

About that plastic issue, plus trucking, trials and tours

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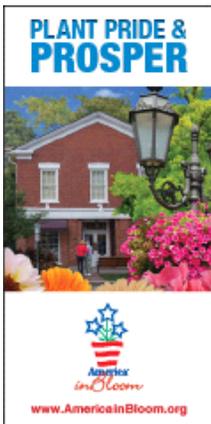
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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

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TPIE Moving to Tampa

That's some big news! It's a whole new city for the Tropical Plant International Expo's exhibitors and attendees to explore. After nearly 30 years of exhibitions at the Broward County Convention Center in sunny Ft. Lauderdale, the gem of the tropical plant trade shows will now be hosted in the Tampa Convention Center on the whole other side of the Florida peninsula. If you love sunsets, your time has come. And for you ocean sunrise lovers, you still have one last chance to catch the sun rising over the Atlantic—the event moves to Tampa in January 2021, for at least two years.

Why the move and why the "at least two years?" The current location, the Broward County Convention Center, is expanding and adding a long-promised hotel adjacent to the building. It's a huge, disruptive and long construction project. So it's off to Tampa for TPIE for the 2021 and 2022 shows while construction takes place. FNGLA, the organization behind TPIE, will monitor the construction progress and if the work looks like it might be continuing longer, TPIE may still be

hosted in Tampa in 2023.

According to TPIE's show manager Linda Adams, folks are gonna love Tampa, saying they "will love the welcoming and urban chic style of downtown Tampa. It's walkable, it's diverse, it's hipster, it's waterfront, it's fun, it's warm and it's friendly." Tampa's gone through a renaissance with the inclusion of an award-winning river walk, and the establishment of all sorts of restaurants and sports and entertainment venues. Other benefits are its proximity to the Tampa airport, Gulf Coast beaches and the famous Cuban neighborhood of Ybor City. What's better than live music and cigars on a tropical January night when you would otherwise be snowed in in Minnesota? And the hotel options are superb, too, I am assured.



Overlooking the sunset from the Tampa Convention Center patio. Photo courtesy of Visit Tampa Bay.

Other than the host city and venue, not much will change. It's still the great and growing assortment of nursery and allied trade vendors. There will still be a can't-miss, insightful keynote and ed sessions, and Chris (and Laurie) and I will still be walking the show floor (probably with slightly-lost-but-bemused looks on our faces). But TPIE Chairperson Marcella Lucio-Chinchilla put the change perfectly in perspective in a press release by saying, "Sometimes a little change is just what's needed to keep things interesting. We didn't seek this situation. Yet when it came to us, we embraced it as an opportunity to bring new sights and perspectives for our TPIE participants. Tampa fits the bill for a change all will enjoy."

As I mentioned before, TPIE stays put in Ft. Lauderdale for 2020 (January 22-24), but moves westward the following year. Put January 20-22, 2021, in your calendars for TPIE's move to Tampa.



Could This Be An Option?

I had several responses to [last week's mention](#) of horticultural plastic recycling difficulties, all of

which were in the vein of “Amen, sister!” and, “There’s so much waste.”

I had a request to share more information about what companies will haul away used pots from garden centers. There aren’t many, as far as I know. East Jordan Plastics is one that does pick up used pots from garden centers. I have a call into them to get the latest, so stay tuned for that update next week.

One respondent said she told a supplier they wouldn’t buy hanging baskets from them if they used plastic wraps as sleeves. We know why baskets and larger plants are sleeved—for protection during transport and to allow more plants per rack. Most of the plastic sleeves on the market are even less recyclable than pots.

What recyclable alternative to the current sleeving material do we have? There’s got to be something sturdy yet sustainably made, and something that can also be easily accepted at municipal recycling centers. How about this: Fox Packaging, a manufacturer of packaging materials for the fresh foods industry, just released two new products—the Fox Eco Stand-Up bag and the HD Stand-Up bag—“nature-friendly alternatives” to their current Stand-Up Combo bags.



These bags are used to hold items like grapes, cherries and snacking peppers, I’m sure you’re familiar with them from the supermarket. While looking at the bags I thought, if you leave the bottom of the bag unsealed and elongate the bag a bit, wouldn’t that create a sleeve? It’s possible, right?

Said product manager Jeff Reger in the press release announcing these products, “The Fox Eco Stand-Up bag employs the same stand-up format and features a new, environmentally friendly substrate. It’s desirable and delivers on the expectations requested by recyclers, retailers, buyers and most importantly, consumers. This material advantageously incorporates eco-starch resins, directly and positively impacting waste reduction factors through renewable agricultural resources.” Craig Fox, the company’s EVP, added, “Our products significantly reduce waste, energy use and global warming potentials as opposed to traditional flexible packaging. We are determined to push the reusability of our products to assist in diverting plastic from landfills, and to inform our audiences of the reality of the reduce, reuse, recycle reality of our industry. At the end of the day, we are doing everything in our power to ensure that our products meet retailer criteria so that our customers’ products can stay on store shelves.”

Now that’s the attitude we want to hear. Can we take a page from another industry’s playbook? Can we solve the problem that solves the problem that another company’s customer is having? Can we make these ideas and products our own? Sure we can.

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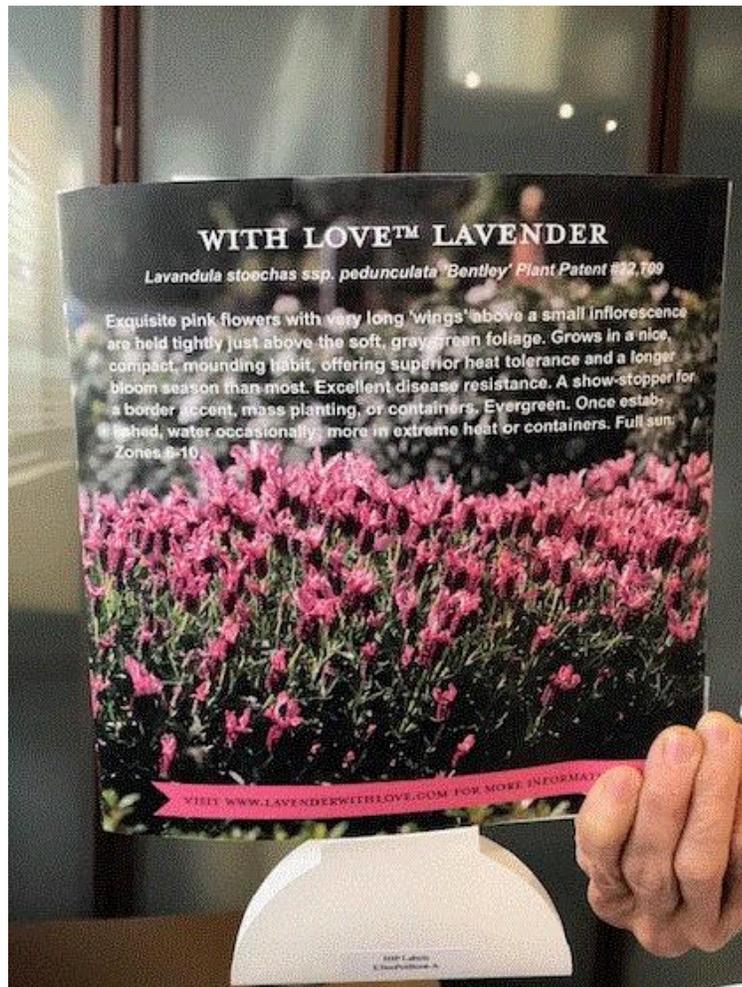
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Why Use Plastic at All?

That's what Danny Takao and the folks who make ellepots have been saying for a while now. Danny and others are trying to work out a way to make these paper-based ellepots suitable for retail and landscape sales, which would help take a lot of plastic out of use. I've written before about their efforts, and this week asked Danny for an update.





An ellepot prototype. The final sleeve will have a better fit.

“These are paper wraps that are waterproof, meaning they can be used at the retail level. The idea would be to grow the ellepots to size, remove them from the trays and slip them into the wraps for retail.” They aren't 100% plastic-free, though. They are coated in plastic to make them waterproof, much like a hot drink cup. These wraps may not be 100% biodegradable, but they do use roughly 90% less plastic than the plastic pot you'd grow them in. (You put your paper coffee cups in the recycling? Most aren't recyclable. I just learned that.)

“We aren't just figuring out the retail presentation, but also the complete production cycle,” said Danny. He says Proptek has designed trays in which the big ellepots can be grown. They're a little expensive, he adds, but last 10-15 years. “These trays can be moved around with forklifts like they do in Europe, so it helps drive down the touching cost.

Visit the Blackmore booth at Cultivate, he says, and check out what they are working on.



Another Industry Issue ...

... is trucking. Last Friday, June 7th, was supposed to be the day that the Federal Motor Carrier

Safety Administration released their proposed changes to the hours of service (HOS) rules. Didn't happen.

Tal Coley, AmericanHort's Director of Government Affairs, reports that the proposed changes are still expected sometime this month. Why the delay? Apparently, it stems from an ongoing Office of Management and Budget (OMB) review. Lots to examine in these proposed changes, I would imagine. AmericanHort will keep us posted.

Future of Well-being

One of my go-to trend providers, Trendwatching.com, has some new insights into the future of well-being. The global wellness economy, they say, hit \$4.2 trillion in 2017. Amazing, right? But put aside the one-health-trend-replacing-another wellness industry and just focus on well-being—our happiness and our inherent health. There are some major issues out there threatening our health and happiness in all economic, demographic and interest categories.

Here are two issues impacting the future of well-being, as determined by Trendwatching.com:

The Burnout: Millions of consumers from all backgrounds have burnt out their mental and physical reserves. It's an epidemic.

Air Time: Air pollution is an ever-present threat to health and happiness around the world. Consumers will demand reduction, prevention and protection.

What solutions does our industry have to contribute? Beyond creating Instagram-worthy "jungelos," being surrounded by plants is also a matter of well-being, as we have all heard and experienced. Spending quiet time indoors or out surrounded by greenery helps calm nerves, focus the mind and ease the breath. Not only that, those potted plants on the office desk or arranged throughout the house help that pollution problem on a very local level.

How are you positioning your houseplant offerings as something worthy of customer attention beyond the trendiness of it all? Have you developed a long-term strategy? Let me know about it [HERE](#).

PanAm Gets Celosia Breeding

Hey, Chris, you beat me to the punch in telling our readers about PanAmerican Seed and celosia breeder Celex. Ah, well, I'll just let you tell them all about it:

Long a distributor of Celex's varieties of celosia, both cuts and bedding, [PanAmerican Seed](#) has decided to buy their full assortment, along with the breeding programs. [Celex](#) is known for the cut-flower celosia Neo and Sunday, and annual series First Flame, Bombay, Dracula, Kosmo and Concertina. Their varieties have won two Fleuroselect Gold Medals as well as a Quality Mark.

The two companies have been partners for more than 25 years, with Celex doing the breeding and PanAm doing the seed production, distribution, sales and marketing.

"Over our many years of partnership, we have built a successful and sustainable growing business in celosia," says Anne Leventry, President of PanAmerican Seed. "We are pleased with all the efforts Celex has put into this class and we can't wait to build on this momentum of excellence."

“We are assured our Celex breeding efforts and genetics are in good hands at PanAmerican Seed,” says Peter Van Den Bosch, owner of Celex, who is nearing retirement along with business partner Henk Van Der Boog. “They will continue our work to the benefit of cut flower, potted and bedding plant growers all over the world.”

The sale will be finalized Oct. 1, when the full Celex celosia breeding assortment will be integrated into PanAm’s catalog. No employees or assets are part of the purchase.

Take Peeks

You may be able to spot some celosia varieties—and a whole mess of other bedding plants—at the numerous field trials happening this summer. I have information on two geographically diverse trials and their field days.

Dallas Arboretum Plant Trials Field Day, Wednesday, June 26, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Online registration is now open through Friday, June 21. They will be serving lunch, so come early or plan to stay late to tour the gardens. Parking is included in the ticket price. For details and registration, click [HERE](#). Questions? Email mproska@dallasarboretum.org.

Cornell University’s Floriculture Field Day Tuesday, July 30, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. It’s always a great time at this event, with seminars in the morning and trial walkabouts in the afternoon. This year’s speakers include Proven Winners’ Kerry Meyer, Cornell’s own Margery Daughtrey and NY Farm Bureau’s Henry Talmadge (I’m pretty sure we’re related). Annual beds include varieties from Ameriseed, American Takii, Ball FloraPlant, Ball Ingenuity, Beekenkamp, PanAmerican Seed, Proven Winners and Selecta. And they finish off with Cornell’s famous ice cream. Info and registration can be found [HERE](#).

Retail Tours

If you prefer tours over trials, I have reminders of two and info on one new tour for you.

1. There are still a few seats available on the **GCA Summer Tour** of Nashville-area garden centers, June 23-26. And rooms are still available at the Sheraton Grand Nashville Downtown, the host hotel. The tour organizers say that registration for this tour is higher than it has been for at least 10 years. It’s Nashville! There will be Q&A sessions for the first time, plus the pub crawl networking event is seeing crazy registration numbers, too. Get your seat and room while you can—head over to www.GardenCentersofAmerica.com to get yours.
2. Heading to Cultivate? Get there a day early for **Cultivate’s Retail Tour** of three gardens within driving distance of Columbus, Ohio. The tour will be stopping at White Oak Gardens, Delhi Gardens and Berns Garden Center. The tour takes place Saturday, July 13, 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Register for it [HERE](#).
3. The **Farwest Show’s Go-To Garden Centers Retail Tour** of Portland, Oregon-area IGCs happens on Tuesday, August 20. You’ll spend the day seeing the best that Cornell Farm, Farmington Gardens, The Garden Corner and the newly remodeled Dennis’ 7 Dees Landscaping & Garden Center—all very different and all inspirational retail locations. They also offer a landscape tour and a sustainability tour. For more details and to register, go to farwestshow.com/register.

Happy Father's Day, dudes! Comments, questions, suggestions? Drop me a line at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



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