

The Last Weekend of April; New Shrubs; Florida Plant Finds



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FRIDAY, MAY 3, 2024

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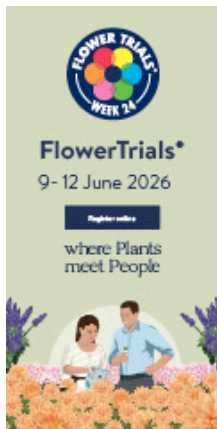
COMING UP THIS WEEK:

April 27-28 not bad ...
... but could have been better!
- Your comments, high and low
- Meanwhile, up in Canada
New ColorChoice shrubs
Finally ...

DÜMMEN ORANGE.

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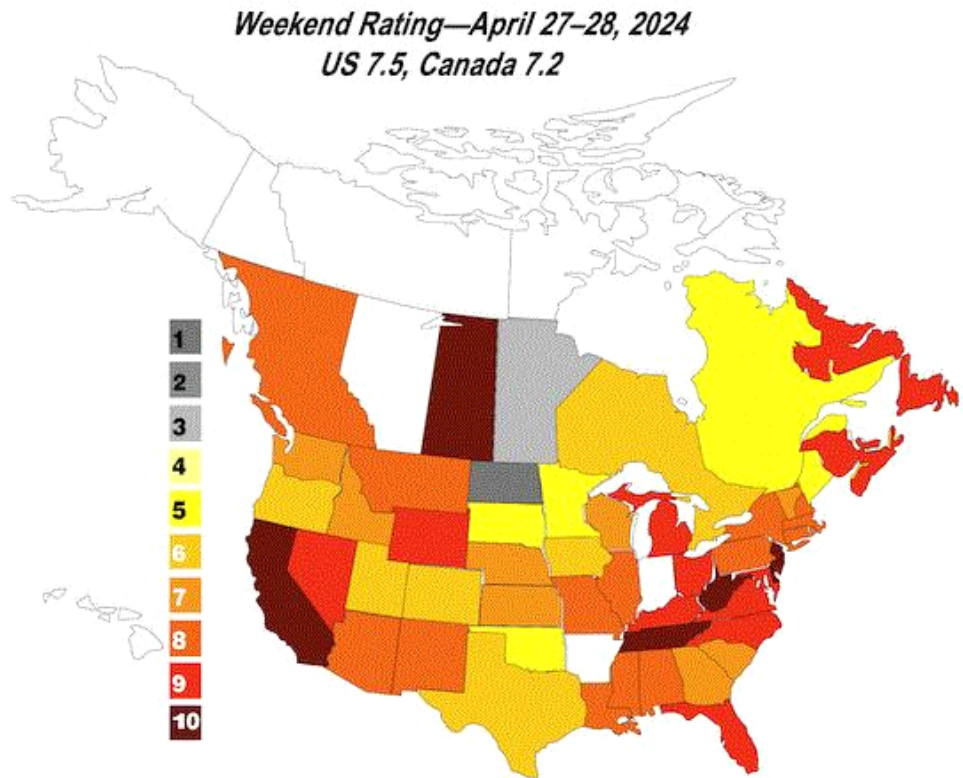
How was the last weekend of April?



Great for some, awful for others, which works out to slightly above average overall, and not at all bad for the last week of April at **7.5 in the U.S.** and **7.2 in Canada.**

The 10-year average for this date is **7.2 in the U.S.** and **6.5 in Canada**, which we beat! In fact, only pandemic-driven 2020 (9.4/7.6) and 2021 (9.1/9.6) beat this year in the U.S. Canada did only very slightly better last year (7.4) and in 2014 (7.3). Otherwise, this was a solid weekend.

Here's the map:



That's based on 121 scores from 46 states and seven provinces. (New Mexico showed up! And Arizona! But nobody from Indiana? Arkansas?) There were 23 perfect 10s (19%).

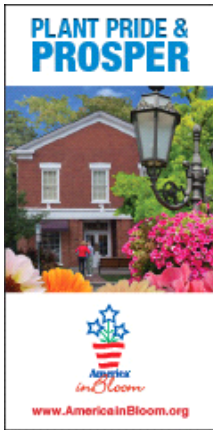
Top-performing regions include the East (9.0), West (8.7) and South (8.0), even though it's heating up down there (this weekend and next week will be in the 90s, so I suspect scores will suffer). The Plains (5.0) and Northwest (6.5) covered the bottom.

The best state with multiple scores? Ohio, at 9.3, based on eight scores, including four 10s. North Carolina had three scores for 9.3.

Canada had 15 total scores across seven provinces, so not exactly a giant sample size. But Ontario (6.2) had five scores (3, 5, 7, 8, 8), as did BC (7.9), including two 9s. It was interesting that BC did so well when just to the south Washington scored 6.5.

Yet it could have been a better!

Roughly half of you (55%) scored April 27-28 an above-average 8, 9 or 10. And for some of you, that was in spite of a rainy weekend day. So far this spring, where the weather has been nice, spring sales have been going like gangbusters—in some cases, coming close or even matching pandemic numbers, you tell me. Every indication is that customers are buying.



But for the other 45% of you, severe weather got in the way of what should have been an excellent weekend. For many of you, it was the killer storm system that struck from Texas to the Great Lakes that spawned 106 tornadoes, killing five people and injuring hundreds. Tornadoes were reported in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa and Missouri. To say that would put a damper on gardening is an understatement.

The upper Midwest and Pacific Northwest were cool and rainy, which dampened enthusiasm and sales. Wrote Jay Holasek of Fred Holasek & Son Greenhouse of Lester Prairie, Minnesota, who scored his weekend a 6, "Rain, cool temps and wind make for a lackluster weekend. Saturday sales were about 30% down from the same weekend last year. We are ready, the plants are ready, now it's up to Mother Nature to give us some nice weather."



Your comments

Here's what you high scorers had to say about the weekend (I love John David Boone's advice at the end):

New Hampshire (10). "Opening Day, beautiful weather. Matched 2021 pandemic year."—*Ara Lynn, Amazing Flower Farm*

Ohio (10). "We're lucky to be alive. And it's not even May."—*Chris Baker (aka the other CB), Baker's Acres*

Wisconsin (10). "This was our spring open house weekend and the parking lot was packed all weekend. One of our best April sales weekends ever, with less-than-perfect weather on Sunday."—*Chris Williams, K&W Greenery*

Illinois (10). "Too busy for comments. :)"—*Trevor Woldhuis, Woldhuis Farms Sunrise Greenhouse*

California (10). "April this year in Northern California was in like a lamb and out like a lion. Nice to build on sales throughout the month and finish off with a 10!"—*Dave Vincent, Cal Color Growers*

North Carolina (10). "Beautiful weather again this weekend in NC! Saturday was on par with each Saturday in April this year. Sunday was our busiest Sunday of the month. This weekend was our best weekend of April and a 48.9% increase over this same weekend in 2023. April weekends (Saturday and Sunday only) saw a 23.66% increase over 2023 April weekends."—*Jake Scott, Piedmont Feed & Garden Center*

South Dakota (9). "Our annual spring open house to kick off the season was a very busy one. A little cool and some showers, but pretty nice overall. It's a bit early for full-force planting, but they are certainly in the mood to buy and they did! Looks to be a strong season from the excitement I see from the customers."—*Tim Sime, Jolly Lane*

Florida (9). "Weather great, but need some rain. All items still strong."—*Bill Biedenstein, 1st Choice Pest Control Professional Services*

Wyoming (9). "Cold weather all day Saturday did not keep people away. High in mid 40s. Sunday was a very good day. Time to break out starting this week!"—*Jeff Jones, Great Gardens*

Illinois (9). "Saturday was amazingly good, lots of traffic, but unfortunately Sunday had a lot of rain and slowed down the sales a bit. Weather is looking great for upcoming week with no more frost so that will help people not being too worried putting plants outside."—*JP, Countryside*

Flower Shop & Nursery

Nevada (9). “The weather didn’t help us, but pent-up demand did and we had an ‘almost 10’ spring weekend!”—*Bruce Gescheider, Moana Nursery*

Virginia (9). “Cautiously optimistic is the word. Good customer flow and sales volume both during the week and on Saturday. I’m concerned about our current deficit of rain this month. If we don’t get more rain soon, I think the season will taper off early.”—*Duane Weaver, Millmont Greenhouses*

Illinois (9). “Sales were solid even though it was a partially rainy weekend.”—*John Hoerst, Chalet Nursery*

New York (9). “Good start to the spring season. Nice weather for the weekend increased sales to almost normal levels. Saturday was a little lackluster, but Sunday in the low 70s made up for it.”—*Jim Boxberger, Monticello Farm Home & Garden*

New Mexico (9). “Weather was pretty terrible, but we were aggressive in advance with a short-notice sale. Ended up being a great Four-Day Sale that outpaced any April four-day stretch since COVID impacted spring of 2020 ... which will forever be the apples-to-oranges year.”—*Derek Lynde, Lynde Greenhouse & Nursery*

Wisconsin (8). “Weather warmed up for the first time since the weird February/March burst of whacky weather. That pushed people immediately into hanging baskets. We ran a flash sale on a crop of 10-in. HBs, which was very well received. Still a great mix of spring annuals/perennials and indoor crops ... I’d say around 60/40 (just slightly tipping into higher seasonal sales). People tend to open up their pockets this time of year, so having a wide range of categories all together increases the traffic and increases the total sale amount.”—*Erik Winer, Mill Creek Gardens*

Alabama (8). “Great week, getting hot. People are still spending. If you’ve got a good place and good stuff, I think they will pay more than most of us are charging. To my friends in the north: Raise your prices before you get busy! You’re welcome.”—*John David Boone, Dothan Nurseries*



And the below-average scores

Washington (7). “Cold, rainy weather tamped down sales quite a bit from what they should have been, but we still had a solid weekend. I’m impressed with how many gardeners were out and about despite the weather.”—*David Vos, Vander Giessen Nursery*

Oregon (7). “Cool and wet dampened the spirits of what has been a specular April.”—*Ed Blatter, Cornell Farm*

Nebraska (6). “Very stormy weather with multiple tornadoes in our area. A little hail damage on one greenhouse.”—*Scott Farrington, Indian Creek Nursery*

Texas (6). “Saturday was a really bad weather day, storms and tornadoes all around. We had to close early. Sunday was nice and clear and pretty busy.”—*Katherine Smith, Smith’s Gardentown*

Alabama (6). “Last week was slower than it should have been.”—*Davy Wright, Wright’s Nursery*

Davy added the following note about what Abe VanWingerden said last week about the price level of items that seem to be selling best:

“We’ve also noted the low- to mid-level products are moving, while the high-end are extremely slow. Cell packs are selling as fast as they can be transplanted and rooted in. It was just like this last year.”



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Meanwhile, up in Canada ...

Saskatchewan (10). “We have had the best April ever. Only two days with no sales: the first Sunday, when we did not open because I wanted to clean the office, and the day it snowed. Sales were not large; a lot of gift cards. We overwinter our trees and shrubs in the greenhouse; people were coming to see green. We have been selling seeds, potatoes and onion sets—it seems that the older customers just wanted something to do. We started to fill the greenhouse with annuals last Tuesday and sales have been very good since. This is very early for Regina, Saskatchewan—usually our sales do not start until the week of Mother’s Day. It may slow down this week because they are forecasting rain and light frost for Thursday or Friday.”—*Lucille Bouvier, Plant Ranch*

British Columbia (9). “We at Windsor Greenhouse in Abbotsford had our customer appreciation event this weekend. Sales were great and we served 260 hot dogs. I gave it a 9 because the weather was cool and rainy.”—*Sharolyn Goossen, Windsor Greenhouse*

Ontario (7). “Fair bit of rain and a major event in a neighboring town that draws a big audience. Sales up slightly from last year, but nothing to get excited about.”—*Rob Gemmel, Gemmel’s Garden Centre*

British Columbia (7). “Weather was a 0—very cold and multiple days with an inch of rain, but people were eager to get out and any slight break in the weather and the store was filled. We nearly matched our last two sunny weekends in sales even though the weather was horrible.”—*Tim Vaandrager, Vaandrager Nurseries*

Manitoba/NW Ontario (3). “Spring has arrived, but it’s being a little shy, hiding behind clouds or sheltering from the wind. The moment the sun comes out, so do the customers, as you well know. We are receiving some much-needed moisture, which is nothing but good news. Manitoba/NW Ontario is still a sleepy 3, but feeling optimistic.”—*Duayne Friesen, Ball Seed*



New ColorChoice shrubs

I don't want to leave you woody ornamental fans out when it comes to coverage of the recent [Proven Winners](#) open house I visited in Michigan last month. Or perhaps I should say you edibles fans because two of the new offerings are just that ... and one you wouldn't expect!



Here are a few of the 2025 offerings (all tasty, not just the edible ones) from [Spring Meadow](#) for Proven Winners:

Rose Flavorette Pear'd



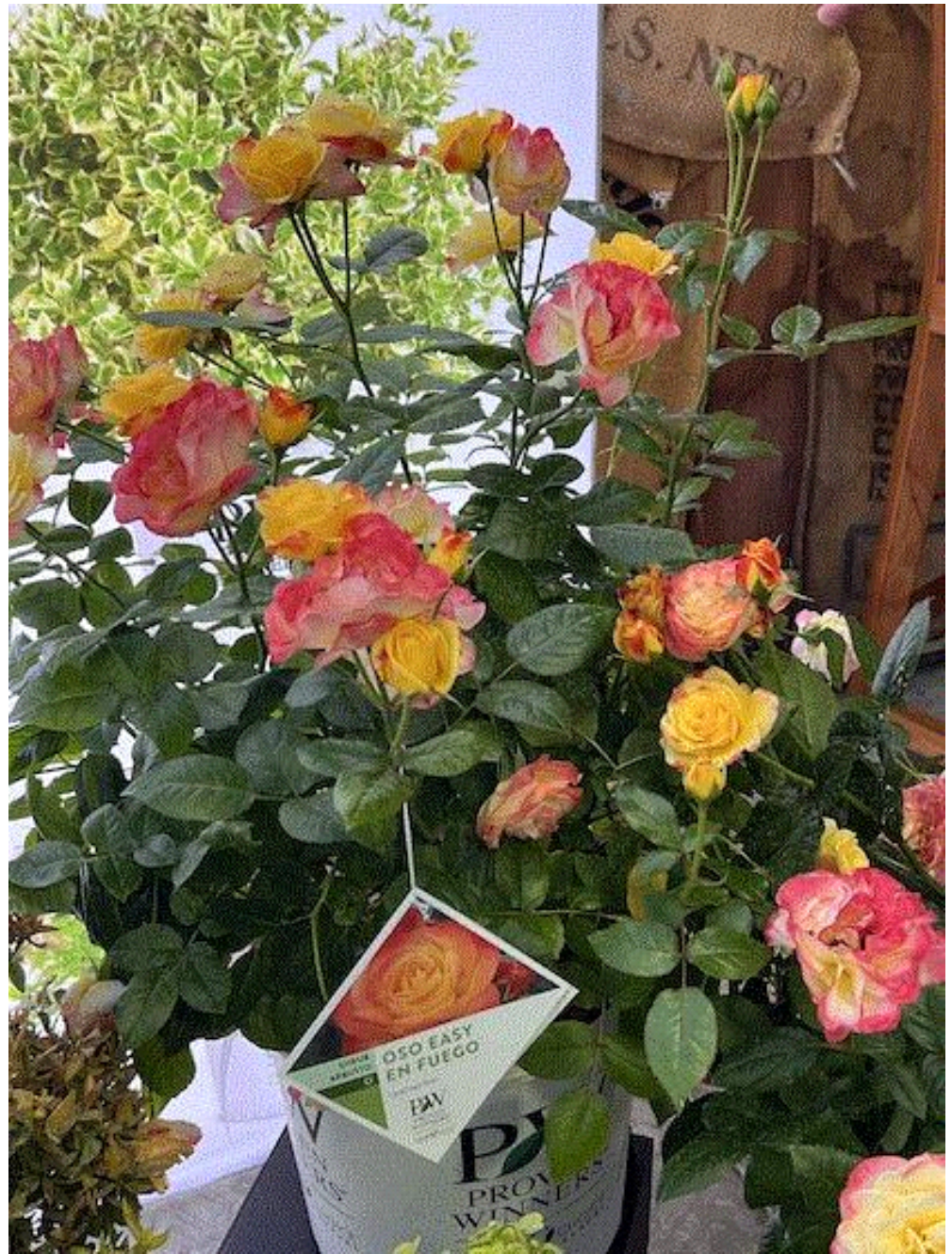
I warned you! It's an edible rose ... well, you use the flowers as a garnish. And while you can do that with any rose, some taste pretty harsh, I'm told. But the petals of this rose actually offer a hint of nice pear flavor. It, um, pairs with Flavorette Honey Apricot, introduced last year. Bred in Serbia by Pheno-Geno Roses, Pear'd has semi-double repeat-blooming white flowers that blush pink as they age. It's got good disease-resistance, too. Grows 3- to 4-ft. tall and 3-ft. wide. Zones 4 to 8.

Blueberry Splendid Blue



This “hedging” highbush blueberry comes out of the North Carolina State University blueberry breeding program. It makes lots of fruit, but also forms a tidy blue-foliaged hedge for year-round function. Grows 3- to 4-ft. tall and wide. Zones 6 to 9.

Rose Oso Easy En Fuego





Talk about striking! This addition to the Oso Easy collection of landscape roses opens yellow and red, then turns orange. Bred in the UK, En Fuego ("On Fire") is said to be their most disease-resistant of the Oso Easys. Color-wise, one of these is like having three roses in one. Zones 4 to 9.

Hydrangea Fairytrail Green



This trailing hydrangea is an interspecific hybrid that tumbles and cascades, blooming all along the stem at the internodes. It joins Fairytrail Bride, a white version. Growing 3-ft. tall and wide, you can even do this one in containers. Zones 6 to 9.

An advertisement for Canna Tropicanna. It features a green background with the text "Canna TROPICANNA" in yellow and orange. To the right, there is a photograph of colorful flowers in shades of yellow, orange, and red. Below the photo, the text reads "Adds an exotic touch to any landscape!" and "Click here for a short video tesselaar.com".

Canna
TROPICANNA

Adds an exotic touch to any landscape!
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Finally ...



It's been interesting re-learning how to garden in the tropical climate (just touching Zone 10) of Orlando. We have 2 acres to fill with every imaginable sort of plant, and we're still dealing with anchor trees and foundation shrubbery and groundcovers. But that doesn't stop us from making impulse purchases, such as a 3-gal. Cuban petticoat palm (*Copernicia macroglossa*) for \$100 from a local palm specialist. Tell me that's not cool! Granted, this is a photo I borrowed from Martha Stewart's visit to a Miami garden showing a more mature specimen; our plant is only about a foot tall. But give it time and some palm fertilizer and watch out!



At Home Depot, we spotted a branded *Pandanus tectorius*—a yellow screw pine—something I would expect to only find at a specialty nursery. It's from Altman Plants, part of their Sunscape Tropicals line. I love pandanus, AKA walking tree, for the way they appear to move across the landscape on their extended aerial roots. At first glance this looked more like a nicely colored spider plant; in fact, it was Laurie who spotted what it was. It took me about three seconds to say, "Let's buy it!"

The \$20 specimen is living in a temporary pot on the pool deck until we find a spot in our garden for him to start walking.

By the way, the fruits are edible. You listening, Spring Meadow ...?





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

See you next time!

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

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