


Freight rates rise, the fall season already and who and what to see at Cultivate




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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Ocean Freight Rates
Pinterest Trends
Christmas in July
And the Winners Are ...
And the Winners Are?
New IGC Consulting Firm
McHutchison and Vaughan's



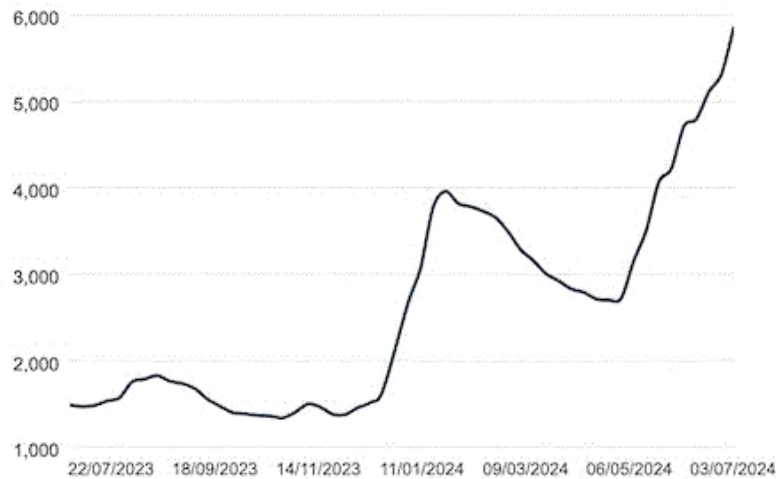
Ocean Freight Rates on the Rise

My new-favorite retail newsletter, Modern Retail, informed me a little over a week ago that the rates for ocean freight shipping are spiking. The edition, which you can read [HERE](#), mentioned that average spot rates for container shipping from the Far East to the U.S. West Coast were \$6,178 in mid-June, about a 275% increase in rates from mid-December. Same thing is happening in shipments headed to Northern Europe—worse, actually. Those rates have gone up about 315% since December. Those are post-pandemic-freight-crisis levels of increase.

So, with no pandemic to blame, what's causing these increases? Troubles in the Middle East, specifically the Suez Canal, which about 30% of global trade counts on. And there's a drought happening in the Panama Canal region, too. And on top of these, there's a labor contract negotiation happening for dockworkers along the East and Gulf Coasts this summer.

I hunted around for more information and found the [Drewry World Container Index](#). For the week ending July 4, container rates increased 10%. Take a look at the following graph. Spike indeed!

Drewry World Container Index (WCI) - 04 Jul 24 (US\$/40ft)



Here's Drewry's assessment for what happened this last week:

- Rates have increased 298% compared to same time last year.
- While still 43% below the pandemic spike in shipping rates, today's rates are 313% more than the average 2019 rate.
- Most importantly, Drewry expects a minor increase in freight rates out of China because Asian ports are facing some congestion issues.

These are all good things to know as you place orders for products for the holidays and beyond. Anyone feeling the shipping rates yet? Drop me a note about it [HERE](#).



Pinterest Trends

It's been a few weeks since I've included the Pinterest trends from [National Garden Bureau](#). The biggest change NGB's Gail Pabst has seen over the last few weeks? NGB's Pinterest followers are moving on to fall already.

Trends in Planting

Percent changes are compared to the previous 30 days

fall garden vegetables

↑ 100%

maple

↑ 300%

how to dry basil leaves

↑ 200%

fall garden

↑ 200%

Potential audience size for Planting

2.7m-4.5m ⓘ

This graph shows that the fall interest covers a wide swath of topics—edibles to grow and how to

harvest, trees and fall gardens in general. (I'm surprised lawn care isn't in there.)

Gail had also heard that people are looking for a garden type. As in, it can't just be a garden with flowers or vegetables—it has to be a woodland garden or a goth garden or what have you. The following gives some credence to that speculation.



coreopsis
152.8x
more searches



woodland garden
63.4x
more searches



hydrangea garden
58.5x
more searches



ornamental grass landscape
56.2x
more searches



garden whimsy
37.5x
more searches



magical garden
35.8x
more searches



bird bath garden
34.4x
more searches



garden yard ideas
25.1x
more searches



front garden landscape
24.5x
more searches



english garden
24.2x
more searches



hillside landscaping
16.2x
more searches



summer flowers
14.2x
more searches

Just look at the percentage increases over the last 90 days for woodland gardens, hydrangea gardens, magical gardens, English gardens—even bird bath gardens. As a reminder, this is the percentage increase for Pinterest users who follow [NGB's Pinterest page](#) or have engaged with NGB pins over the last 90 days.

Pinterest users are planners! If they are making plans for fall and are searching for specific gardens *now*, get ready for when they are ready to buy.

A large photograph of a garden filled with vibrant pink Knock Out roses. In the background, there is a white garden bench and more greenery. A green banner in the top left corner reads 'the knock out family of roses'.

**Thank you
for 25 years of
Knock Out!**

We can't wait to share what's next.

Three Knock Out rose bushes in green pots, each with a 'knock out' label.

Christmas in July

Speaking of planning, the folks at M&M Wintergreens have two pieces of information for you: 1) They are partnering with Oregon-based [Peace of Mind Nursery](#) to bring you some rare and unique varieties of foliage for winter décor, and 2) these Peace of Mind Nursery guys do such a great business that they *already* have orders in place, so if you're interested you, too, should order as soon as possible to avoid stock shortages.

Okay, what do these Peace of Mind Nursery folks have for you? They have about 160 varieties to choose from, and offer them in isolated color options—blue, green, gold, white, variegated, deciduous, cones, moss and on and on. They offer a wide range of products, but a smart starter pack would be something like the WildBunch, which offers 20 different varieties in each case—and with six cases to choose from, that's a lot of options.

Here's one of the amazing products that came through with their press release:



And for more beauty shots (and apparently some pics of a safari?), you can check them out on [INSTAGRAM](#).

Like I mentioned, they suggested you order early. You'll do that with the help of the M&M Wintergreens folks. First, just download an [EXCEL](#) or [PDF](#) version of their collaborative order form. Complete the form, send it over to [SHANNON](#), who will “e-introduce” you to Dave Grotz at Peace of Mind, and then you and Dave will take it from there.



And the Winners Are ...

All-America Selections has just announced the first five varieties to receive the 2025 AAS Awards. As they've done for 90 years, AAS and their cadre of horticultural experts/volunteer judges tested each and every variety submitted to them in gardens throughout North America to see which rose to the top in its performance. And now, the judges have spoken. The winners are:

Dianthus Capitan Magnifica, Non-Seed Ornamental Winner (National Winner): This new

dianthus impressed the judges with its ability to continue blooming and growing through the summer heat. Blooms are lovely and edged in light pink. Bonus—long stems make this a cut flower. Bred by [Selecta One](#). Find sales information [HERE](#).



Next up is a trifecta of *Tropaeolum* bred by [Takii EU](#). **Nasturtium Baby Gold, Baby Yellow and Baby Red** all won the **Ornamental Seed** category for the Heartland, Northeast, Mountain/Southwest regions. The newest colors in the Baby series, Gold, Yellow and Red all have that same floriferousness, petite stature and a mounding habit. The flowers are accentuated by the dark foliage. These are perfect for containers and small gardens. Judges appreciated the compact habit, which prevented “flower flopping.”



Baby Gold



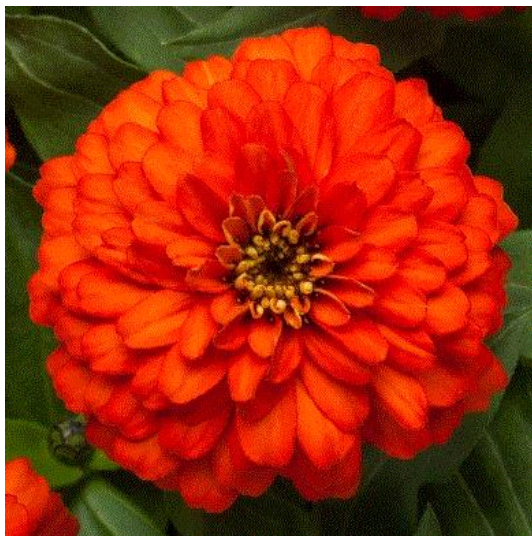
Baby Yellow



Baby Red

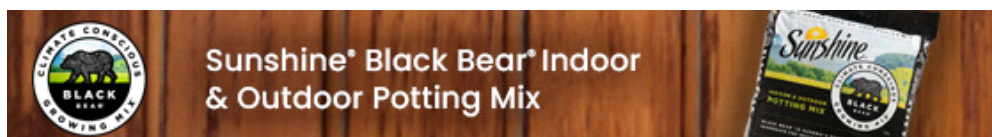
Find sales information [HERE](#).

Zinnia Zydeco Fire, Seed Ornamental Winner (National Winner): This fiery, bright and fully double zinnia has flowers noticeably larger than comparisons. Judges commented on its flower power, long-lasting blooms and disease-resistant foliage. Bred by [Syngenta Flowers](#). Find sales information [HERE](#).



Zydeco Fire

As with previous winners, all AAS winners will burst onto the scene via social media, public relations and trade shows. And they are backed by a ton of marketing such as bench cards, variety markers and such. Head over to the [AAS website](#) for more information. Or, drop by the All-America Selections display in the New Varieties area at Cultivate!



And the Winners Are?

On the topic of Cultivate, be sure to swing by the [Unplugged](#) event on Monday, July 15, where we'll be awarding the *Green Profit* The Garden Center Group Young Retailer Award. The event takes place at Gaswerks 8-10 p.m., with the awarding of both the Young Retailer and Young Grower Awards taking place around 8:30 p.m. This is all after the well-deserving finalists have dinner with some horticulture industry luminaries, including Anna Ball and Bill McCurry. What a night for them!

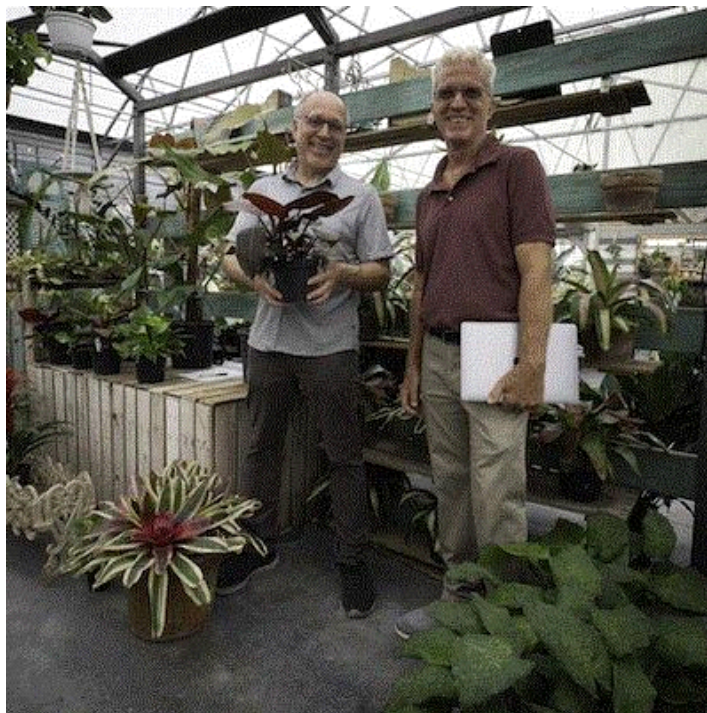


Young Retailer Finalists McKenzie Lain, Zachary Pitchford and Jake Scott

As a reminder, the three YRA finalists are McKenzie Lain of Watters Garden Center in Prescott, Arizona; Zachary Pitchford of Wilcox Nursery & Landscape in Largo, Florida; and Jake Scott of Piedmont Feed & Garden Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The Young Grower finalists are Drew Groezinger, of Clara Joyce Flowers in Stockton, Illinois; Trevor Stark of Hoffman Nursery in Portland, Oregon; and Carleton Stuecker of Metrolina Greenhouses in Huntersville, North Carolina. Join us to find out who takes home the high honors! Even I don't know who won.

New IGC Consulting Firm

That would be Garden Center Consultants LLC, which just launched this week. And the folks behind it are some of the best minds to have been in the IGC business themselves—Erik Dietl-Friedli and Dave Williams.



Dave Williams and Erik Dietl-Friedli

I know Erik from my many trips to the Tropical Plant International Expo (where was the chairperson of the event at least once) and from his time at Martin Viette Nurseries and Flamingo Road Nursery in Florida. Erik brings more than 35 years of experience to this new gig, along with his expertise in creating must-visit departments, enhancing the customer experience and, maybe most importantly, driving sales growth.

I know Dave from his nearly 40 years at the plant-lovers paradise, Williams Nursery in New Jersey, and with his involvement with Garden Centers of America. Dave's experience and amazing horticultural knowledge has made him a go-to for global IGC consultancy already, and that's even before pairing up with Erik! Oh, and he's a world-class photographer, too.

Erik and Dave can do it all—strategic planning, trend forecasting, staff training, merchandising and on and on. If you're in need of their services, you can find out more about what they offer at [Garden Center Consultants](#). And both Erik and Dave will be at Cultivate in Columbus, Ohio, next week if you're attending. Best of luck, you two!

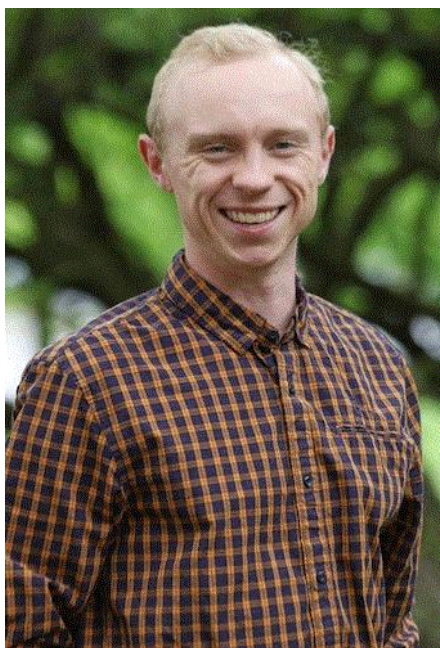
New at McHutchison and Vaughan's

[McHutchison](#) and [Vaughan's Horticulture](#) have had a hiring frenzy, it appears. They've hired at least three folks in the last little while, and since you should know who your specialists and sales reps are, I'll tell you about these three hires.

Jeff LaCourse was recently named perennial technical sales specialist. With more than 40 years in the industry, Jeff has been involved in a number of growing operations in Texas, Oregon and California, developing skills in propagation, stock production, production planning, growing, technical support, product development, sales and marketing. His latest gig was as integrated product team lead at Dümmen Orange.



Ryan Noack and Diana Shull are the companies' newest sales reps. Ryan has worked at a variety of places, including the USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center, Special K Ranch, Big Sky Watershed Corps, CyBIZ Lab and Montana State University. He not only has a bachelor's degree in agricultural business from Iowa State University but also a master's degree in agriculture education from Montana State University.



Diana brings 25 years of industry experience gained from Longwood Gardens, Brick Street Farms, Dümmer Orange, Center Greenhouses, Ball Horticultural Company and Wagner Greenhouses. She earned her bachelor's degree in horticulture from Illinois State University and her master's degree in production from Metro State University.



All of these good folks will be at Cultivate, so if you see them around, offer them your sincerest congratulations!

I'll be at Cultivate, too, so if you'd like to catch up in some sort of organized way, drop me a note [HERE](#). Otherwise, just shout "Hey, Ellen!" from across the aisle.

Questions, comments, suggestions? Drop me a line if you'd like at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

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

Ellen Wells

Senior Editor
[Green Profit](#)

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