

What I'll miss at Cultivate, plus AAS's first winners and a succulent source



THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2019

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What I'll Miss at Cultivate'19

As you can gather from the headline, I'm not attending this year's Cultivate'19 event in Columbus, Ohio, happening this Saturday through Tuesday. Missing my daily dose (or twice daily) of Jeni's Splendid Ice Cream is a given. But as far as the tradeshow goes, there are a bunch of things I will regret not seeing and experiencing this year.

Such as the Retailers' Choice Awards, happening Monday, July 15, at 3 p.m. at the AmericanHort member center in aisle 700. The awards ceremony recognizes the exhibitors who have products that really catch the attention of The Garden Center Group's Danny Summers and Sid Raisch and other participating retailers as they walk the floor during the day on Sunday.

If you're attending Cultivate, you can weigh in with your opinions, too. If you're interested in participating as a retailer judge, contact Danny Summers at 678-909-7770, or email danny@thegardencentergroup.com. He'll let you know how to proceed and when to meet with the

YOUNG RETAILER AWARD

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rest of the group at the end of the day to compare notes. It's really fun and you feel like you've helped your fellow retailers find something that'll help their business. Do join in.



The Young Winners

I'll also miss the crowning—or plaquing—of the next *Green Profit/RBI* Young Retailer Award winner. As in years past, the three under-35 finalists are converging in Columbus to experience all that Cultivate has to offer and then be treated to a very nice meal—all before learning who the winner is. So really, they all win if they get all that, right?

The finalists and all other interested Cultivate attendees are invited to attend the award ceremony, which will be held Monday, July 15, on the rooftop at Callahan's (520 Park Street) as part of the Unplugged event. The ceremony starts around 8:15 p.m.

As a reminder, the *Green Profit/RBI* Young Retailer Award finalists are:

- Madison Rae Landa Williams, co-owner of Boulevard Flower Gardens in South Chesterfield, Virginia
- Tanner Jones, garden center manager for Helmi's Gardens in Columbia, Missouri
- Morgan Huston, store manager for Birdsall & Co. in Englewood, Colorado

The *GrowerTalks/Nexus* Young Grower Awards are happening, too, at exactly the same time and place. Those lucky finalists are:

- Brian Austin, head grower for Dutch Heritage Gardens in Larkspur, Colorado
- Tonya Diehl, lead assistant grower at Sunny Farms in Sequim, Washington
- John Terhesh, head grower at Willoway Nurseries in Avon, Ohio

Congratulations and good luck to all six! As well as to the new hosts for the ceremonies, Ball Publishing's Allison Westbrook and GrowIt's Mason Day.



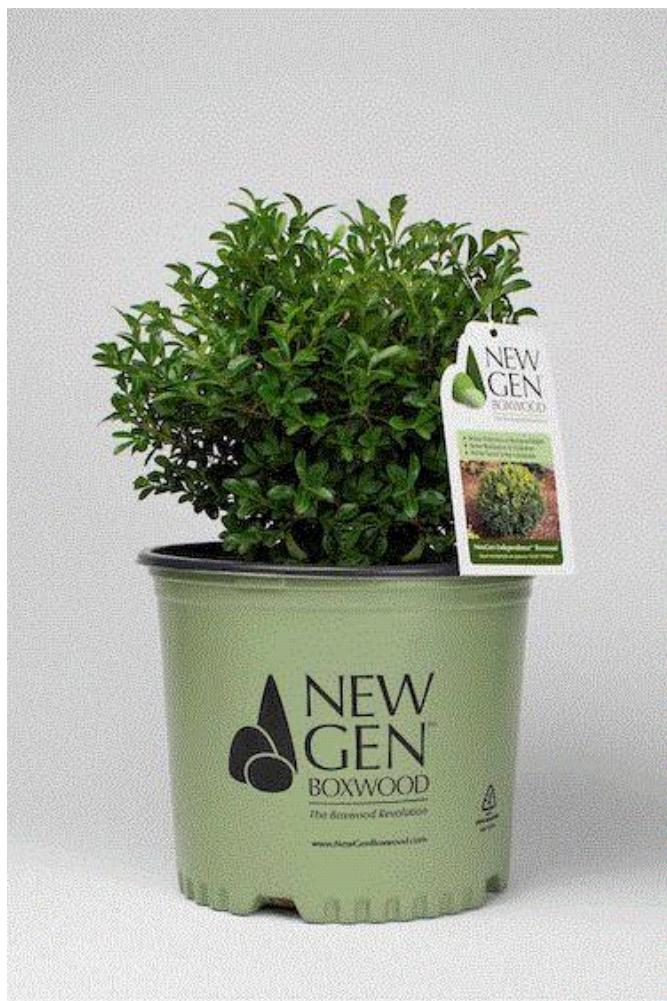
A New Day for Boxwoods

I'll miss seeing some new plant intros, too—the ones that weren't displayed at the California Spring Trials. Like the NewGen Boxwood from Saunders Genetics, for example. I was totally going to write about this item this week, but it turns out that colleague Matthew Chappell, editor

for our **Nursery & Landscape Insider** e-newsletter, wrote it up in yesterday's edition. So I will let the UGA professor and nursery expert tell you all about this groundbreaking variety.

NewGen Boxwood, marketed by Saunders Genetics, LLC, will unveil the first two introductions in its groundbreaking boxwood program at Cultivate'19. 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 Independence Red 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.

Just wanted to add that the Saunders folks have created a **VIDEO** that tells the details of how

these varieties came about. Give it a view—it's compelling stuff!

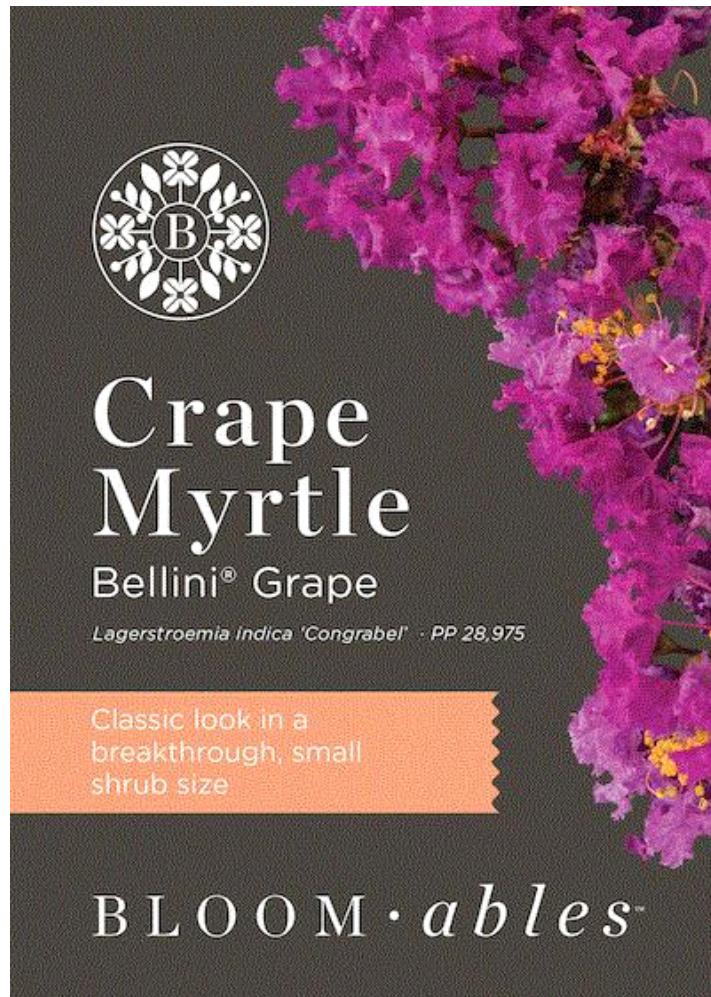
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MORE BLOOMS

A Brand Debut

Star Roses & Plants (a subsidiary of Ball Horticultural, Ball Publishing's parent company) was an exhibitor at Spring Trials this year, but even so, they have a new brand to unveil at Cultivate. It's called Bloomables, and it's a collection of their best flowering genetics that are easy to grow for both the grower and the consumer.

There are more than 35 varieties within Bloomables, and each has been selected for a number of attributes, including having a "noteworthy" flower, outstanding garden performance, bright colors, unique textures and interesting foliage. Choosing from these varieties, consumers will have a gorgeous, bloom-filled garden all season long. Consumer friendliness is key and begins with POP, especially tags, that give a recognizable common name and a simple explanation for why the plant is special or how it can be used.



Sample of a Bloomables plant tag, front side.

Supply is limited! So if you're at Cultivate, take a look at it (Booth #3217) and put your order in for

Spring 2020. And if you're not going to Cultivate, you can find more information at www.bloomables.com.



Know Your Squad

Last year's "Which Character Are You?" quiz from the folks at J. Berry was kinda fun to participate in during Cultivate. Did you? It matched up your personality with that of a Hollywood Hibiscus variety. Well, they're having another quiz this year. It's consumer-oriented, as was last year's, and is meant to engage folks with the Hollywood Hibiscus brand.

HOLLYWOOD HIBISCUS

HOLLYWOOD SQUAD | THE JOCKS

YOUR BESTIES ARE THE JOCKS

When you're not walking the red carpet or the runway, you're enjoying the outdoors, hitting the gym, grabbing a bite and generally enjoying some low-key fun.

BOMBSHELL
CHATTY CATHY
FIRECRACKER
PLAYBOY
RUNWAY BEAUTY

It's called "Who's in Your Hollywood Squad?" and you'll find out which hibiscus personalities are your "besties." There are five different "squads" that you could be matched with. I just took the quiz and OMG, I'm a Jock! Take the quiz [HERE](#).

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Two Bits of News from AAS

First, All-America Selections has given five edibles its AAS Winner designation for 2020. Each was trialed against comparable varieties already on the market and each excelled. That's how AAS has been providing consumers with the best-performing varieties for gosh-near 90 years.

The first set of AAS Winners for 2020 includes :

Cucumber Green Light F1 (National Winner). A high-yielding mini cucumber with attractive, early-maturing fruit and great eating quality. Bred by [Known-You Seeds](#).

Tomato Celano F1 (National Winner). A semi-determinate, patio-type grape tomato, growing 40 in. and having excellent late blight tolerance. Bred by [ProVeg Seeds](#).

Tomato Early Resilience F1 (National Winner). A deep-red, uniform and good-quality Roma on bushy, determinate plants and exhibiting a great deal of resistance to blossom end rot and other diseases. Great for home canning! Bred by [Heinz Seeds](#).

Tomato Galahad F1 (Regional Winner for Heartland, West, Northwest). A sweet, high-yielding, highly late blight resistant tomato on a sturdy plant. Bred by [EarthWork Seeds](#), distributed by [Garden Trends Wholesale](#).

Watermelon Mambo F1 (National). Weighing in at 9 lbs. at only 75 days after harvest, this watermelon has a smaller seed cavity, giving you the look of a seedless, but the taste of a seeded melon. Doesn't overripen. Easy to grow on vigorously healthy vines. Bred by [Known-You Seeds](#).

As is AAS policy, these winners are now available for growers, retailers and consumers to grow, sell and enjoy. If you click on the breeder link associated with each variety, that will automatically open up an email to the breeder from you so you can begin your seed order.

Second, AAS now has a new pricing schedule for breeders who want to join in on the competitive fun, and it's designed to give discounts for early entrants. You can see what those discounts are and find all the other entry information [HERE](#). All entries are submitted to Jenny Boxell at jboxell@aaswinners.com.



More on Bennett Plants

I wrote about a new-to-me source of succulents in my latest [Tropical Topics](#) e-newsletter. I had spotted [Bennett Plants](#)' material at several of the retail stops on the recent GCA Summer Tour of the Nashville area.

I have a bit more information on the company, thanks to Bill Bennett, who is part of the family business. The family started their business in the mid-to-late 1980s in Heflin, Alabama, growing mostly annuals at the time. They got into contract growing in the 2000s and as part of that, they grew hardy succulents. They moved to growing succulents exclusively about five years ago. With the help of an investor, they've expanded their greenhouse facilities and stock plant production and are now able to serve a national customer base.

The cool thing about Bennett's Plants is that they produce the hypertufa-like LITEStone containers in which they sell a majority of their plants. And unlike other hypertufa-looking pots, these really are quite light. They'd been experimenting with their little concrete pots while they

were still contract growing, and when they hit upon succulents, they knew they had something special.



Beautiful, huh? They come in singles and artfully crafted arrangements. They do have plastic pots available, but why not do the upgrade to something your customers are going to fall in love with?

With the exception of a special soil blend, everything they sell is handmade and original—from the stock plants to the pots themselves.



POS Webinar

You know, it's a good time of year to assess the competency of your point-of-sale system. There's a bit of a lull between the spring rush and the fall/Christmas rush. But don't you rush into a completely new system before considering options.

There's a webinar for that. Not a Ball Publishing webinar, but from the folks at Epicor. Join Ruben Muruato for "Things to Consider Before Upgrading or Changing Your Point-of-Sale System," which you can catch on July 24 at 12 p.m. Central Time. Briefly, the webinar will answer the questions, "Why change?" "Is now a good time to upgrade or switch?" and other questions that are in the checkout line of your thoughts.

Register for the webinar [HERE](#).

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Going to Cultivate? Eat some Jeni's for me, but don't dare send me a photo of it. Comments, questions, suggestions? Drop me a line at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

Ellen

Ellen Wells
Editor-at-Large
Green Profit

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