


Dümmen Comments on Changes; Five Days of CAST Faves; Octaploids ...?



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

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Hort scholarships available
Congrats, recipients!
Finally ...

2026

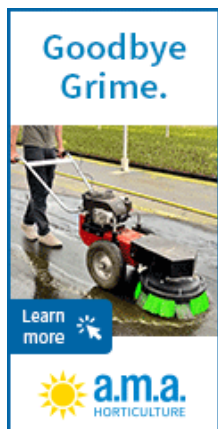
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What's behind the changes at Dümmen Orange?



Since February, I've gotten three press releases regarding changes to licensing agreements and partnerships. In late February, Dümme Orange and Westhoff announced the decision to discontinue their licensing agreement for the production of unrooted cuttings of Westhoff products as of the end of this season.

Then, effective March 1, Dümme Orange announced it was divesting its ownership of anthurium producer Rijnplant of De Lier, the Netherlands, part of Dümme Orange since 2015. Rijnplant would once again operate as an independent company.

And most recently (March 13), Dutch breeder HilverdaFlorist announced that they and Dümme Orange had discontinued their exclusive licensing agreement for unrooted cuttings of potted dianthus, a change that change goes into effect February 1, 2025.

Individually, these bits of news, none of which are earth-shaking, don't seem to mean much. But after getting three in a row, I got to wondering if there was something connecting the three moves, something deeper or more important.

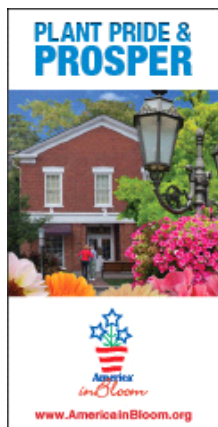
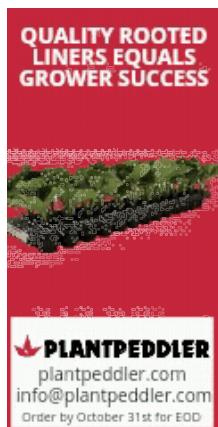


Dümme's display at CAST 2024 was loaded with annuals and perennials.

So I asked, shooting a brief email to COO Perry Wisman to see if there was more to the story. Here's his reply:

"The decision to discontinue our production license agreements with Westhoff and HilverdaFlorist aligns with our commitment to focus on selling our own breeding and other proprietary products," he explained of the first two press releases. "We are dedicated to providing comprehensive solutions to our customers, and part of this strategy involves seeking and supporting production relationships that complement our product portfolio. We remain committed to fostering strong partnerships within the industry and continuing to deliver innovative solutions to meet the evolving needs of our customers.

"The timing of the transition of production and commercial activity to Rijnplant was coincidental. This decision has been under evaluation by the company for some time, and it aligns with our strategic focus on strengthening our position as a breeder.



“Dümmen Orange remains committed to our core business strategies, which include breeding high-quality products, ensuring the best production quality of starter material from our farms and focusing on distribution in North America. These pillars are central to our mission of delivering excellence to our customers and partners.”

In other words, nothing to see here.

Of course, if I get a fourth press release, I'll be back to asking questions ...



Five days, five favorites

I just got back from covering the California Spring Trials, where fellow editors Jen Zurko and Bill Calkins and video producer Osvaldo Cuevas spent five long days visiting every trial stop and reporting on our findings through our daily email, video and social media coverage. If you missed it (although I don't see how that's possible the way we were bombarding you with the stuff), you can find our newsletters archived at our [California Trials website](#). The YouTube video playlist is [HERE](#).

Bumping into folks traveling up and down the coast, we were asked repeatedly, “What have you seen? What did you like?” It was hard to answer while in the thick of it; after doing this for 30 years I've found you have to go home and process all the information to see what bubbles to the surface as memorable (as well as stare at a gray wall for a while to let the retinas recover from all the color!).

Anyway, after having some time to ruminate and cogitate, I've come up with five things I saw, one per day, that I think was most noteworthy from that day. Actually two things per day, plus maybe an honorable mention—because it's too hard to pick just one!

To see any of these in more detail, check out our YouTube Spring Trials playlist [HERE](#).

Day 1: Angelonia and Osteo

Day 1 (Tuesday): Tie: **AngelFlare Black Angelonia** (Ball FloraPlant) and **Osteospermum**



Akila Hawaii Sunset Mixture (PanAmerican Seed).



The black flowers of AngelFlare Black start out dark purple and age to, well, about as black as a flower can be, I suppose. It's dark, that's for sure, and unusual. Will it have a place in the market? We'll have to see!



As for Akila, I LOVE the many shades of yellow, orange, peach, salmon, pink and purple ... the "Sunset" in the name is appropriate.



Honorable mention: **Ageratum Monarch Magic** (Ball FloraPlant). The first (as far as we know) trailing vegetative ageratum.



Day 2: Petunia and Semponium ... huh?

Day 2 (Wednesday): Tie: **Hells The Red** (Westhoff). Or perhaps it's Hells THE RED!, which is how the hand-written sign read. And **Semponium Surreal collection**: Destiny, Sienna, Diamond (Pacific Plug & Liner).



Westhoff has made the most of that once-banned, now-allowed corn gene with this one, producing the brightest red petunia we've seen. As they say, it's not a red, it's THE red.



Semponium is a new hybrid genus, the combination of aeonium and sempervivum, created by Surreal Succulents of the UK. I'm not sure what the cross is capable of, but I do know that my wife often has a black aeonium in her collection, and it always grows to a foot or more tall. But Semponium Destiny stays tight to the pot and makes a fat, full plant, as does Sienna and Diamond.



Honorable mention: **Cyclamen Illusia** (Schoneveld) for having open, upward-facing flowers. Odd and interesting.

Day 3: Celosia and Verbena

Day 3 (Thursday): **Celosia Burning Embers** (Sakata), **Verbena Empress Sun Kiss** (Dümmen Orange).

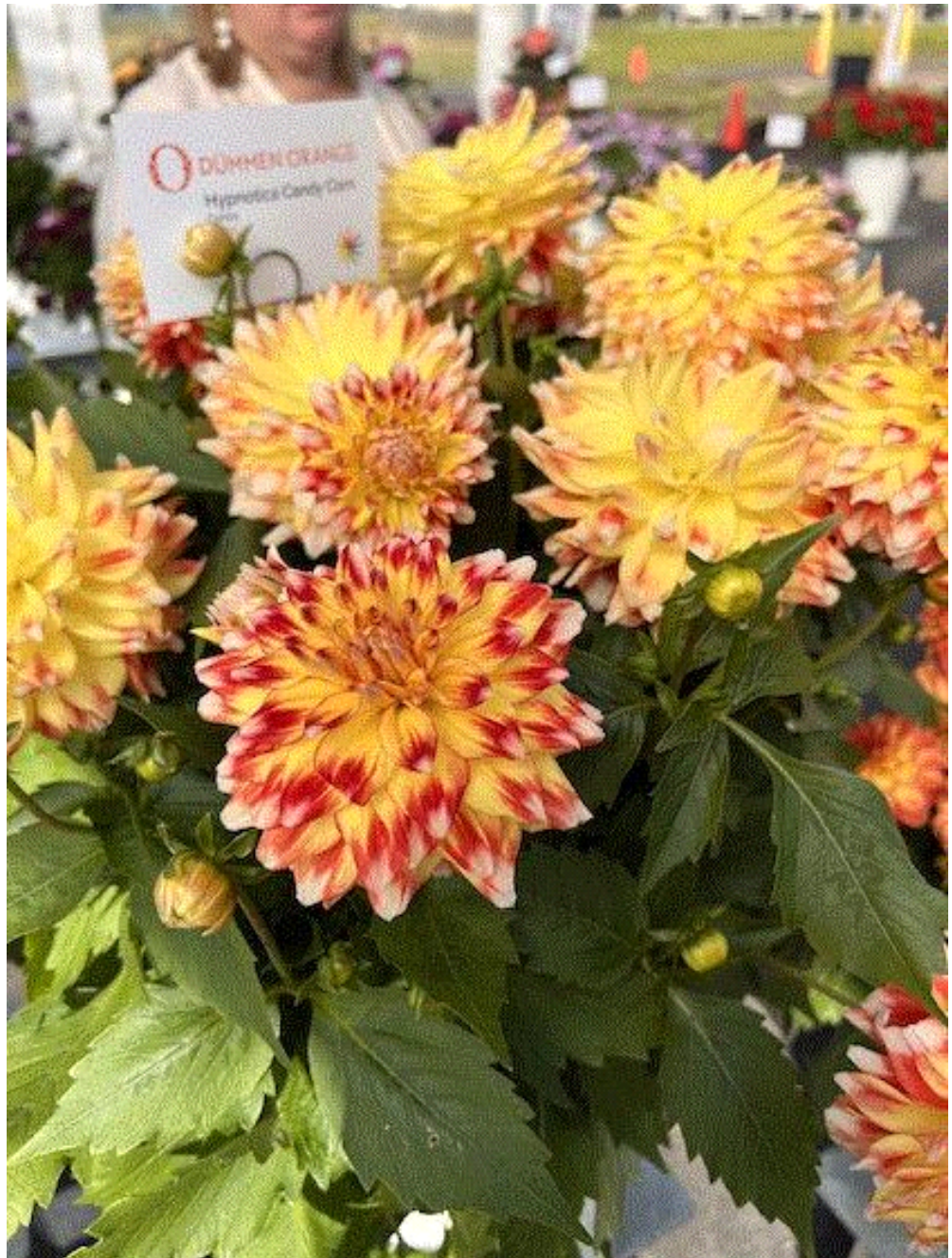


I picked Burning Embers Celosia because this red-on-red *C. plumosa* earned an All-America Selections award for 2024, which means some expert seedsmen and women have judged it superior. Good enough for me!



Empress Sun Kiss is a more compact, early version of Dummen's Empress Sun Verbena series. It's a good-looking series that they say is heat and humidity resistant, with large flowers in four colors: Pink, Red, White and Blue. We also really liked the succulent wreaths planted with Sun Kiss—clever idea!





Honorable mention: **Dahlia Hyptonica Candy Corn** (Dümmen Orange) because that is what the flowers look like. Sell it in the fall alongside Hells THE RED! and AngelFlare Black (and Skeletal Coleus from Kientzler).

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Day 4: Black and Yellow

Day 4 (Friday): **Dahlia Black Forest Ruby** (Takii) and **Sunfinity Double Yellow Helianthus** (Syngenta).



Black Forest Ruby has dark burgundy foliage and ruby red flowers and is from seed (one of only two commercial dahlias from seed, we were told). In fact, it's open pollinated, not an F1 hybrid. Why? Well, they explained something about it being an "octoploid" and how that provides genetic diversity or some such thing. We didn't get it, but we like the plant.



The popular and floriferous Sunfinity seed helianthus gets a vegetative partner in Sunfinity Double Yellow. Flowers are smaller, golden yellow and double. And it's powdery mildew resistant! Plants are said to be a bit less picky to grow than the original Sunfinity. If you want sales support, they still offer POP and have a website: mysunfinity.com.

Day 5: F1 Lobelia

Day 5 (Saturday): **Masterpiece F1 Lobelia Blue with Eye** (Benary).



A breeding breakthrough, Masterpiece is the first F1 lobelia from seed. It's said to have the same good habit and heat tolerance as the popular vegetative lobelias, but being from seed it's easy to source and store, has no risk of disease or virus being carried in from a propagator, and it should have a price-point advantage at retail. More colors are coming.



Honorable mention: **Silver Surfer Dichondra** (Benary). Now you have another option when shopping for this popular component spiller. Germination is 85% and there's plenty of good seed

in the bag, they say.

I'll bring you more highlights and memories from the trip if and when they come to me. And if you were out there, let me know [HERE](#) what you liked or think will make growers and retailers some money—because as I always say, you don't make money growing plants, you make money selling plants. And we're all here to turn plants into money.



HRI accepting scholarship applications

I like to promote these scholarship opportunities because there may be students out there at your businesses or in your families who could use financial assistance for college. Here are two, plus the recipients of the 2023-2024 scholarships:

Horticultural Research Institute's Scholarship Program is now accepting scholarship applications for the 2024-2025 school year. The HRI Scholarship Program, made possible by generous donors from across the industry, assists students pursuing careers in horticulture by providing financial support for their education. Scholarship awards range from \$500 to \$5,000 and the recipients are selected by the HRI Scholarship Review Panel, based upon criteria established by the donors.

Numerous endowed funds have been established to support the academic journey of motivated students and ensure the continuity of the nursery and landscape profession. These funds include:

- The Carville M. Akehurst Memorial Scholarship
- Timothy S. and Palmer W. Bigelow, Jr. Scholarship
- Bryan A. Champion Memorial Scholarship, Mugget Scholarship
- Spring Meadow—Proven Winners Scholarship
- The Wright Family of Alabama Scholarship
- Usrey Family Scholarship
- And more!

Eligibility requirements and application details for all scholarships can be found on the HRI [WEBSITE](#). You can submit applications online now through May 31. As it did in 2023, HRI is partnering with the Sidney B. Meadows Scholarship Endowment Fund on a common application, which allows students to apply for both scholarship programs at once and mitigate the time-consuming application process.

Sidney B. Meadows 2024 Scholarships available

As with the HRI Scholarship Program, the Sidney B. Meadows Scholarship Endowment Fund is now accepting applications for its 2024 Awards.

Created in 1989 by the Southern Nursery Association (SNA), The Sidney B. Meadows Scholarship Endowment Fund is a 501 (c) 3 corporation providing scholarships to students pursuing a career in horticulture and who are residents of the sixteen southeastern states SNA represents: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. The fund is projecting to award twelve \$2,000 scholarships in 2024. All eligible horticulture students in their junior, senior or graduate years of study are encouraged to apply. Students may be attending institutions across the United States but must be residents of the 16 Southeastern States listed above. Deadline for application is May 31. The Scholarship Selection Committee will make its selections by August 1.

The application is available online at sbmsef.org.

As mentioned earlier, the Sidney B. Meadows Scholarship Endowment Fund is partnering with HRI on a common application, which allows students to apply for multiple scholarship programs at once.

Since its inception more than 30 years ago, the fund has awarded more than \$625,000 in scholarships to horticultural students and today the Fund's endowment is more than \$1 million dollars.

Congrats to the 2023-2024 HRI scholarship recipients

HRI is also celebrating the program's current school year scholarship recipients. These scholarship recipients for the 2023-2024 school year showcase a diverse and talented group of students pursuing degrees in various horticultural disciplines. Their dedication to the industry, academic achievements and future career goals illustrates the robust and vibrant future that awaits the field of horticulture.

The 2023-2024 scholarship recipients are:

- **Ramsey Arram**, North Carolina State University (Spring Meadow–Proven Winners Scholarship: \$4,000)
- **Anna Baloh**, University of Kentucky (Spring Meadow–Proven Winners Scholarship: \$4,000)
- **Landon Erbrick**, Auburn University (Spring Meadow–Proven Winners Scholarship: \$4,000)
- **Cassandra Madru**, University of Massachusetts Amherst (Timothy S. and Palmer W. Bigelow, Jr. Scholarship: \$2,000)
- **Kayla Morrison**, Oklahoma State University (Spring Meadow–Proven Winners Scholarship: \$4,000)
- **Debasish Paul**, North Carolina State University (Mugget Scholarship: \$1,000)
- **Lillian Pinkelman**, Ohio State University (Bryan A. Champion Memorial Scholarship: \$1,000)
- **Yufei Qian**, University of California, Davis (Susie & Bruce Usrey Education Scholarship: \$500)
- **Jorge Millan Rodriguez**, California Polytechnic University (Usrey Family Scholarship: \$1,000)
- **Lauren Staley**, North Carolina State University (Wright Family of Alabama Scholarship: \$2,000)
- **Katelyn Wissinger**, Virginia Western Community College (Carville M. Akehurst Memorial Scholarship: \$5,000)
- **Yongjun Yue**, University of Georgia (Spring Meadow–Proven Winners Scholarship: \$4,000)

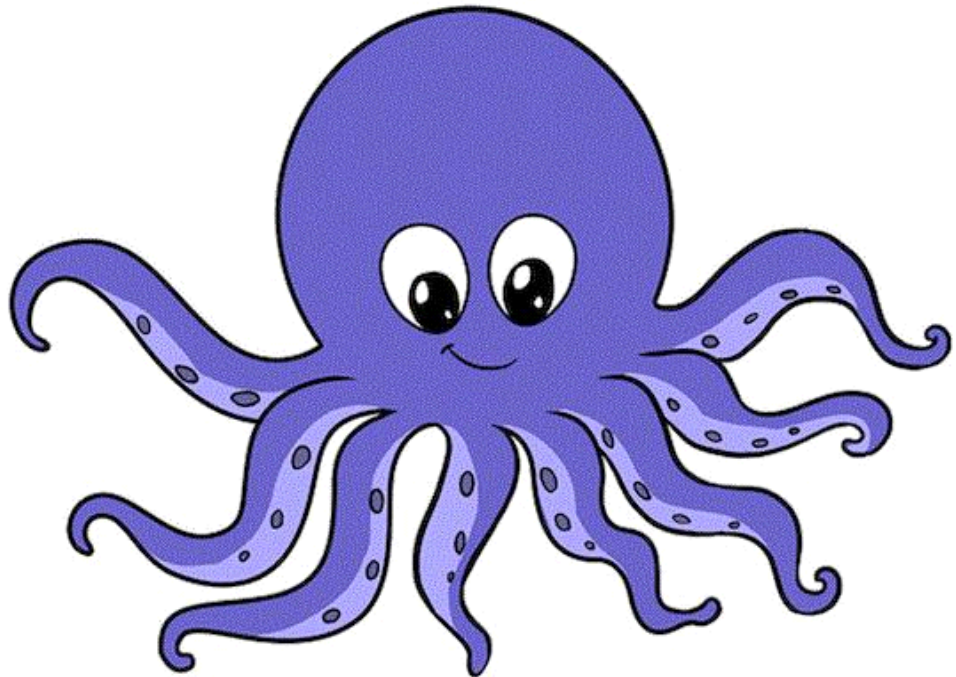
For more information about the HRI Scholarship Program and the scholarship funds, visit HRI's [WEBSITE](#).

HRI is the research, scholarship and leadership development affiliate of AmericanHort, the nation's leading association for the horticulture industry.

Thanks to generous donors, HRI has been able to provide more than \$9.5 million in funds to research projects covering a broad range of production, environmental, and business issues important to the green industry. Over \$19 million is committed to the endowment by individuals, corporations, and associations. For more information about HRI, its grant-funded research or programming, go to their website [HERE](#).

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Finally ...



What's an "octaploid"?

That's what Jen, Bill and I would like to know (and I assume Osvaldo, too). As I mentioned above, we first heard it associated with a dahlia. And then later in the trip we were told that pansies are also octaploids. How did I go 40 years in the business without hearing that term?

Of course, we had much fun with the word, linking it to sea creatures and using it as Osvaldo's nickname.

But getting serious, can someone explain—in terms a soft-headed editor can understand—what an octaploid is and why it might lead a seed dahlia to be open-pollinated instead of F1?

Do so [HERE](#).

Thanks!

Feel free to email me at beytes@growertalks.com if you have ideas, comments or questions.

See you next time!



Chris Beytes

Editor-in-Chief

GrowerTalks and Green Profit

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