TPIE heading to Tampa, plus a biophilia webinar and air quality



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TROPICAL TOPICS

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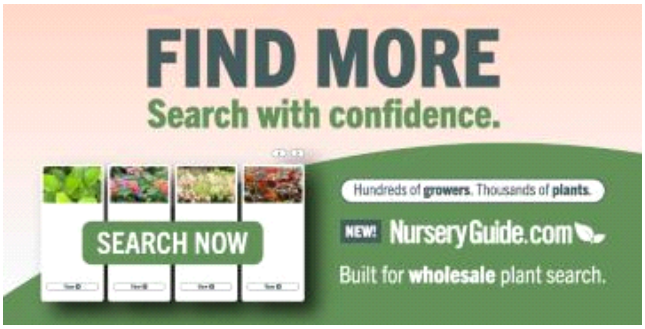





TPIE Heading to Tampa

You've likely heard the news that the annual Tropical Plant International Expo will be hosted in Tampa for 2021 and 2022. After nearly 30 years of exhibitions at the Broward County Convention Center in sunny Ft. Lauderdale, this top of the tropical plant trade shows will be set in the Tampa Convention Center on the other side of the Florida peninsula. If you love sunsets, your time has come. And since the show isn't moving until 2021, you sunrise lovers still have one last chance to catch the sun rising over the Atlantic.

Why the move for 2021 and 2022? 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 while construction takes place. The Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association (FNGLA) 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.



What a view from the Tampa Convention Center. Photo courtesy of Visit Tampa Bay website.

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, on your calendars for TPIE's move to Tampa.



A Couple of Notes

Like a lot of folks in the industry, you like to kill two birds with one trip to Florida, tacking on nursery visits or vacations on either side of your TPIE attendance. I checked in with FNGLA's Linda Adams and she assured me that those are still doable with the venue's change from Fort Lauderdale to Tampa. The growers in the Miami/Homestead region are still a four-hour drive away (similar distance for you folks who'd fly into Orlando and drive down from there). And the Apopka nurseries are a 90-minute drive from Tampa. So, yes, you can still go on your annual plant pilgrimage.

As for vacations, the Gulf Coast is gorgeous (as is the weather) and there are islands to visit. For you folks who would cruise out of the port in Fort Lauderdale, the Tampa Cruise Port is close by the convention center. Trade show with a next stop being the Caribbean? Yes, please.

Sports fans, Super Bowl LV will take place in Tampa a little more than a week after TPIE, so the city should be looking its best as they prepare for the event (and you won't have to deal with the crowds!). And Canadian visitors will feel at home if the Tampa Bay Lightning are playing a home game in Amalie Arena, a short distance from the TPIE venue.

As for TPIE-related programming, obviously the switch to Florida's west coast will open up new locations for the pre-TPIE tours. Linda says the change of venue will open up some fabulous new spots for the tours that visit interiorscape projects and garden centers.

I'm pretty psyched about the trip to Tampa in 2021. Hope you are, too!



Webinar Alerts!

I have two webinar alerts for you this time around, one for you folks who grow in nursery pots and one for the biophilia fans in the audience. By presentation date, those webinars are:

Ellepots + HydraFiber = Young Plant Success. This 1-hour Ball Publishing webinar takes place **Thursday, June 20, 1:00 p.m. Eastern**. The Blackmore Company's Dr. Bill Argo has studied pH and nutritional management of container-grown crops for quite a while and he knows his stuff. In this webinar, he will share his research on wood fiber substrates and will also offer guidelines for growing in Ellepots. Bill will be joined by Daniel Norden, Senior R&D Manager and Technical Specialist Manager for Profile Products, who will share findings from university and grower trials that used HydraFiber Advanced Substrate. Chris Beytes will host. Register at www.growertalks.com/webinars.

Building a Biophilic Design Practice: A Conversation with Randy Fiser and Joe Zazzera. If you're into biophilia, this 1-hour AmericanHort webinar will help you grow your design practice. Taking place **Tuesday, June 25 at 2 p.m. Eastern**, the webinar will be a conversation between the CEO of the American Society of Interior Designers (Randy) and the founding principal of Plant Solutions, Inc. (Joe). They'll discuss how to communicate the return on investment of biophilic designs to clients, the benefits of broadening your firm's design identity to include science, how to build an interdisciplinary team and how to nurture an internship program. Register for the AmericanHort webinar HERE.



The Air Out There

I mentioned this item briefly in last week's edition of my *buZZ!* e-newsletter, but considering its applicability to the tropical and houseplant growers, I'll mention it here. Trendwatching.com, my trusted source for trends that track societal changes, has some new insights into the future of well-being—and it includes us, if we are quick enough to position ourselves properly for full advantage. We're talking well-being, as opposed to wellness. Wellness trends tend to be "trendy," like the paleo diet or popular colors. Well-being, on the other hand, focuses on what makes us happy and healthy.

I wrote about two of Trendwatching.com's issues that are threatening our health and happiness last week, but I want to delve into just one in this space on a deeper level: Air Time.

Here's what they say about the issue of Air Time:

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 to the air pollution problem? As the biophilists among us know, the plants we provide go a long way toward improving indoor air quality. Potted plants on the office desk or arranged throughout the house are just the start. Building the office or the home from the start to support air-cleaning green walls, for example, can help address the pollution problem on a very local level. This takes our products from trendy to essential for well-being. Are we in the position to present ourselves as a provider of products of such great importance?

It's Bananas

An elusive variegated banana? Garden Industries in Loxahatchee, Florida, has 'em. The company, known for quite a diverse product line, is going even bigger by adding Musa Ae Ae Variegated to their line of exotic foliage. David Bache, sales director for the company, says it's one of the most sought-after bananas in the world, rumored to have produced fruit that only the Hawaiian royal family was allowed to eat.



Just look at those bands of white and green! And David says those bands are also found on the actual fruit. The selection Garden Industries has access to apparently has "particularly bold coloring." Looks like art, doesn't it?

David says this variety is a notably slow grower. They'll have plants ready by Fall 2019. These musa "pups" will be sharing space in a newly built shadehouse meant to house their growing collection of unusual and uncommon aroids. Can't wait to see what other goodies they have! Follow them on Facebook and Instagram to catch a peek of it all.



Suggestions, comments, questions or news to share? Just drop me a line at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



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