TPIE plant winners, a pre-show stop and a cool tag from Germany



News and Inspiration from the world of foliage and tropical plants

GROWERTALKS MAGAZINE greenPROFIT MAGAZINE

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2019

subscribe





TROPICAL TOPICS

COMING UP THIS WEEK:
It's About the Plants
These Won, Too
Breaking Dolphin News
Being Industrious
As For Sources …







It's About the Plants

I'm back in the frigid Northeast after a lovely time in South Florida for last week's Tropical Plant International Expo. FNGLA's Ben Bolusky reports that attendance for this year's show was up nearly 400 people, hitting 6,488 attendees. People came from 46 different countries, six continents and 47 different U.S. states. And to me, it seemed like the most diverse trade show I've ever attended, so kudos for that.

I have a notebook full of notes, but I know what your priorities are: You want to see some plants.

For those of you who get my *buZZ!* e-newsletter, you already know about these first two plants—but do keep reading for a few additional plants that I haven't mentioned yet.

The new variety that I enjoyed best is one that the show's panel of judges admired, too. They awarded the new anthurium Livium from Anthura as the Most Unusual Single Plant Specimen.



It’s unusual in its degree of highlighted venation; that is, its veins look like they’ve been painted several hues lighter—almost white—than the rest of the reddish spathe. Livium also won the Favorite New Flowering Plant award, which is voted on by show attendees. (It got my vote.)

The winner of TPIE’s Favorite New Foliage Plant—also voted on by the show attendees—was dracaena White Aspen from Costa Farms. Variegated houseplants are a big deal on social media nowadays, so this wide-leafed cream-and-green variety is sure to be a hit. (I may have voted for this one, too!) Chatting with other attendees, I got the sense that White Aspen is much appreciated for its bold coloring and formidable presence. This specimen is a monster!





These Won, Too

While the show judges and the general throng of attendees picked their top plants, the retailers taking part in the TPIE Cool New Products search were also scouring the floor. They chose a half-dozen or more plants as part of their Cool New Products collection, and as luck would have it, I left my camera at the show (No worries! It's making its way back to me). So, I'll include those winners I happened to capture on my iPhone and wait to share the others next time around.

Rico Suave Hollywood Hibiscus, bred by J. Berry Nursery. What a color!



The Dolphin Succulent from Branette Farms. Rather than curving up like others do to form “bananas,” these curve down to form shapes resembling tiny leaping dolphins. It's hot on social media!



Now, my not-official information sheet for the Cool New Products awards lists “LiveTrends Collection,” without mentioning a specific item. So, I’ll pick my own from their vast offerings. I’ll go for the new cut foliage and unrooted hoya containers. Launching in April, these will be shipped filled with water and a cut/unrooted item with a foam-ish stopper plugging the top to prevent spilling. The hoya is inserted in a cube of Oasis-ish material and the cut foliage is slotted through a really cool round pumice stone lodged in the glass jar.





Breaking Dolphin News

Chris Beytes, who is emailing me from the IPM Essen show in Germany as I type, just sent this image along to share:



If customers can't quite make out the tiny jumping dolphins (it does take some imagination), this Jumping Dolphin tag will clue them in! And if you think folks don't care about this sea-loving mammal, think again. I've had friends come up to me, point their phones in my face and ask, "Hey, have you seen this plant? I just found it on Instagram!"



Being Industrious

My time in Florida wasn't all trade show walking. I met up with Bossman Chris Beytes and his wife Laurie to tour a few nurseries the day before TPIE opened. Our first stop was the 31-acre Garden Industries in Loxahatchee, 15 or so miles due west of Palm Beach and just an hour's drive away from Ft. Lauderdale. We connected with sales director David Bache, who gave us the operation's story. The nursery had formerly been called Life Force Nursery and was owned by an architect (structural or landscape, I'm not sure), who basically used the grounds for material he'd use for his own projects. That is to say, it wasn't set up like a nursery others would find plants in easily. The current owners—also in the architecture field—bought the place 11 years ago and kept it relatively the same.

Until last year, that is, when David and a handful of others were hired after their former workplace, Boynton Botanicals, closed. They cleared out a number of overgrown pines and palms, opened up

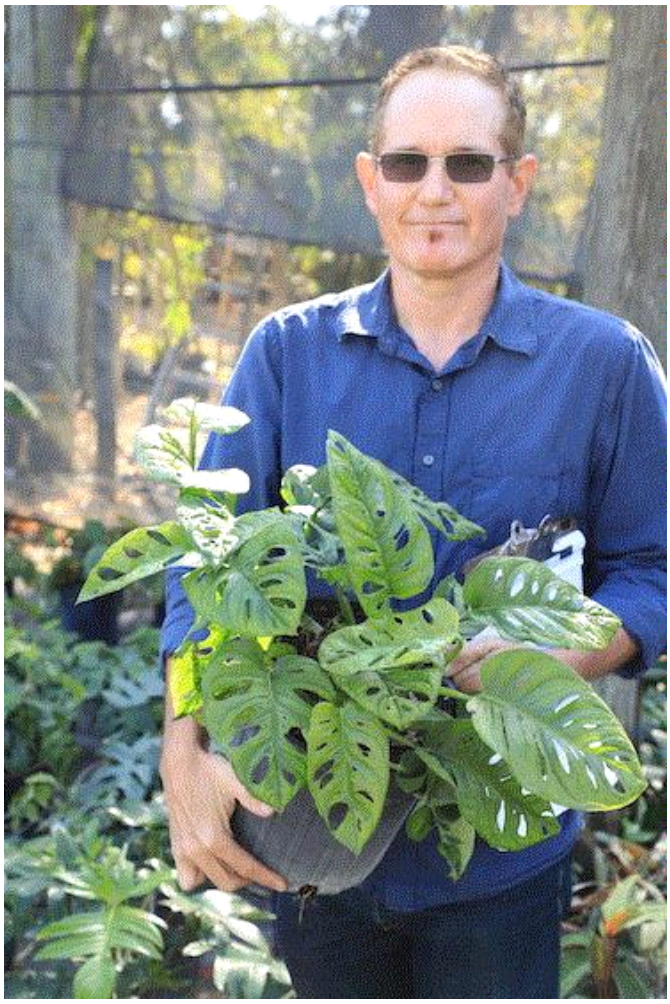
the front of the property to give it some curb appeal, and then set about creating a more shopper-friendly wholesale nursery. Chris noted that Florida wholesale nurseries almost as a rule are set up in sections and rows much like a garden center, and David certainly agreed. There are even a few gardens on the property that he planted specifically to give their wholesale customers some ideas for what to create on their own projects.



Newly created curb appeal at the entrance of Garden Industries in Loxahatchee, Florida.

Garden Industries has become known for some unusual and hard-to-find items. They've filled a vacuum, David says, that was left when places like Boynton Botanicals and a few other specialty nurseries closed. Their clients are high-end folks who want something unlike what their neighbors have. David used the adjective "boutiquey" to describe what they are creating at the nursery.

"Creating" is the key word here, because just a year and a half in at Garden Industries, David is keeping close tabs on how the clientele—the large theme parks, resorts, high-end landscapers and others—is evolving and what's selling (and what's not!). With that information, they can add and subtract items from their availability—which currently lists more than 500 varieties.



David Bache with *M. adansonii*.



As For Sources …

As for where he sources some of his more unusual varieties, that would be at his own home. He's a plant hoarder, alright (and I noticed he didn't give us his address). For example, the shade house with these unusual philodendrons? Most are from his own property. It's enough to drive plant-crazed Millennials nuts!



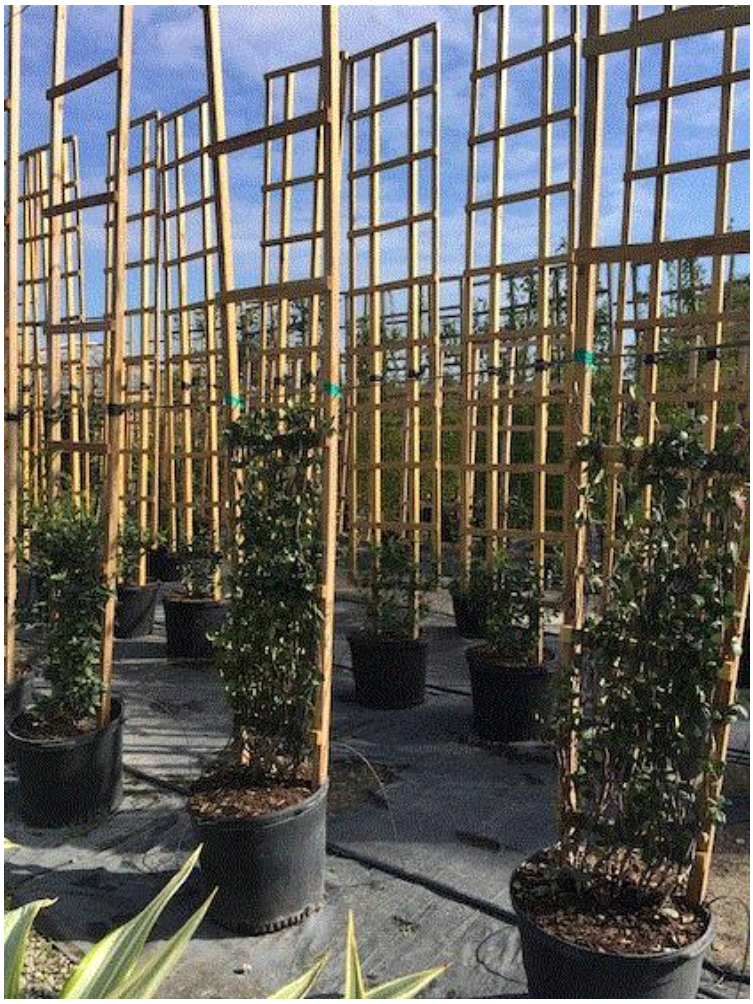
You can’t get more tropical than hibiscus, and Garden Industries has plenty, especially of the more unusual varieties. They also have some of the nicer, more unusual Monrovia hibiscus, too.



Here’s something you’ve likely never seen before: Lantana White Lightnin' trained on a trellis! These items are what I call worker plants. They have a job, and that job is to hide something like an AC unit or a patio from public view. These trellises find work as security and privacy managers in fancy schmancy West Palm Beach—where white is the predominant color in the landscape.



Confederate jasmine twined on trellises also find their way to WPB and other locales. Garden Industries had hundreds lined up like tall soldiers awaiting deployment. David says they keep one person on staff just to fix their uniforms (am I taking the analogy too far?), or rather, to untangle the twining vines.



Check out how tidy they are from behind.



If you’re looking for a wholesaler of unusual tropicalesque stuff, you should definitely make Garden Industries one of your stops. Because they don’t ship—yet. David maintains a pretty active social media presence for Garden Industries on Facebook, so feel free to check them out there for their latest unusual stuff.

Next time, I'll include our other pre-show grower visits and a few more things from TPIE. Meanwhile, comments, questions or news to share? Just drop me a line at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



Ellen Wells
Editor-at-Large
Green Profit

This edition of Tropical Topics was sent to 27,203 loyal readers!

If you're interested in advertising on Tropical Topics, contact Kim Brown **ASAP!**


Subscribe to
GROWERTALKS | greenPROFIT