

## Cool Plants from TPIE, plus a coupon, invasives education and YRA



FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 2024

subscribe

### GROW YOUR VISIBILITY • TRAFFIC • SALES

Merchandise Dramm  
Where Your Customers Are



DRAMM



Green Profit's  
**buzz!**

Retail news from inside and outside the green industry

#### COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Winning Cool Plants  
A Whole Booth!  
Three from Suntory  
Start Promoting Seed Starting  
Education on Invasives  
What Dropped In My Inbox  
It's YRA Time  
Check Your Vendors

PROVEN  
TO SELL  
MORE

PW  
PROVEN  
WINNERS



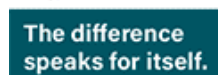
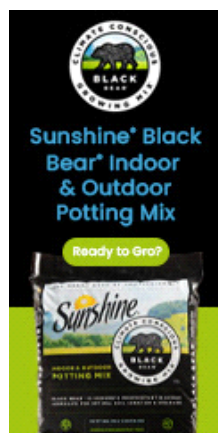
### Winning Cool Plants

I've been back from the Tropical Plants International Expo a week already and I'm still reeling from all the new-new and new-to-me stuff I want to share with you. Am I a bit overwhelmed by it all? You could say so.

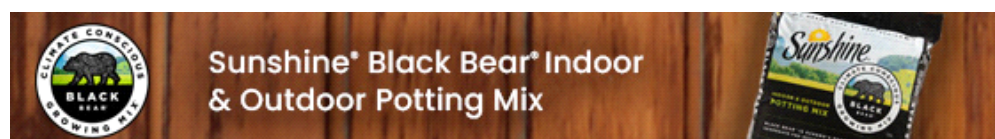
However, I fortunately have The Garden Center Group's Cool Product Awards to help me organize at least part of it. Once again the GCG's Danny Summers and a group of volunteer retailers scoured the TPIE trade show floor, looking for new-to-them products that they would sell in their very own stores. Their list of 15 products somewhat overlaps with mine, which means that sharing their list of Cool Product Award Winners is a great place to begin.

Seven of the 15 Cool Product Award Winners are plants, so let's start with them.

First up is the ***Latania lontaroides* Red Palm** from the folks at **Acosta Farms Nursery**. What



caught the attention of the judges was its bright red leaf stem. They say it's red just when the leaves are young, but I saw a larger version of this in Acosta's booth and it still had quite-red leaf stems. This slow-growing fan palm can grow as tall as 30 feet.



## A Whole Booth!

**Bullis Bromeliads** did something I hadn't seen before for a Cool Product or Retailers' Choice Award—their **whole booth** won! The judges were blown away by both the number (and very cool colors) of new selections and the booth design itself that they gave the whole kit and kaboodle an award. Check out their [WEBSITE](#) to see the great varieties for yourself.







My silly little camera phone cannot do this booth justice!

I've seen the pitcher plants in the **Deroose Plants** booth for several years, but this year several retailers spotted **Miranda**, a hybrid from *Nepenthes maxima* and *N. northiana* and were blown away by the appearance and size. This carnivorous tropical plant produces 10-in. long pale green pitchers with red-brown speckles, which are positioned almost vertically, with an opening of nearly 4 in. in diameter—big enough to consume a rodent, and apparently they do!



**R&D Nurseries**, known for some super-rare and extraordinarily beautiful foliage plants, won an award last year for its Red Moon Philodendron, and this year their Fire Moon Philodendron took home the prize. Compared to Red Moon, Fire Moon has an even darker and more dramatic splash of red contrasting with the leaves' yellow and green tones.





### Three from Suntory

All three of the remaining plant-related Cool Product Award winners belong to **Suntory Flowers**. I've written about two of them in last week's *buZZ!* Those are Sun Parasol Original XP Bluephoria—a Dipladenia with blue flowers and pink buds—and the first variety of a new series called FiredUp. FiredUps have a more upright habit with narrow leaves and a flatter, pinwheel-shaped flower. Orange is a wonderful color and I can't wait to see what other colors they have in the pipeline. By the way, this makes a perfect “thriller” item for a combo. Both of these items also won TPIE's Favorite New Flowering Plant for 2024.







Suntory's Sun Parasol Original XP Mauvelous won a Cool Product Award, too, with good reason! Just look at this softly speckled coloration—so beautiful. And the name is awesome, seriously.



I'll tell you all about the winning products in the next *buZZ*!

Rudbeckia 'Treasure Trove'  
New to Proven Winners  
Perennials for 2025-2026!



## Start Promoting Seed Starting

And Valentine's Day. That's the takeaway from a look at the search terms that [National Garden Bureau's](#) Pinterest followers are using. As we've pointed out here numerous times, Pinterest users' search terms are a good indication of what consumers will be purchasing a month or more in advance.

When it comes to trends in planting, this graphic shows how much the search terms "seed starting indoors" and "seed starting" increased compared to the previous 30 days. A lot!

### Trends in Planting

Percent changes are compared to the previous 30 days

1 acre homestead layout ↑ 80%	seed starting indoors ↑ 500%
seed starting ↑ 400%	strawberry garden ↑ 100%

You can also see that searches for "1 acre homestead layout" are even greater than they were when we mentioned them previously (80% this week compared to 60% two weeks ago).

And this graphic validates both the seed-starting interest and the interest in Valentine's Day decorations. As a reminder, these are some of the most popular global growing trends for NGB's audience, which includes all users who are following NGB or have engaged with any of their pins in the last 90 days.



gardening  
5.7x  
more searches



spring aesthetic  
3.2x  
more searches



valentines day decorations  
2.3x  
more searches



plant  
2.3x  
more searches



## Education on Invasives

Speaking of NGB, the organization recently published a [BLOG POST](#) on new cultivars of previously invasive species. When NGB's Diane Blazek suggested I give it a read, I thought this would be the perfect article to educate garden center staff on the meaning of invasive, what's invasive and where, and how modern breeding techniques are helping to curb invasive tendencies of some of the more bullying species. Knowing the details and what's being done to combat



invasivity can go a long way in helpfully answering customers' questions out on the sales floor. These lines from the post is a good place to start a novice's education on invasives: "... it's also important to realize that **not all plants labeled invasive invade all USDA zones**. Some plants are worse than others, with widespread bullying tendencies. But plants that may be considered invasive in USDA zone 10 may never spread in chilly zone 4."



The post includes information on sterile and/or non-invasive varieties of plants that are considered invasive and/or aggressive in certain areas. The post includes two buddleia series—the Cascade Collection (sterile) and the Chrysalis series (very low seed set) so that folks pretty much everywhere can enjoy and celebrate NGB's Year of the Buddleia without concern of contributing to rampant butterfly bush spread.

Read the post [HERE](#) and then send it around to your fellow staffers as suggested reading. A knowledgeable staff person makes for a satisfied customer!



## What Dropped In My Inbox

A late-January edition of [Armstrong Garden Center's e-newsletter](#) dropped into my inbox yesterday and again it contained something I wanted to pass along to you. At the very end of the newsletter it had this request:



A 20% off coupon for a few minutes of my time filling out a survey? Who wouldn't bite at that! Not that I could anyway, there being an entire continent between my Massachusetts home and the California-based garden center (I'm on a lot of IGC newsletter lists across the globe).

Turns out that the Christmas-based survey asked specifically about why I didn't buy a Christmas tree this year. I like this targeted survey and how it was presented. Not only are they gathering information to understand how their customers engage with the tree-selling process, but it's also

injecting the idea of “Oh, maybe I will buy the next Christmas tree at Armstrong's” possibility into their customers’ minds. Good for them for making the effort to understand their customers by asking questions rather than speculating what might have been their reasoning.

What type of survey question would you ask? Tell me about it [HERE](#).



## It's YRA Time

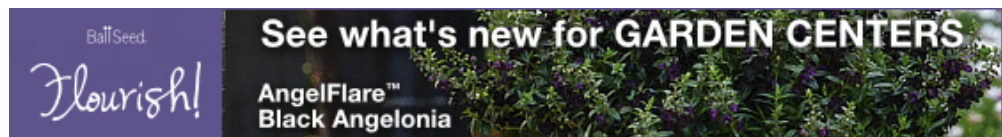
If a garden center staffer suggests an idea like offering a coupon for taking a survey about a topic you really want to learn more about, well, that's an insightful employee. In fact, they are deserving of a nomination for this year's *Green Profit*/The Garden Center Group Young Retailer Award. And it just so happens that our YRA nominations are open and ready for you to submit that young person's name.

The Young Retailer Award, now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year, recognizes 35-and-under garden center personnel who are outstanding at what they do—merchandising, buying, nursery management, even running the whole shebang. Nominate that deserving young person—or even yourself—and they may find themselves as one of the three finalists. Finalists go through a judging process, write a guest editorial for our June issue, are invited to attend Cultivate'24 as a guest of our sponsor AmericanHort and attend an intimate dinner featuring editors and industry notables, including superstar Anna Ball.

They'll all gather at AmericanHort's Unplugged event during Cultivate where the winner will be announced. They are all winners, really, but the top trophy taker will be the subject of our September cover story. Exciting stuff!!

Are you or your most deserving employee up for it? Of course you are! Head over to [HERE](#) to submit the application before March 1. It doesn't take long, but do include as much information as possible to highlight the nominee's qualifications—in other words, brag!

*GrowerTalks* is doing the same thing for growers. If you know a deserving grower, drop their info [HERE](#).



## Check Your Vendors

Vendor error is the third of four sources of shrink that [consultant Sid Raisch](#) has suggested folks look into when trying to limit shrink (remember our initial discussion of [shrink](#) from two weeks ago?). Everyone is liable to make some mistakes here and there, and sometimes it's the vendors' turn.

Here's what Sid has to say on the topic:



“Shrink Through Vendor Errors: I always advise clients to audit their vendor orders and invoices. This process invariably uncovers ‘found money’ that was previously slipping away unnoticed. These aren’t deliberate acts of theft, but rather errors, often as simple as miscalculations or counting mistakes. If you’re not actively looking for these errors, they can persist undetected for years. An effective audit can be sporadic or more thorough, such as examining every order from a specific vendor. The cost of conducting these audits is usually far less than the amount of money recovered. Even if no errors are found, the process itself provides peace of mind, which is invaluable in its own right.”

Next week Sid looks into his crystal ball to see where the future of shrink is headed. Meanwhile, keep in mind that it is important to approach a consultant first before you take action on your own. As I have been saying, consultants are professionals and can best address your situation when they have your specific details to work with.



Questions, comments, suggestions? Drop me a line if you'd like at [ewells@ballpublishing.com](mailto:ewells@ballpublishing.com).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen".

Ellen Wells  
Senior Editor  
Green Profit

**This week's BuZZ! was sent to 25,844 loyal readers!**

If you're interested in advertising on BuZZ! contact [Kim Brown](#) ASAP!

*The Only Magazine*  
**GROWERS AND RETAILERS FLIP OVER.**