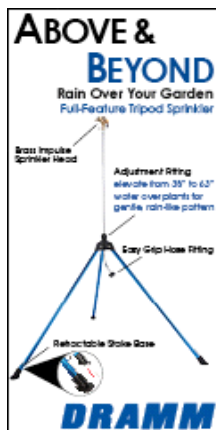


ERCs, holiday hits, what to read and hort's first "Triple Crown"



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2022

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Green Profit's
buzz!
Retail news from inside and outside the green industry

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

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Is ERC For You?

A COVID-19 pandemic aid provision that ended last year is this year's tax break tax advisors are pushing hardcore. The Employee-Retention Tax Credit allows some businesses to claim up to \$26,000 per employee in refunds by amending payroll tax returns from 2020 and 2021.

But! And isn't there always a "but" with anything that sounds too good to pass up? But, you and anyone trying to push you toward these ERC refunds, need to be aware that the IRS is watching the claims with a very close eye. It's a very serious compliance issue, so this [article in the Wall Street Journal claims](#), and those stretching their facts a little too much could be audited. No one wants that.





There are a whole host of tax firms that are pushing small businesses to apply for the ERC, using all sorts of advertising to get the message out. Before you pick up the phone and dial 1-800-#TAX, know that you should look very closely at the eligibility requirements, as you will need to show a significant decline in gross revenue from 2019. Work with your accountant on this to be sure you are eligible.

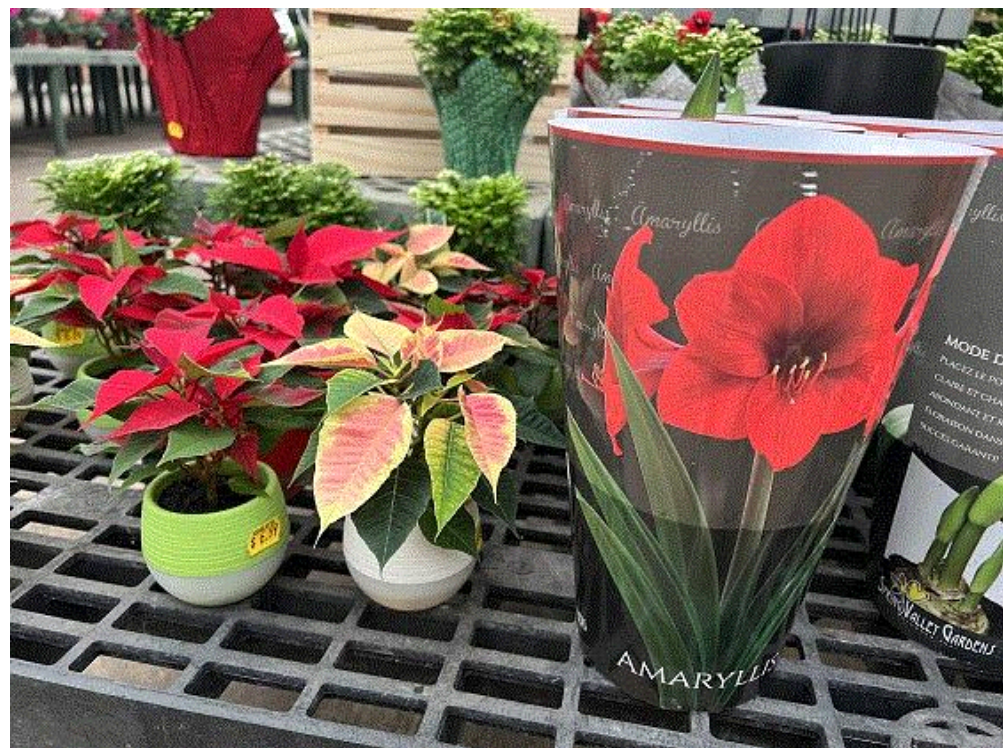
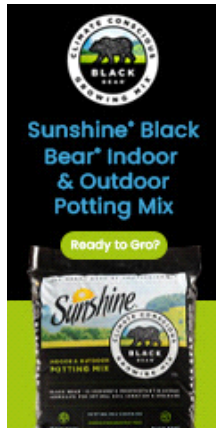


Holiday Hits

Colleague Jen Polanz went holiday shopping last week and has this report from some Cleveland-area garden centers.

Last week I hit a couple of garden centers in Northeast Ohio to gather some ideas for an upcoming story I'm doing on gift and holiday trends (if you have any thoughts about what will be trending for 2023, hit me up at jpolanz@ballpublishing.com).

I found some great ideas to share with the class related to snazzing up plants for gifting purposes and in creating gift ideas out of food items, aromatherapy and garden-related products. Check it out:



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In both these photos, the plants at Gale's Garden Center in Willoughby Hills are ready-made for gifting, whether it's on the mini side with the poinsettias, medium with amaryllis or large with a Norfolk pine in a wrap with decorative picks nearby.





I visited the newly remodeled Tallmadge location of Petitti Garden Centers to find the houseplant benches adorably wrapped with bows to show off a selection that's ready to give as gifts.





I love, love, *love* these poinsettia treatments at Boyert's Greenhouse & Farm in Medina. The addition of the greenery and the decorative containers make them super festive to give as gifts (or keep!). Another mix had a white Princettia poinsettia, English ivy and greenery for a beautiful holiday combo.



More Gift Ideas

Continued from above.

These might be too late for this year, but here are a few additional gift and holiday décor items I liked from my travels:



I actually bought one of these cardinal-themed deco pots from Gale's (bottom left). These are a great way to dress up a plant gift or turn a potted plant into holiday décor.



Airplant cuteness overload from Gale's.



A garden-themed tree at Petitti's Tallmadge with garden gift items around it, including notepads, plant signs for the garden, ornaments and vases.



Petitti's often carries some specialty food products, and I love how they dressed up some of them like gnomes to highlight their gift-ability, too!

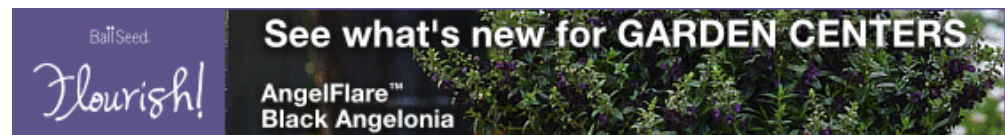


Boyert's highlighted smaller items that were great for stocking stuffers, including these delightfully smelling soaps.



And finally, Boyert's had a clever way to advertise their upcoming make-and-take classes: by showcasing them right up by the front door and having a pick in each with the date and time of the class. They had several different options available. Love this idea!

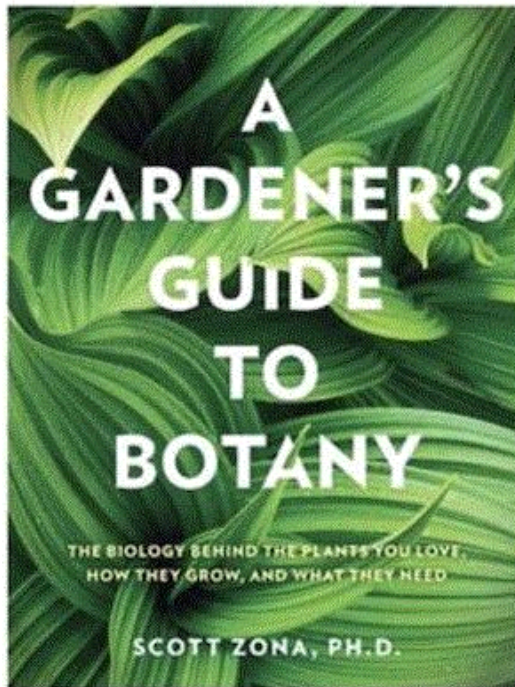
Thanks for pinch-hitting for my one-holiday-item-per week, JP!



Botany for Gardeners

Here's a holiday gift that new gardeners will enjoy. It's "A Gardener's Guide to Botany: The biology behind the plants you love, how they grow and what they need." With a title like that, it sounds like even longtime gardeners and even some pros like yourself will enjoy this new book from Dr. Scott Zona, too.

What I like about it is it promises to be more than just another book about how to grow plants. The description says "A Gardener's Guide" is "a botanical journey into what makes plants tick, delivered in layman's terms that are easily understood."



The book covers such topics as how plants convert water, air and sunshine into actual plant material; how they react to their environment and “know” when to do what; how plants access water and nutrients, some with the aid of other living organisms; and how plants reproduce. It’s all very fascinating! And readers will enjoy it way more than a college-level botany textbook, thanks to some beautiful photography.

It’s new and available now from Cool Springs Press. Contact your book rep today, and maybe you’ll make some new plant parents very happy this holiday season.



You’re a (Triple) Winner, Baby

Who says no one can ever agree on anything? All-America Selections, National Garden Bureau and Perennial Plant Association have just disproved that by all agreeing that Rudbeckia American Gold Rush takes a top recognition from all three organizations. This is the first time that three major plant industry non-profits have joined together to promote a plant class and specific variety. “And for good reason,” a press release about this Triple Crown of Horticulture announced.



Those three recognitions include:

- All-America Selections' Herbaceous Perennial Winner
- National Garden Bureau's 2023 Perennial of the Year
- Perennial Plant Association's 2023 Perennial Plant of the Year

The confluence of titles means the time is right for brokers, growers and retailers to promote this variety all along the sales chain. Free promotional programs from each organization will help you do that. And may I remind you that this publicity works (more on that in the next item).

All-America Selections highlights this plant on its [own web page](#). National Garden Bureau has photos of this and other rudbeckia under the "Year of" tab on the [NGB website](#). And Perennial Plant Association has photos, descriptions and more on the [PPOY web page](#). Head on over to any of these sites and take advantage of the free promotional materials.



Proof Promotion Programs Work

I included this item in yesterday's *Tropical Topics*, so forgive me for somewhat repeating myself. But it's a great illustration that marketing programs from non-profits do actually work.

Aimee Rohrbach, co-owner of Musselman Wholesale Foliage in Pennsylvania, ran some sales numbers for tropicals and foliage plants comparing YTD 2023 with numbers from the previous five years. No surprise here—2023 numbers are down compared to 2020-21 but still way ahead of 2019.

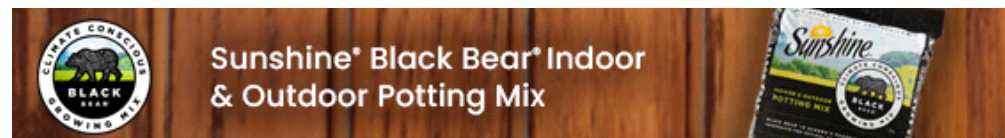
But what I wanted to bring to your attention is this. Aimee says, "I also checked the sales figures on Peperomia—the National Garden Bureau's 2022 Houseplant of the Year. In 2018, we sold only 3,470 peperomias. This year we have sold 20,500 pots of the species to date, so I think the marketing did work!"

If anyone else has noticed increased sales of peperomias or any other nationally or regionally promoted plants, drop me a note about it at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

What to Read

If you're not into football or need to pretend you're working so that weird cousin doesn't talk your ear off post-turkey, I have a suggestion for what to read. [This is the story of Ryan Neil](#) and the apprenticeship that turned him into a bonsai master. Fair warning, it's not as peaceful and serene as you would first imagine.

Have a great Thanksgiving, folks! And have an even better holiday sales weekend. Stay warm!



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Perennials for 2025-2026!



If you have questions, comments, suggestions, drop me a line if you'd like at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

Ellen Wells
Senior Editor
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