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Features

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IGC Show Parties at the Pier

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Save the Date!

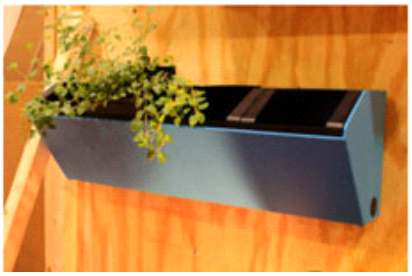
IGC Chicago returns to Navy Pier August 15-17, 2017!

This year marked the 10-year celebration for the IGC Show, Chicago edition, complete with cake, extraordinary vendors and educational sessions and rousing rock-n-roll from REO Speedwagon. Navy Pier once again was the site of this mid-August event, and while the weather outside the trade show space was cooler than in years past, the floor was hot with new products and buyers and vendors ready to make deals.

According to IGC Show found Jeff Morey, IGC Chicago had more first-time attendees this year than ever before. Reasons for finally giving the show a try range from can't-miss educational sessions to finding inspiration and some unique products.

All of that and more could certainly be found at the IGC Show this year. What follows is a round-up of products and trends that caught our attention, as well as a summary of Green Profit columnist Amanda Thomsen's Tuesday morning keynote.

Our Picks from the Pier





Make Room for Wall Planters

While walking the floor, Amanda pointed out that we're finally "getting it" when it comes to vertical planters. For years, the items available for household purposes have been complex/messy/just all wrong for the Everyday Jane or Joe. This wall planter from Pride Products is an example of how the product is being simplified and made more user friendly. Folks can grow herbs in a pot in the kitchen without actually taking up space on the counters or windowsills.

The Dead and the Polynesian

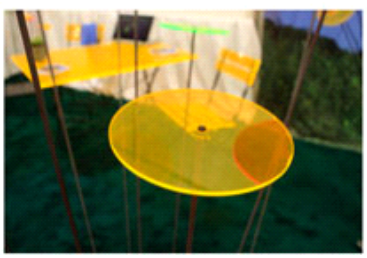
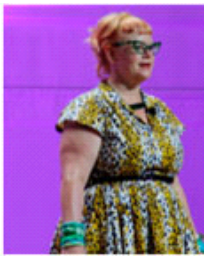
Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a Mexican holiday that celebrates friends and family who have passed away. The iconography that goes along with the holiday is something that speaks to people of all cultures and is making great inroads into the American Halloween tradition.

Polynesian culture is celebratory, too, and is also becoming a common décor trend especially for summer celebrations. The feelings that both of these cultural motifs bring to a garden or backyard patio are those of tropical/warm climate celebration. Masks, figurines, containers, wall art—you name it!—people just love participating in the feelings that the Day of the Dead/Polynesian culture present to them.
Pictured: Exact replicas of the heads from Easter Island, available from Angelo Décor International.

Shelter for Masons

People are interested in the whole pollinator issue. We've been pushing the food sources—planting the right plants to attract pollinators to the garden. But what about offering shelter and help in establishing colonies?

That's where this Mason Bee Starter Kit from Organic Control Inc. comes in. It contains a large cylinder filled with the tubes in which bees can create their home. The kit also comes with a how-to booklet and a certificate, which the customer mails in to the company to receive a tube of live-cocooned mason bees.

If Dali Made Terrariums

This was one of those "stop-in-your-tracks-how'd-they-do-this?" type of products. These glass terrarium jars

from Cohasset Gifts and Garden are all one-of-a-kind works of glass art. Balinese glass blowers drop large beads of molten glass onto a wooden base—typically a piece of root or branch from a local teak or gamal hardwood tree farm—and then snip the glass bead to create a bowl. The liquid glass oozes its way through the wood's bumpy surface to form a bottom that fits precisely into that unique space. In fact, the glass can also ease its way off the wood to create a Dali-esque "melting" glass jar. Use the glass bowls for terrariums, aquariums, colored sand creations, marble holders—use your imagination! Smaller glass votive holders are also available.

Light Up the Garden

Cazador del Sol was one of the most innovative new products at IGC Show this year. These are fluorescent disks of acrylic that transform invisible UV rays into visible light, a soft glow that's even more intense in lower light conditions. Mounted on flexible rods, these disks sway gently in any breeze. They're available in three sizes and three colors (yellow, green and red). Create your own fluorescent bouquet! They're also available as hanging pendants.

Dos and Don'ts, the Aster Way

Plant lover, modern mom, Ryan Gosling stalker, meme maker, garden blogger, Green Profit columnist, whiskey connoisseur—Amanda Thomsen is all of these things. Of course, we here at Ball Publishing already knew how awesome she is, which is why IGC Show founder Jeff Morey asked the Kiss My Aster blogger to be one of the keynote speakers at IGC Chicago this year.

Pictured:Amanda Thomsen, aka Kiss My Aster, gives her keynote at the IGC Show in Chicago.

With Tuesday being the first day, she literally kicked off the show. Despite a few snags (a small electrical fire resulting in the air conditioning being less than adequate at Navy Pier, for starters), Amanda killed it with her informative talk titled "Ditch the Bad Habits: Win the Love of Gen X, Y & Z." She had the room chuckling with her clever memes and gifs, as they were soaking in all of her tips for reaching out to young people.

A few quick suggestions on how to do so from Amanda:

• Articles you see online about demographics are just click bait. Basically, every generation hates people younger than them.

• The word "Millennials" has come to have a negative connotation.

• Get 'em while they're young! Examples included movie nights, a wedding registry, in-store scavenger hunts, put a dirt pile in the corner and let their kids play in it, etc.

• Millennials may not have the experience, but they have a TON of knowledge you don't care about but it's still important.

• You MUST have a basic website, or at the very least, a blog.

• Instagram should be the No. 1 thing you're trying.

• Twitter is basically a ton of disposable thoughts.

• Facebook is good for timely info. ("We're closing early today." "One-day sale—TODAY ONLY!" "Here's a coupon.")

• Having a YouTube channel with informational videos is very important. Amanda said, "You need to do this. Young people eat this stuff up."

• She pooh-poohed the people who say they don't have enough content to justify doing social media. "If you're breathing, you have content," Amanda said. "Post about what you have and love."

She ended with a few Dos and Don'ts:

• DON'T auto-post the same message to all of your social media outlets. People can tell and it ruins your credibility.

• DO boost your Facebook posts. You can do it by keyword for $10. And DO use Facebook Live!

• DON'T treat young people like they don't know what they're doing.

• DO do chickens.

• DO succulents and cool planters to put them in.

• DO be fun and clever and tongue-in-cheek and push the envelope to get attention.

• DON'T spend too much time worrying about offending people. This industry is known for being "too stodgy," said Amanda. Try getting away from that.

• DON'T tell Amanda she looks like an adult landscaping clown. **GP**