

Beat the heat, plantscaping trends and is that fall I sense?





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# TROPICAL TOPICS

## COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Costa Employees Beat the Heat  
Talking Plantscape Trends  
Two More  
Fall Tinge in the Air?



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## How Costa Employees Beat the Heat

*This week I've had a double whammy of a summer cold along with a second occurrence of Lyme disease, and I'm not feeling so hot. Answering the call to help wrangle items for the newsletter, Bossman Chris Beytes provided the below very relevant information. It's hot out there, so protect yourself and your team!*

It's been hot down south this summer. Miami even broke a heat record back in May, when it hit 96F (86F is more typical). And it hasn't really cooled down since. That's why Costa Farms, which has hundreds of employees working outdoors on more than a thousand acres of nursery property in Homestead, south of Miami, has decided to get really serious about heat safety for its workers, enhancing working conditions and implementing rigorous heat protection standards. The company even goes beyond OSHA guidelines, actively advocating for higher worker safety standards.

What have they done to help workers stay healthy when dealing with summer heat in the workplace? Six things, reports Stacey Pierson of Garden Media Group, who spoke with Costa's Justin Hancock on the topic.

**Regular breaks in shaded, cool areas.** "While we have a mandatory 30-minute break every morning and every afternoon, Costa Farms team members are encouraged to take breaks as often—and as long—as they feel they need to stay healthy," says Justin. "Some team leaders will add mandatory breaks for their teams, depending on conditions."

"Most employees work under shade, since the majority of our plants are grown under shadehouses. But for areas where we grow crops in full sun, team members can find shade from nearby trees or jump on a golf cart or Gator [utility vehicle] and get to a nearby shaded or air-conditioned break room."

**Adjustments in work hours during heat waves.** Says Justin, "Depending on the manager/task, managers may choose to rearrange order of tasks, for example, pruning eugenia

topiary in full sun first thing in the morning and then moving pruning tasks to shade houses as the heat builds throughout the day.”

**Ample electrolyte water hydration stations are placed strategically across the farm.**

“Gatorade and other sports drinks are offered in addition to water in work areas,” says Justin. “In areas like the packing house, there are stations set up. In the field, water and electrolyte drinks are provided in coolers. We have frozen electrolyte popsicles in some work areas where we have freezer capacity or can use a mobile ice cream cart.”



In addition to those specific cooling-off opportunities, Costa provides continuous training programs for employees on heat safety and prevention, so they know the signs of heat stress and how to protect themselves. And they’ve taken the extra step of having a full-time registered nurse on site to educate and aid employees regarding heat safety.

*Thanks, Boss! And thanks, Stacey!*



## Talking Plantscape Trends

In the last *Tropical Topics*, I said I’d have information about an interiorscape-focused educational session I attended during Cultivate last month. As promised! Not only was the session, “Women Entrepreneurs: Trends in Plantscape Design, Tech, Products and Holiday Décor,” well-attended, it was packed with so much great information. The four speakers ran the gamut of topics particular to interiorscaping, from botanical designs to tech and mechanics and from holiday décor to new revenue streams.

First up was Rebecca Bakke, Owner of [Bloom and Flourish](#), speaking about trends in styles. Rebecca has found that trends in biophilia are driving the styles of containers toward natural finishes such as wood and stone. On-trend containers have an organic—that is, *not* rectilinear—shape. Think wavy and rounded. There’s a trend in grouping containers, too, that has an eclectic vibe, mixing up finishes and heights, maybe setting them up on something.

Rebecca’s take on plant trends in interiorscaping are leaning towards a jungly look; i.e. a grouping of biodiverse plants, especially to create “nature nooks” within a space. Funky

architectural plants are big, too, as are moss landscapes and laser-cut moss art. (For an idea of what that is, click on the Plant the Future link I include below.)

Another Rebecca, this one Bullene, Founder of [Greenery NYC](#), spoke about tech trends in our industry. The basic gist is that customers don't like paying for the ongoing costs of maintenance. Keep their plants happy with irrigation and grow lights and your clients will have minimal maintenance costs that are centered around pruning and pests. Makes sense! She did recommend a few tools, like [BioticInstruments.com](#) (I believe this is a division of Greenery NYC), but if you have further questions I'd head over to the [Greenery NYC](#) website and contact her that way.



This is a unit I spotted at the Greenery NYC booth while I was at TPIE last January. It incorporated both irrigation and lighting. Very handy!



## Two More

*Continued from above.*

Jan Goodman, Founder of Cityscapes, gave us a *lot* of information, as Jan usually does. Her primary message was push yourself to do something new around creating new revenue streams for interiorscaping businesses. Such as what?

- Plant and floral parties
- Giveaways based around events like National Indoor Plant Week
- Social events for your building tenants
- Pop-up events with plant trucks or in lobbies

- Creating gift baskets that clients can give out for holidays and celebrations

She gave incredible examples for each of these bullet points, and also shared a few Instagram accounts to keep an eye on, such as [Plant the Future](#).



This is the TransPlanted Truck from Cityscape that I saw in Boston a few years ago and is a great example of creating a plant-related pop-up event.

Finishing off the presenters was Caroline Puller of Seasonscapes. Her company does a big business in holiday décor for interiors. She shared some of the trends she has seen at the ChristmasWorld tradeshow that happens in Europe:

- Paper everything, including large ornaments that fold open and store flat.
- Holographic and iridescent trends in trees, deer, stars and other beautiful designs.
- Tinsel! Tinsel everything!
- Did you know that Europe is instituting a ban on glitter by 2035? [Microplastics](#) are nasty things floating about our environment.

Microlights are a big thing in Europe, too. And from what Caroline showed, they are beautiful. If you are in the market for Christmas lights for your interiorscaping business, I saw at Cultivate that Glenhaven Home & Holiday debuted the Amazing Seasons offering of commercial LED lights for those looking to install holiday lighting. They can be used inside or outside, and come rolled up versus in retail packaging. They have a separate website for it at [amazingseasons.com](#).



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### Fall Tinge in the Air?

If it's feeling fallish, that means winter is not far behind, and that means ... the Tropical Plant International Expo is right around the corner in January! While you might not have yet solidified your plans to attend **TPIE 2025**, almost all TPIE exhibitors have done so, according to Linda Adams, COO of Florida Nursery Growers and Landscape Association. The show has less than 20 exhibit booths available—this is a record for this far in advance of the show. “It’s exciting to see the enthusiasm for foliage and tropicals continuing to be strong going into 2025 and beyond!” Linda said.



Truly it's not too soon for you all to put TPIE on your calendars. Get your calendars out and mark the show dates of January 22-25, 2025. TPIE will again take place at the Broward County Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. At the moment, FNGLA's team is full steam ahead to open [The Landscape Show](#) in Orlando next week, but after that they'll be working on the final details in order to open TPIE registration in October.

Here's something interesting Linda told me. The TPIE Committee members and staff are tasked each year to come up with a tagline of six words or less that describes TPIE to the world. The tagline for 2025 hits the nail on the head in giving the essence and experience of the show: ***TPIE, always evolving, always on trend.*** And it's a great description of the people and companies who take part at TPIE, whether exhibitors or attendees. It is an audience and industry with plant vibes and more!

Comments, questions, suggestions? Email me about them at [ewells@ballpublishing.com](mailto:ewells@ballpublishing.com).



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