

Monrovia's New CEO; Central's New Buy; Three Passings



GrowerTalks' Acres Online

News and Commentary from GrowerTalks Magazine

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Houseplant Appreciation Day
Central makes another buy
Pedersen makes CEO
Bailey's new execs
In memoriam:
- Paul Daum
- Matt Willoughby
- Dr. Harold Wilkins
Finally ...



Sunday is Houseplant Appreciation Day, Dear Peoples

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If you're looking for an excuse to change your marquee from the classic, "We're so excited we wet our plants," how about telling your town that Sunday, January 10 is Houseplant Appreciation Day?



Now, I'm not sure who dubbed it that, but who cares? It's after Christmas, the house is drab now that the tree and lights are gone, and folks are looking for a reason to freshen up their interior—even more so if they're locked down inside.

I like the way the website smartphonemodel.com promotes the day last year:

"It is the most popular Celebration Day United States and more country. Dear Peoples, by mid-January, most of our various holiday decorations and Christmas trees have made their way out of our homes. All the Christian Peoples are Celebrate this Special Epiphany 2020."

Well said ... well, not really, but ...

Anyway, Dear Peoples, promote houseplants for this Special Epiphany 2021!

(Also, today is National Bobblehead Day, so here's a special shout-out to my fellow bobblehead Ellen. Hey, Ellen!)

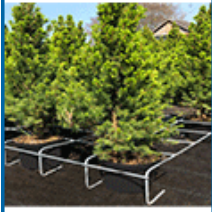


Central Garden & Pet makes another buy

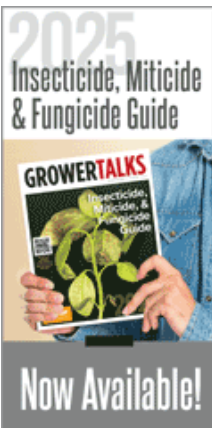
Not a nursery operation this time, like the Hopewell acquisition of a few weeks ago—this time it's packet seeds and spring garden supplies via the company Green Garden Products of Norton Massachusetts.

I'd never heard of them, but I (and you) know their brands well: Ferry-Morse, Jiffy, SUPERThrive, NK Lawn & Garden, Dyna-Gro, plus four lesser-known seed brands, McKenzie, Livingston, American and Seeds of Change. They've got 3,500 SKUs going into 70,000 North American retailers, served from production and distribution facilities in Ohio, California and Manitoba.

No more
windy-day
worries.

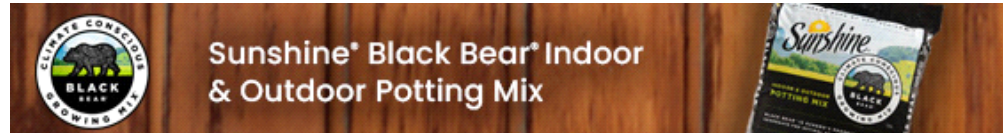


PLANT PRIDE &
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The deal is worth \$532 million, says the press release. The transaction is expected to close in the first calendar quarter of 2021, pending the usual regulatory rigamarole.

Tim Cofer, CEO of **Central**, said, "We are thrilled to welcome Green Garden into the Central Garden & Pet team upon closing. Our new Central to Home strategy is focused on building further scale in our two operating segments and meeting consumer and customer needs. Adding Green Garden's well-known and trusted seed and seed starting brands for vegetables, herbs and flower gardens will expand our portfolio into an attractive adjacent garden category and will strengthen our footprint with key retail customers. Moreover, we expect to leverage our strong merchandising, brand building and digital capabilities to grow sales for both Central and our retail partners."



Jonathan Pedersen promoted to CEO of Monrovia

Congrats to Jonathan Pedersen, who's just been appointed CEO of world-renowned nursery Monrovia, based in Azusa, California. Jonathan succeeds Miles Rosedale, who's stepping down to focus on his role as Co-Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Jonathan joined Monrovia in 2013 as vice president of business development and intellectual property after stints with Bailey Nurseries and Linder's Greenhouses. In 2019, he was promoted to vice president of sales and business development.

"Jonathan brings a depth of experience and a fresh perspective at an exciting time for Monrovia," said Chris Kroes, co-chairman of the Board. "His deep industry knowledge and institutional tenure makes Jonathan uniquely qualified to lead Monrovia successfully into the future."



"It has been a truly challenging, yet remarkable, year," said Jonathan of 2020. "We worked with our garden center partners to adapt to changes quickly, while maintaining a focus on growing the highest quality plants and providing the best service to our customers. Now more than ever, homeowners want to create beautiful outdoor living spaces and they want to find just the right plant for the right place. I'm excited to work with our dedicated craftsmen to keep fulfilling that promise to our customers and consumers."



Bailey's new execs

Speaking of Bailey, they've got their own leadership announcement to make: the promotions of Shane Brockshus and Alec Charais to the newly-created positions of Chief Operations Officer and Chief Marketing & Product Development Officer, respectively. Marc McCormack will continue leading company-wide sales direction and sales leadership development, now as Chief Sales Officer.

Additionally, Ofelia Wegley has joined the Bailey organization as Chief Human Resources Officer. Elevating these key business functions to a more senior level complements the existing management structure led by Chief Executive Officer Terri McEnaney, Chief Financial Officer John Bailey and Chief Information Officer Pat Bailey.

"We are looking forward to having Shane, Alec and Ofelia in their new positions, contributing to setting direction for the future of our company," said Terri. "Shane and Alec have been with Bailey for 20 years and have continually shown themselves as strong leaders who bring creative, thoughtful and impactful ideas to the table and make them happen. Ofelia joins our company with two decades of experience within and outside the horticulture industry, bringing our human resources team great insight and direction."



RIP Paul Daum

It was just **last month**—December 1, to be precise—when I last mentioned Paul Daum, my Gloeckner sales rep back in the '80s when Laurie and I were running our Florida potted plant nursery, Indian River Ornamentals. The topic was Gloeckner's book of business being taken over by Ball, and when I mentioned Paul to Joe Simone, former owner of Gloeckner, he told me Paul was in an assisted living down in Florida, still reading and writing, "and never waning in his high level of 'horticultural curiosity.'"

Well, I'm sorry to have to report that Paul passed away on December 31, two days after his 95th birthday. Paul retired from Gloeckner in 2004 (after a 47-year career with them!) and lived in Costa Rica for many years with his wife, Miriam, still consulting with growers, breeders and importers. In fact, some consider him the "father of the Latin America flower industry," said his son Steve, with whom I corresponded via email. Steve, who works for Smither-Oasis/Floralife as director of Superflor Technologies, sent me some notes about his dad, which included this:

"As quoted by an industry leader, 'Paul Daum was always giving sound horticultural advice to the small to the big to the rich and to the poor.' Paul was instrumental in developing a prime export business in Latin America and the United States. He dedicated over 50 years of his life to the founding and development of global floriculture primarily in the United States, Central and South America ... he was proud of the fact that it provided so many jobs in so many countries."

Paul was born in Canton, Ohio, and was a veteran of the U.S. Navy submarine service during WWII. After his service, he attended Ohio State University, graduating with a degree in horticulture. He's survived by sons Steve and Andre (who's self-employed in Miami), three grandsons and two great grandchildren.



RIP Matt Willoughby

More bad news, and harder to hear, as it's the passing on January 5 of Matt Willoughby, sales rep for Vaughan's Horticulture and a young man, just 45, with so much life and horticulture left in him. He reportedly was a victim of the coronavirus.

I learned this from his McHutchison colleague Jessica Montgomery, who passed along news relayed by Keith Cable, president—North America for Dümmen Orange (which owns both Vaughan's and McHutchison). Keith wrote of Matt:

"Matt lived his life with enthusiasm and integrity; his love for his family was always first in his heart. Matt's passion for horticulture was virtually unmatched. I personally have seen Matt's relationships with his breeders, customers and vendors, which have all been built upon his sincere desire to help others and create personal connections and opportunities."



Matt in a video presentation at Pacific Plug & Liner during the 2019 Spring Trials.

Matt leaves behind his wife, Jennifer, son Sam, and daughters Mason and Conner.

Nathan Lamkey, president of McHutchison and Vaughn's, said, "As we mourn for a life taken too early, we need to focus on the family that Matt has left behind. We have created a [GoFundMe page](#) as a platform to raise money for the Willoughbys and we are asking our industry to help

support Matt's young family by making donations."



RIP Harold Wilkins

Lastly, in the sad news category, is the passing of Professor Harold Wilkins, a fixture of the floriculture education and research world for half a century or more. He passed away January 7 at the age of 87.

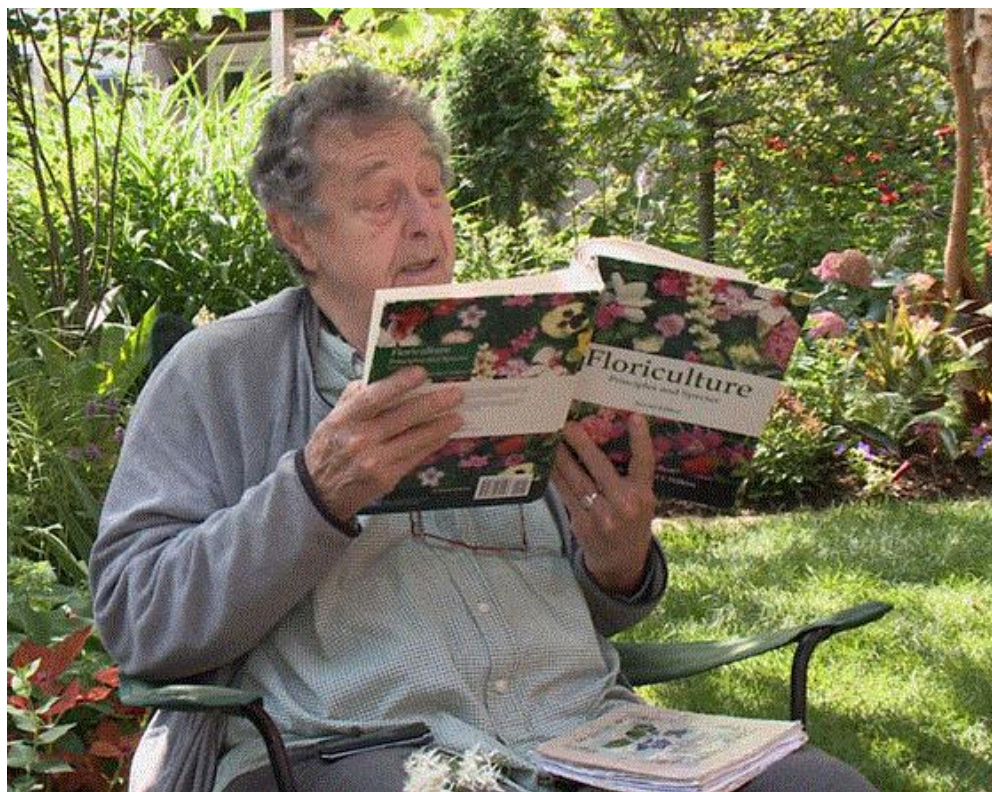
According to his obituary—which he wrote, being a very thorough person, said Ball Hort's Will Healy, one of his many grad students—Harold was born in Cobden, Union County, which is the far southern tip of Illinois. His entire family, including his parents J. Harley and Pauline Wilkins, were involved in the horticulture business.

A 1951 graduate of Anna Jonesboro High School, he attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where he earned his B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. He also attended Cornell University and spent an additional two years of study in postharvest physiology at the University of Florida at Bradenton.

But he's best known as Professor Harold Wilkins: From 1966 to 1989 he taught and served as the extension floriculture professor at the University of Minnesota's Saint Paul campus. Ten Ph.D. students were graduates of Dr. Wilkins' program and today they lead floriculture education and research at major universities and businesses in the U.S. and Canada.

"Hundreds of his undergraduate students continue to amaze their employers and families with their floral knowledge. Beloved by his many students, he considers them his sons and daughters and their children his grandchildren," he wrote.

Harold's research over the years included many floral crops, with a particular focus on cool-weather crops that would require less energy for production. These included Easter lily, freesia, azaleas and alstroemeria. In fact, his research helped create the multi-million-dollar alstroemeria industry here in the U.S. and he's considered "the father of the alstroemeria industry." In addition, his research included branching control for roses, carnations and poinsettias.



Harold and graduate student John Dole authored two editions of "Floriculture Principles and Species."

After retiring from the University of Minnesota in 1989 he consulted in the San Francisco area for one of the largest cut flower and potted flowering wholesale growers in North America. His responsibility was to find and bring into production new species. Thereafter, he was awarded the D.C. Kiplinger Chair at The Ohio State University. Next, he did research at the Hebrew University in Rehovot for two winters, explored for new species at Kirstenbosch Botanic Garden in South Africa for two winters and in Australia for one season.

In November 2004, Harold and his partner, Bryan Gjevre, began a new venture: They purchased an 8-acre farm near Baldwin, Wisconsin, that they dubbed Gold Finch Flowers Farm, where they've planted unusual woody and herbaceous ornamentals to sell to floral shops in the Twin Cities and western Wisconsin. They also provide cut flowers, bouquets and designs for clients of the Mill City Farmer's Market in downtown Minneapolis. They did that until 2019, when they "semi-retired."

Over the years Harold received numerous floriculture industry awards, including admittance to the Society of American Florist's Hall of Fame in 1988.



Finally ...

I was going to bring you some reader comments on memories of 2020 and outlooks for 2021, but I decided to save those for next time, meaning you still have time to weigh in! Give 2020 a score of 1-10 and then tell me what you anticipate (not score-wise, just in general) for 2021. Will it be fantastic, a roller-coaster or a mask-wearing, Zoom-fatigued drag? Email me at beytes@growertalks.com. (I take international submissions, too! What's the outlook for Upper Volta?)



See you next time!

Chi

Chris Beytes

Editor

GrowerTalks and *Green Profit*

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