

Tropicals notes from a tour, plus new phalaenopsis packaging

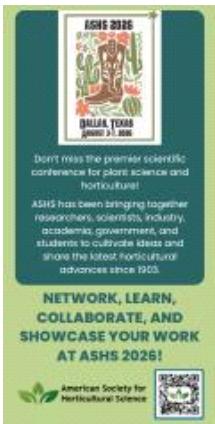


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TROPICAL TOPICS

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Tropical Notes from a Tour
Two Last "For Instances"
Searching for Succulents?
New Phal Packaging from
Dümmen



Tropical Notes from a Tour

I ventured out of my office and onto a tour bus the last week of June. The reason? The annual Garden Centers of America Summer Tour, this time heading to garden centers in the Nashville, Tennessee region. I'm happy to report that of the eight garden retail stores I visited (I missed one spot), houseplants and tropicals were on display—and in several stores, prominently so!

For instance, the quaint Main Street-located retailer Yarrow Acres in Franklin was in my estimation 99% houseplants/tropicals/air plants/succulents, with herbs and a few color baskets rounding out the mix, plant-wise. They, of course, had a good deal of other products, too—some clothing of the "Plant Lady is the New Cat Lady" variety, some tools, home décor, appropriate pottery and such. I liken Yarrow Acres to the Hallmark Card stores of my youth that were mainly cards and some collectibles (I collected Smurf figurines)—both being stores that you could poke around in and be guaranteed you'd buy something on a whim.



Another place filled with houseplants was the indoor décor shop at Creekside Garden Center & Landscaping. They had experienced a devastating fire last fall. As they were rebuilding, the building across the street became available and they moved the houseplant and décor items into

that spot. It was literally packed with houseplants. In addition to the 100+ tour attendees walking through, the store was doing a brisk business with everyday customers. These are high-end customers looking for high-quality plants—of which Creekside had a great variety. And not too many tchotchkes and non-related items, either, which I appreciate.



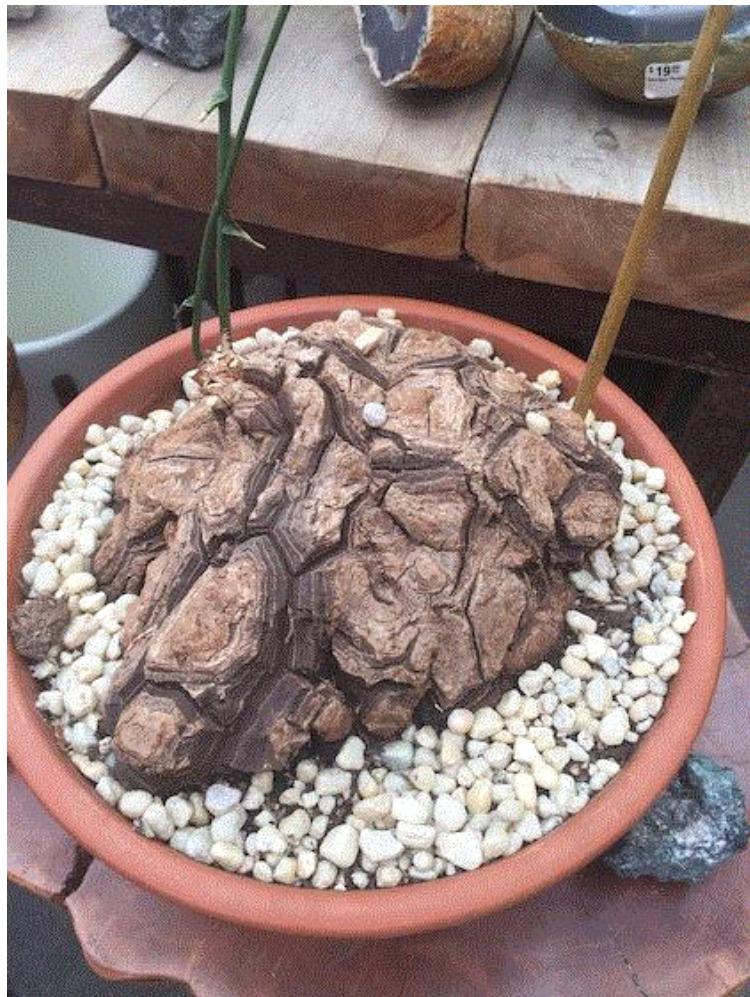


Two Last "For Instances"

I can't not mention the assortment at Gardens of Babylon. Strategically located within the same parking lot as a popular daily farmers market/food area, Gardens of Babylon's indoor plant collection spanned two different retail greenhouses—one with a 70s macramé-and-basket-weaving vibe and small collectible plants, and the other with larger items such as monstera and fiddle leaf fig.



They had some really interesting items, such as this dioscorea, which I've never seen at retail.



Tight-lipped with their sourcing, rumor has it they have a contact at a botanical garden somewhere. Speaking of plant sources and suppliers, [Tennessee Tropicals](#) and [Tri State Foliage](#) were mentioned several times by the buyers at the various locations, along with another one that I just can't remember at this time.

I'll end my tour wrap-up with Hewitt Garden and Design Center in Franklin. They had an extraordinary variety of houseplants, tropicals, succulents, air plants and cacti—and I have to give them props for the best and cleanest cacti display outside of a botanical garden that I have ever seen.





The owners said they've had a tremendous increase in growth—12% two years ago and another 7% last year—and they attribute that growth to their spot-on houseplant/tropicals social media campaigns.



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Searching for Succulents?

I have a new supplier for you (or at least, new to me) by the name of [Bennett Plants](#). And the bonus is you have the option of getting the product potted up in their own hypertufa-like LITEStone containers. And unlike other hypertufa-looking pots, these really are quite light. They'll sell you just the succulents or you can get them potted up either as singles or as artfully crafted arrangements.





They were on display at several of the IGCs we visited, but these photos are from Moore & Moore Garden Center. I'm not sure who is responsible for that white "sansevieria" in the center of the display, but it's made out of a paper-like material and painted. Super cool!



New Phalaenopsis Packaging

Consumers never get tired of orchids, but maybe they are getting tired of the same-old, same-old large-flowered phalaenopsis! Dümmen Orange has just the thing to spice up sales of a small-flowered series of phals called Popcorn. They introduced new phal packaging at the Flower Trials in Europe last month and it's cool, check it out. Popcorn, by the way, comes in a whole slew of colors—white, yellow and a range of pinks.



Dümmen says that Popcorn's flowers are smaller than other phals on the market—about 1.5 inches in diameter—and each plant produces upwards of 50 flowers. They are targeting Millennials with this packaging's fresh look. The Popcorn packaging even has a tagline: "Pops up your room."

My question is, is it available in the North American market? I sent that question along to their HQ and am awaiting word. Even so, packaging sells—why not develop some for your own line of orchids or houseplants?

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

Ellen Wells
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