

Webinar alert! Plus two winning tropicals, work hubs and Insta-tips



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TROPICAL TOPICS

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Two Tropicals to Ogle At
Insta Tips
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Hubs Are the New Office



Two Tropicals to Ogle At

We may have missed out on seeing some glorious new varieties of houseplants and tropicals at TPIE this year, but folks who attended Cultivate '21 in Columbus, Ohio, last week, got to see a few. Two varieties ended up as recipients of the Retailer's Choice Awards, the Cultivate version of TPIE's Cool New Products winners. So you can rest assured that these two houseplants were chosen by folks who know what customers are looking for in this category. This means you should get a line on these beauties to either grow them or sell them!

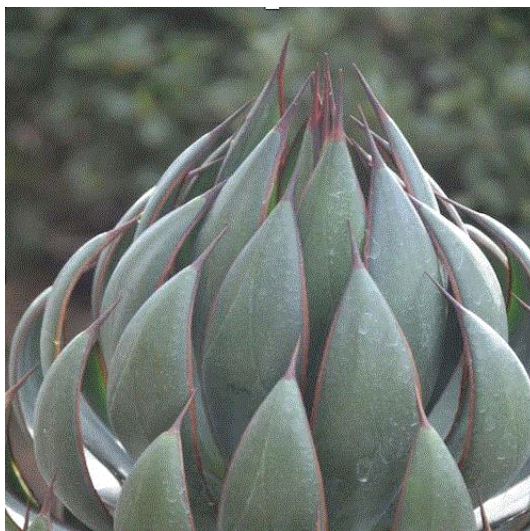
Without further ado, the two tropical-related winners of this year's Retailer's Choice Awards include:

Peperomia caperata Brasilia from Succulents Unlimited BV, Wageningen, the Netherlands. This new peperomia is characterized by leaves that are gray-purple on the upper surface and red on the lower surface. And it's got a lot of them, too! Plus it throws up yellow-white flower spikes and has a compact habit. You'll have to wait some months to acquire it, though, as its availability in the U.S. is expected in later 2022. www.succulentsunlimited.com



Mangave Praying Hands from Walters Gardens, Zeeland, Michigan. If you're unfamiliar, mangaves are an intergeneric cross of *Manfreda* x *Agave*. And this variety, Praying Hands, brings a totally different look to the mangave scene. Its dark green leaves stay curled upward like a teardrop or an artichoke, with the cinnamon brown terminal spines nearly touching each other. It's unique praying hands-like habit comes from one of its Agave parent, *Agave ocahui*. It's on the manageable side, size-wise, coming in around 8-10 in. both in height and spread.

www.waltersgardens.com



Insta Tips

Unboxing houseplants is the 2020s version of cat videos. These pics and videos are everywhere

and everybody loves them, especially folks who hang out on Instagram. The must-follow hashtags are too numerous to share (anyone have a list? [Please share!](#)). If you're in the houseplant biz—anywhere along that supply chain—you need to be there and *be there effectively* to monetize those 65 million monthly users.

I recently ran across an article on [Entrepreneur.com](#) that shared six Instagram marketing strategies for small business users. “But houseplants are selling themselves!” you're saying. The rare or trendy houseplants, yes, and those are in short supply. What about the common varieties that are available? They may need a new way of making them shine in order to get them out the door.

Here are those six Instagram marketing strategies. See which would best suit your small biz:



Create engaging emoji captions. Pictures—even emojis—are worth a thousand words, and that's especially important on a photo-focus app like Instagram. Use emojis to quickly relate the mood of the post—from playful to playful, there's an emoji for that emotion.

Be original. Being authentic and including your own perspective is really the best way to make your plant pics stand out from the thousands of others. Share yourself, show an effort and leave that impersonal sales stuff to the unenlightened.

Use hashtags wisely. Search for any hashtags you may think about using yourself to see how they are performing. Did you know hashtags that are eight to 10 characters in length perform the best? Be sure the hashtags are easy to read, as well. I stay away from ones that have consecutive vowels—it trips me up when I read them for some reason.

Go beyond Instagram. Advertise your Instagram account on Facebook or Twitter.

Post on a regular basis. You'll show up consistently if you do. But don't sacrifice engaging content and brand personality just because you need to get a post out TODAY. Try using Instagram stories—short clips that are easy for viewers to consume—as another way of keeping your content fresh.

Attractive Instagram feed. Make sure your profiles are just as beautiful as your posts. It's often the first images new followers see of you, so make sure they are interesting and enticing. Another “keep it attractive” tip: Instagram is algorithm based, so your content is consumed more when more people engage with it. That means you need to find the posting times that work for your content. A few rules of thumb:

- Lighter, more digestible content is best early, while images that are bolder or more graphic-heavy are better later in the day.
- If you spend less than an hour a day on it, then consider the early hours of the morning. The reason for this is that more people are online during those hours, so posts from this time are among the first they see.
- Where do you live? Some markets are very different when it comes to the amount of time people use their smartphones in those locations.



Webinar Alert! Inventory Management in 2021

You may or may not be a retailer, but even if you aren't, you'll not want to miss Ball Publishing's upcoming webinar (as in very soon, **this Thursday, July 22**) sponsored by Epicor, a maker of retail software solutions. Industry personnel all along the supply chain will want to be familiar with how to use sales data effectively to forecast the seemingly unforecastable future.

During this "Inventory Management in 2021" webinar, Epicor's Sam Kirkland will chat with AJ Petitti, president of Petitti Garden Centers in Cleveland, Ohio. AJ's father Angelo started the garden center in a garage in 1971. Today, 50 years later, they have nine locations, plus a massive production greenhouse and a wholesale nursery.

Sam will take AJ through a range of topics, including:

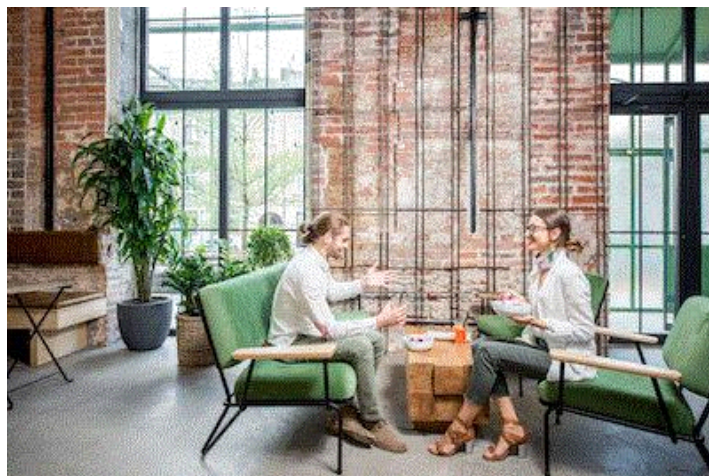
- How to effectively use data to forecast the rest of 2021 and beyond, and
- How retailers are using their increased cashflow from 2020 and 2021 to grow their businesses.

The webinar is slated for Thursday, July 22, at 1:00 p.m. Eastern/Noon Central. Did I mention it's FREE? It is! Another great reason not to miss this online event. Sign up now at www.greenprofit.com/webinars.



Hubs Are the New Office

Here's some news that you interiorscapers might find interesting. An unexpected thing has happened while the country has been emerging from lockdowns and work-from-home environments. Some employers, rather than demanding all employees come back to the office, are in talks with local small businesses—think coffee shops, microbreweries, restaurants and so on—to provide working spaces in locations where a high number of employees live.



The concept, which I read about on [Digiday](#), explains it this way: “[The shops] will do the dual job of providing a work area for people who want additional flexibility and to work asynchronous hours, and supporting local businesses that are in need of extra business after spending the last year or so closed.” These workspaces ideally would be within walking or biking distance of employees’ homes. For example, it would be like setting up a workspace in Framingham or Newton rather than having employees hop on the T or brave the Pike to work in downtown Boston.

Said Traction On Demand’s CEO Greg Malpass about the why his company has chosen this work hub model, “We have given ourselves permission to find a better way to work that factors in what towns we want to live in, what lifestyles we want and need, what is sustainable environmentally and economically, and how the team in each location is made of the communities that are there.”

Back to the interiorscapers here. Office and work environments are in a time of paradigm shift. How are some of the ways your businesses can adjust along with it? Have ideas? Have plans in the works? Drop me a line about the topic at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

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



Ellen Wells
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Green Profit

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