

Spring Survey Wrap-up, SNA Research Proceedings, and Fostering Innovation



News and commentary for the nursery & landscape market

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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Spring: Better Than It Sounds!
Impact Washington
NewGen Boxwood Releases
SNA Research Proceedings
FarWest – Warren & Dirr
Showy Milkweed
Star Roses & Plants Buyer App.
Notes from the Edge of Sanity

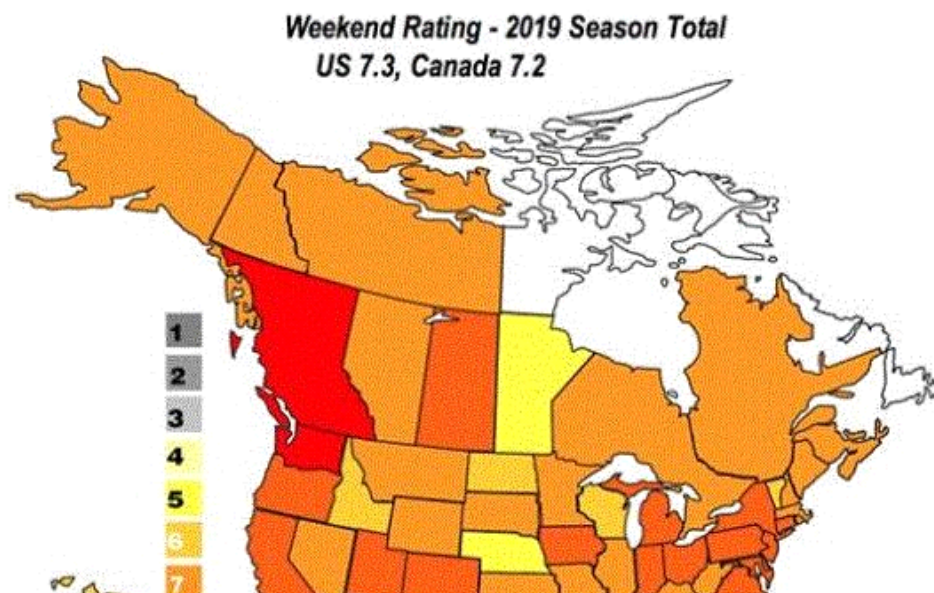


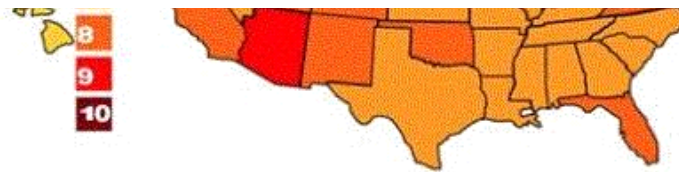
Spring: Better Than It Sounds!

The results are finally in from the bossman's (Chris Beytes) final survey on industry performance. Rather than paraphrase his writing, I am turning it over to him.

Per Chris: *The data is in and I'm done sending you those pesky Monday morning "How was your weekend?" emails. The results? Spring 2019 scored 7.3 in the U.S. and 7.2 in Canada. That's based on 1,129 scores sent in over 12 weekends, from the first of April until the third weekend of June.*

Here's the season-long map:





I will admit the number sounded disappointing at first. But then, I compared it to last year, which was 6.7 in the U.S. and 6.7 in Canada, and I realized this year was considerably better. Then I went back further: 2017 was 7.0/5.9, 2016 was 7.1/7.6, 2015 was 6.9/6.6, and 2014 was 6.7/6.5. In other words, Spring 2019 was the best for the U.S. in six seasons, and the second-best for Canada.

If you're gonna be in the plant business in the U.S., consider the Pacific Northwest. Washington and Oregon consistently score the best from beginning to end. Granted, they have some off weekends due to rain and cold, but locals generally appreciate the breather and time to catch up. Here's what the regional scores look like:

LOCATIONS	AVERAGES			
	YEAR	APR	MAY	JUN
US	7.3	7.0	7.5	7.2
CAN	7.2	6.0	7.4	8.2
South	7.1	7.8	7.1	6.3
West	7.3	7.5	7.2	7.2
Midwest	7.2	6.3	7.5	7.8
New England	7.0	6.1	7.5	7.4
East	8.0	7.7	8.0	8.3
Mountain	7.4	6.9	7.7	7.6
Plains	6.6	5.8	7.3	6.7
Northwest	8.2	8.0	8.2	8.4

Sun Parasol
FiredUp Orange



AmericanHort Impact Washington Event

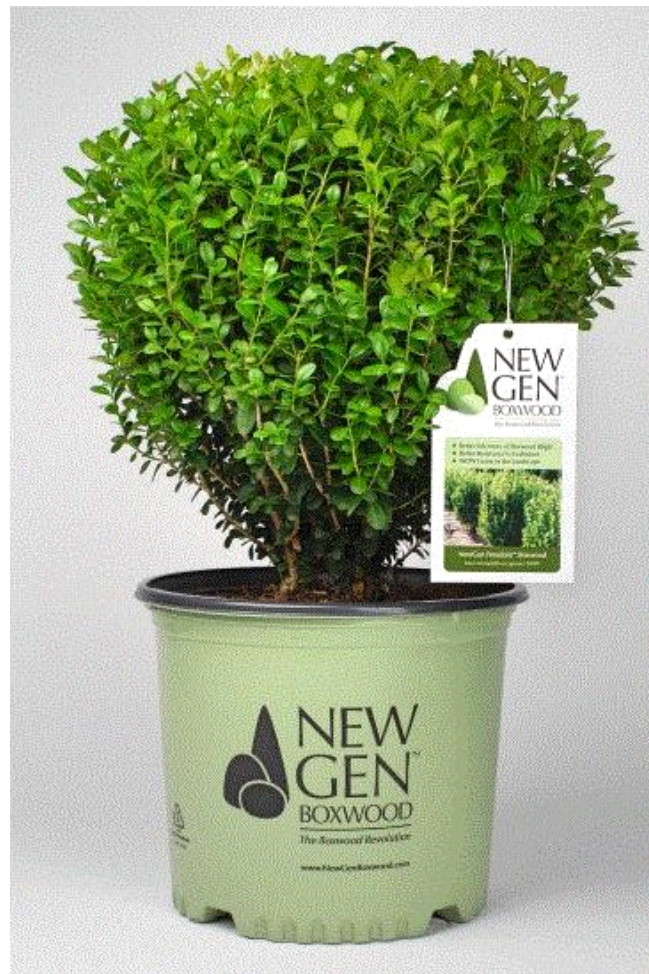
Coming this September 16-18, AmericanHort will once again descend upon Washington D.C. for the annual Impact Washington event. The summit will unite leaders from across the green industry to educate Congress on our challenges and priorities, while hearing from dynamic speakers about the issues facing the industry. The 2019 Summit will feature a program of senior administration officials and leaders in the non-profit community, as well as congressional champions of good policy benefiting horticulture. The keynote speakers include Andrew Wheeler, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Daniel Garza, President of The Libre Initiative. [Click here for more information on attending.](#)

This is indeed an impactful event, and one that is critical to communicating both the economic and societal benefits of our industry to policymakers and their aides (who actually do the work). Therefore, if you get the chance to attend, I can guarantee you won't be disappointed, and you'll certainly be doing a great service to our industry.

2020 NewGen Boxwood Releases Announced

NewGen Boxwood, marketed by Saunders Genetics, LLC, will unveil the first two introductions in its groundbreaking boxwood program at Cultivate'19, July 13-16, 2019, in Columbus, Ohio. The two exclusive varieties will be available in the marketplace beginning early 2020. The revolutionary aspect of the brand-new introductions is reflected in the given names—Buxus NewGen Independence and Buxus NewGen Freedom. “We’re excited to be able to offer these introductions to the industry and consumers,” says Bennett Saunders, General Manager of Saunders Genetics. “The discovery of boxwood blight in 2011 and the spread of leafminer before that signaled a need to raise the bar in boxwood genetics. After these initial years of work, we think we’re on the track to a new era for boxwood.”

NewGen Independence is a very deep green medium-sized boxwood that holds its rich color all winter. It performs best in Zones 5b-8, with further testing underway. With a medium growth rate, Independence will mature as a 3 ft. rounded shrub in 15 years. It performs well in sun, part sun and shade. Strong branching withstands moderate to heavy snows. Recommended uses would be in formal plantings where a medium-sized plant is desired, including as a replacement for English boxwood in foundation plantings.



NewGen Freedom is one of two new Buxus introductions from the new(ish) Saunders Genetics, LLC.

NewGen Freedom is a relatively vigorous rounded cultivar, slightly taller than it is wide. With a

fast growth rate of 3 to 5 inches per year, at maturity (in 15 years) it will reach a size of 4.5 ft. (height) by 4 ft. (wide). Freedom performs best in Zones 5-8, with further testing underway. It performs well in sun, part sun and shade. Beautiful glossy green foliage paired with a uniform and tight habit make it an excellent choice for more formal and residential landscapes as a medium specimen, hedge or foundation plant.



2019 SNA Research Proceedings

On June 12, the Southern Nursery Association (SNA) announced that the proceedings of the 63rd Annual SNA Research Conference have been compiled and are now available online at www.sna.org. This 209-page compilation, provided free to the industry, is downloadable, searchable and printable. It should also be noted that it is written to be readily understandable and easily implemented by growers.

The 2019 proceedings include ten sections of the latest horticultural research on plant breeding and genetics; container grown plant production; economics and marketing; growth regulators; landscapes; pathology and nematology; plant propagation; water management; engineering; structures and innovation; and entomology. Titles were presented by 95 authors from thirteen states and Mexico. A complete list of titles and authors can be found in the Covers and Introduction section, page viii and ix.

The annual publications of the SNA Research Conference Proceedings, from 1991 to 2019, are available on the SNA website at www.sna.org under the Research & Education/SNA Research Proceedings tab. Proceedings are available in a PDF format for viewing, printing or downloading. When downloaded, the PDF file is searchable. For a direct link to the 28 years of information, that includes 3,136 titles comprised of 12,393 pages, go to <https://sna.org/page-1052564>.

FarWest—Warren & Dirr Tackle Urban Trees

At the 2019 Farwest Show (August 21–23 at the Oregon Convention Center), industry experts Dr. Michael A. Dirr and Keith Warren will deliver back-to-back educational sessions focused on the best trees suited for smaller landscapes and urban settings. The talks will shed light on the changing applications for trees in today's environments.



Dr. Dirr's session, "The Remarkable Cornucopia of Small Trees for Restricted Planting Spaces,"

will take place from 8:30 - 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, August 21. As today's garden spaces become smaller, the demand is growing for trees that require less pruning and maintenance, have shorter height and width and offer less energy disruption. Dr. Dirr will spotlight new developments in trees from J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. and North Carolina State University that meet these criteria.

Warren's talk, "Today's Best Trees for the Urban Forest," immediately follows Dirr from 9:45 - 10:45 a.m., Wednesday, August 21. This seminar will present the current best species and cultivar selections for street trees, large landscapes, parks and campuses. New invasive insects and diseases and a changing climate are challenging urban trees like never before. The newest cultivars and trends in species selection will be highlighted, and successful "old faithfuls" will be revered.

Registration for both sessions is required. Convenient registration with discounts is available at <https://farwestshow.com/register/>. Complete details on events, daily schedules, speakers and education for FarWest can be found at www.farwestshow.com. For further questions, contact Zen Landis, event and education manager, at 503-582-2011 or zlandis@oan.org.

Showy Milkweed

Every once in a while (especially when I am going through a bout of writer's block), I ask a student to write about one of their favorite plants. In this case, I asked Mary Lewis, a Master's student in the University of Georgia's Department of Horticulture. So take it away, Mary...

Now that summer is in full swing, most plants in gardens around the U.S. are beginning to regret emerging, and would really rather tap out now before the insects and late summer diseases set in. However, there are some plants who thrive under these stressful conditions. One such plant is *Asclepias speciosa*. *A. speciosa*, or showy milkweed, is a native plant to most areas of the U.S. and lower Canada, with a hardiness range of 3a-9b. As somewhat described in the common name, this is a flowering perennial that has many weed-like qualities. Reaching a staggering maximum height of 6 ft. (although I've only seen it around 4 ft.) with wide silver-haired leaves, large fragrant pink flowers and zero branching, this plant makes a serious garden statement. It's also a veritable watering hole for every pollinator in the county.



Personal experience growing this plant in Georgia has revealed that when sited right, *A. speciosa* will outperform most plants in the garden. One of the common misconceptions about milkweeds in general is that they are extremely drought tolerant. While this is true, most people put them on the same level as cacti or succulents, which they are not. While not as needy as hydrangeas, they still require some soil moisture, and would be about on the same level as lantana or phlox on drought tolerance. A little water goes a long way, lengthening your bloom season and encouraging growth. While most plants begin to lose flower power by June/July (south) into August (north), this is the time of year when *A. speciosa* takes off. Blooming from May (south) to October (north), this plant will produce large clusters of pink blooms that you can smell from across a room.

Another cool fact about this plant is that if a storm breaks the main stem, your lawncare service runs it over or you accidentally whack it back—it will send five to ten new stems up from the roots that oftentimes will flower that same year. Extremely vigorous even under poor soil conditions, this is a plant that keeps going and going until the first frost. Its best selling point, however, is its ecological importance to the monarch butterfly. Using as a forage plant, monarchs will drink the nectar from this plant and lay their eggs on it so the larvae can consume the leaves, ingesting the mildly toxic sap to stave off predators.

Star Roses and Plants Launches Buyer App

I sure love it when a branding company makes life easier on a grower. Star Roses and Plants is making growers' lives easier with the launch of Star Track Go (punny, very punny), a mobile app

with functionality that gives customers access to Star Track anywhere at any time.

Star Track Go allows customers to place orders; check availability of thousands of items across Star Roses and Plants' rose, woody, berry and perennial offerings; change or track shipments; and more.

starTRACK® GO



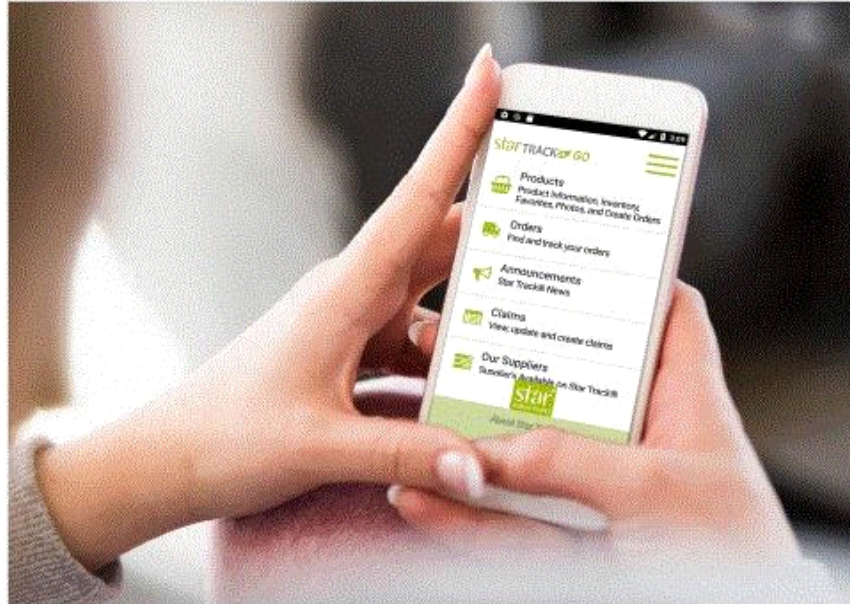
Search Products



Order Online



Manage Account



"This app is an easy-to-use tool that provides growers with the information they need for quick and easy business on-the-go," says Tom O'Connell, Sales Manager at Star Roses and Plants.

The mobile app offers many features including:

- Ability to search inventory from all suppliers
- Quick access to plant information and photos
- Up-to-date availability and pricing
- 24/7 access
- Ability to make changes on orders and file claims
- Shipping notifications and the ability to track individual orders

Star Track Go is available to download for free on Google Play and the App Store. To learn more, visit <https://www.starrosesandplants.com/star-track-go>.

Our Wacky Wonderful World—Notes from the Edge of Sanity

Have you ever felt like you are stuck in a business that lacks innovation? Do you own and/or manage a business that needs to seek out innovation to attain greater market share and profits?

I recently sat in on a [Ted Talk given by Alan Iny](#) that focused on innovation in the workplace,

based upon the concept of applying doubt to the very models and philosophies that make up our predisposed business tendencies. You ask, what kind of fancy talk is this? Well, you can [watch the 8-minute talk](#) to get the mind-bending full description.



Alan Iny presents a bold strategy to drive change and innovation.

But in short, the idea is to inherently cast doubt on the products or services your business offers. Cast doubt upon your everyday tasks and that your way of carrying out these tasks is the best or fastest way. Cast doubt on the fact that you know what your customers want. When you do so, you will look for the better product, better procedure and best product to satisfy your clients' needs.

But seriously ... watch the video. It's a good one.

Live authentic,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Matthew Chappell'.

[Matthew Chappell](#)
Editor-at-Large
Nursery & Landscape Insider

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