal. Every product that comes out of Happy Cat is hand-made and hand-packed. The backstory of the farm is unique, as well. Founder Tim Mountz began the farm based on 70-year-old string bean seeds (Stoltzfus) passed down from his grandmother. The farm specializes in sustainable herb and vegetable seeds, as well as a mix of gardening products.

—Jennifer Polanz



IPM Essen

Bling it on: SK has added real Swarovski crystals to its flowerpots to create the Hollywood Floral Line.

Put a ring on it: Even though it was just a concept, Charmon—"Plant with Charm"—a cylindrical sanseveria bedecked with Pandora-style beads, inspired more discussion than just about anything else at IPM. It was shown by Danish company Feldborg.

In the frame: We loved how flower breeder Sakata showed off their new Vincent downy mildew-resistant cut sunflower. These are basically wooden window boxes with an ornate picture frame front and back, sprayed white and hung by wires. The resulting plantings are more like art than gardening.

—Chris Beytes



New England Grows

Perhaps the biggest news came from Boston's largest horticultural gathering, which took place the first week in February—a week whose annual weather cycle is seeing more and more snow each year. With about 45% of the show's attendees in the landscape/snow and ice removal business, a snow event can significantly impact attendance. That won't be a problem next year because the event is moving to the first week after Thanksgiving, beginning with December 2-4, 2015.

Snow aside, the major shift in dates also is in response to vendor and attendee surveys, which indicated a majority would favor holding the event at a different time of year, one that is earlier in the buying cycle. "We found through focus groups that a lot of them, particularly from the buyers' standpoint, are on hiatus in February—either laid off or not around—so these earlier dates are going to allow more of their people to participate in the event," said Virginia Wood, executive director of New England Grows, in an interview.

With tips from the Garden Center Group's Retailers' Choice Awards held during Grows, here are the highlights.

The Arizona pot: It's a hypertufa trough pot available from Sunny Border Nurseries in two sizes—5-in. square and 8 in. x 5 in. You may recognize it as being a mold of a standard 6-in. nursery pot, with the larger pot being a "double wide" of the standard pot. Sunny Border sells these planted up with succulents or hardy sempervivum. You can also buy empty pots to sell or plant up on your own. These pots are made during the winter by employees who would otherwise be let go for the season.

Certified organic seed potatoes: This display from the Netherland Bulb Company, eye-catching packaging and 10 unique and attractive varieties, make these potatoes a must-grab impulse item for the checkout area.

Above and Beyond Rose: This gorgeous rose from Bailey Nurseries was bred by David Zlesak of the University of Wisconsin to be disease (especially fungal) resistant. Other winning characteristics are a hardiness to Zone 3, a honey-sweet fragrance, apricot-colored, large, semi-double blossoms and a vigorous climbing habit that lets it spread to about 16 ft. or so.

—*Ellen C. Wells*



TPIE

New ways to hang: No longer just for plastic baskets, hanging plants are combining terrariums, fairy gardens and window ornaments into one. These glass hanging terrariums from Apopka's Penang Nursery feature a heavy rope as a hanger, inspired perhaps by Japanese glass fishing floats.

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—*Chris Beytes*