BFCM sales, mobile-ready, plant and pollinator ed, plus Aurora Glow



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2024

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Green Profit's buZZ

Retail news from inside and outside the green industry

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It's Color Trend Time
Don't Forget the Poinsettias



Blowout Thanksgiving Weekend

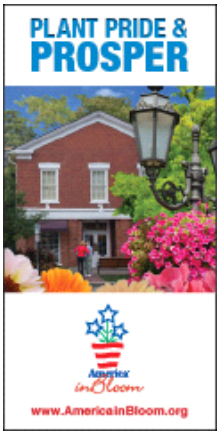
According to the National Retail Federation, 197 million people shopped over the five days between Thanksgiving and Cyber Monday (I'd add another several million who grocery-shopped last Wednesday, including myself). And despite that large number, it's the second highest number in the NRF survey's history. Last year saw just over 200 million shoppers. Even so, the 197 million number did surpass NRF's expected number of 183 million shoppers.

Here are some interesting stats from NRF:

- 126 million shopped in-store, up from 121 million last year
- 124 million shopped online, down from 134 million last year
- A record 63% of Cyber Monday shoppers used their mobile device for shopping
- Top shopping destinations were department stores and online (42% each), food stores (40%), clothing and accessories stores (37%) and discount stores (32%).







And here's a stat you'll be glad to read: According to the NRF survey, consumers still have 52% of their shopping left to do at this point.

What were your sales like this weekend? I'm especially interested in your Christmas tree sales. Is there a shortage this year? Drop me a note about sales and trees and whatever else you'd like to chat about HERE.



Mobile-Ready Is a Must

Good friend and colleague Katie Elzer-Peters of The Garden of Words sent along some other stats and news to know about BFCM spending:

- RetailNext reports that, overall, **store traffic on Black Friday** was down 3.2%, with **footfall down 7% in the Midwest**, 2.1% in the Northeast, 3.5% in the South and 3.2% in the West.
- Reuters reports data from Mastercard and other online sales processors showing that **Black Friday online sales rose 14.6% year over year, while in-store sales rose just 0.7% year over year.**
- According to Adobe Analytics, 55% of purchases were made on mobile devices.
- How much did online shoppers spend last weekend? A record $10 billion.

TL;DR all the links Katie provided? The take-home message is mobile-ready is a must.

"Right now, garden centers are functionally cut out of the Black Friday/Cyber Monday 'economy' and lose out of the growing trend in mobile sales at other times of the year like Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, etc. because most have little to no online offerings except gift cards," Katie wrote to me. "Most also do not have the money or the bandwidth to manage e-commerce offers in any meaningful way."

Solution? Katie, along with the new team at A24 Consulting created one. It's called the Certified ShopifyPlus Online Garden Center and it helps get garden centers in the mobile shopping game once and for all. It has a number of live stores set up and selling now, including Williams Nursery and the Kathy Jentz Garden Shop, both of which are set up for bulb and holiday sales. And they have a demo store set up for you to see a fully merchandised menu that is set up for spring sales—find it at Laurel & Bee (love that name!).



It's more than just an online store that they are offering. It's a fully operation platform that offers 52-weeks of managed email marketing (they do it all for you), fully managed and merchandised online ShopifyPlus online store and a fully merchandised online store with products dropshipped to your customers from leading grower/dropshippers and tool/supply companies, so you don't

have to connect anything at all. And most importantly, they handle all the online order customer service *for your store*.

But don't take my word for it. Head over to HERE for a full explanation of what they are offering. And you also have two opportunities to attend an online "meet and greet" where Katie and crew will offer a show-and-tell of this new venture of theirs. Register for the December 10 12:30 p.m. Eastern HERE and the December 12 4 p.m. Eastern HERE. And from what I hear, the price is right.

SBA Disaster Relief Extended

Not everyone was shopping last weekend. Cleanup and recovery from Hurricanes Helene and Milton are still occupying the minds and hearts of many families and small businesses from Florida up through the Carolinas. The Small Business Administration recognizes that and has extended its deadline to apply for federal disaster loans.

The types of loans available include home disaster loans, business physical disaster loans and economic injury disaster loans. Businesses of any size are eligible for business physical disaster loans. Economic injury disaster loans help small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and most private, non-profit organizations of all sizes.

Here's an important change to note: Folks who need assistance are now encouraged to apply simultaneously for FEMA grants and the SBA's low-interest disaster loan assistance. The FEMA grants are intended to cover necessary expenses and serious needs not paid by insurance or other sources, while the SBA disaster loan program is designed for long-term recovery.

Apply online and receive additional disaster assistance information at sba.gov/disaster. The filing deadline to return applications for physical property damage is Jan. 7 while the deadline for economic injury applications is June 30.



A Plant Shop for Every Place

Jen Polanz is back this week with a tour of an Atlanta plant shop you'll love!

In October I was back in Atlanta for the Global Produce & Floral Show. I made it a point to head over to The Victorian plant shop with co-worker Kim Brown to check it out. The shop was within a short Lyft ride from our hotel in the very trendy newer Beltline Eastside Trail area. The Beltline is a cool, 22-mile loop of trails and parks with restaurants, breweries, galleries and businesses all along it. We watched tons of people walking, jogging, biking, inline rollerblading and roller skating the path near the shop (some even had light-up roller skates!).

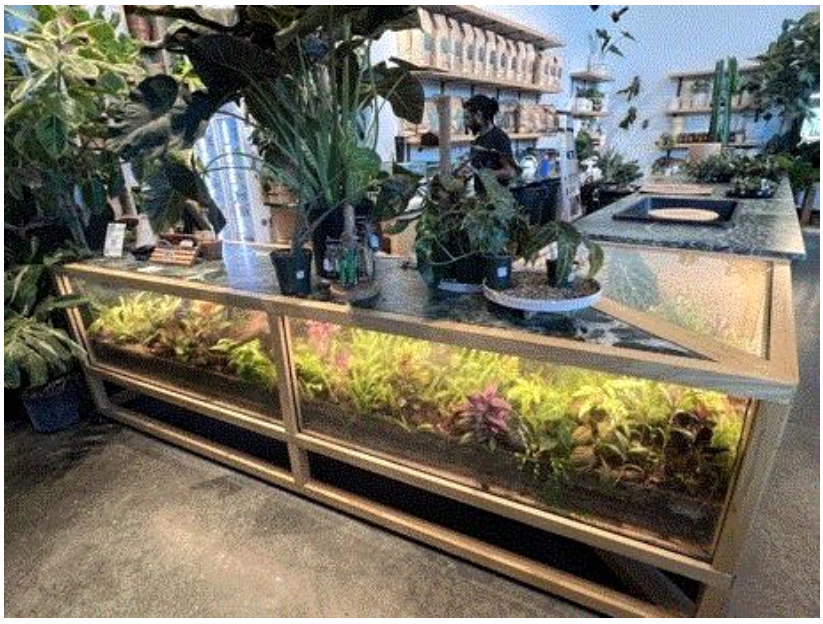
You may remember the shop name, too, as I wrote about them before in the May 2023 *Green Profit*. I had visited the other location in East Atlanta, which was in a very boho artsy

neighborhood. The Beltline shop interior still had a similar feel, but the exterior and the neighborhood was a very different vibe.

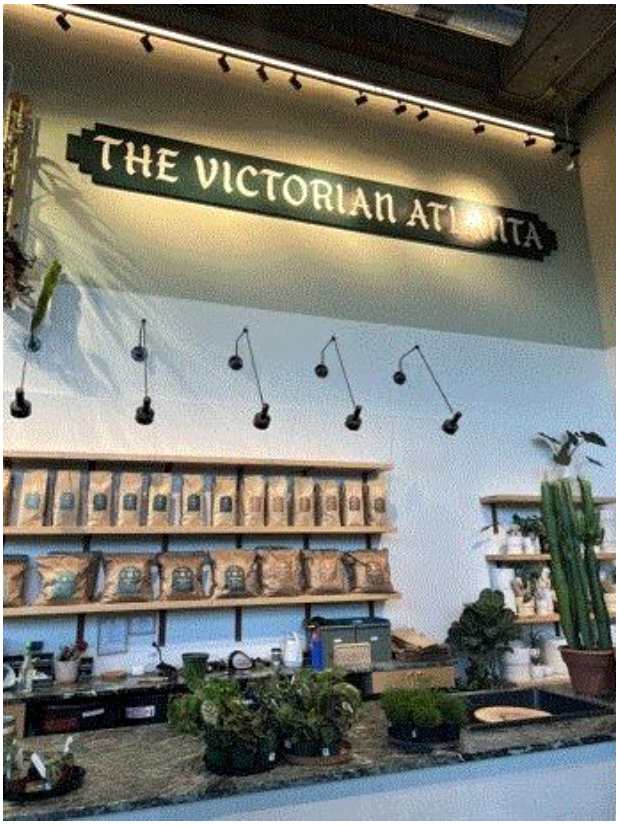
Coming in you can choose to shop the plant store on the first level or head upstairs for a cocktail at Burle's Bar, named after Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx. Both are connected, so you can get to the bar from inside the plant shop, too.



Once inside the plant shop, you are treated to this gorgeous counter, as well as, of course, a plethora of interesting plant options and plant care products. They mix their own soils with a couple of different kinds available. Plant tags are marked with which kind of soil works best for that plant.







A final, interesting item to note are the Rousseau Plant Care towers on the wall. I didn't get a great photo of them, but they provide support and moisture for larger plants, and can even be mounted on the wall, as shown here. The supports are made by a local company in Atlanta.



Thanks, JP! I gotta get myself down south sometime in 2025.



Get Pollinator Certified

The interest in pollinators and the plants that feed and shelter them has really jumped in recent years. The various pollinator-associated organizations in the U.S. are meeting the demand for increased education and information in various ways. One such organization, Pollinator Partnership is doing so by offering a Pollinator Steward Certification (PSC) program.

The PSC program certifies participants as educators on the topic of pollinators, so they in turn can educate folks at a community level. Topics covered in the program include how pollinators live, threats to their survival and how humans can help. Also covered are pollinator habitat creation in different types of landscapes such as parks and home gardens, as well as strategies for how to reshare this information through community outreach.



This course is appropriate for anyone wanting to do more to support pollinators. And that would be you! Sign up a staff member or even yourself and become a Certified Pollinator Steward representing your garden center. It'll give you an added level of legitimacy as you go out in your community or within your store and offer pollinator-related programming.

The 2025 PSC program runs from February-April and includes seven modules, plus the completion of one created habitat and one form of outreach or education. Easy peasy, and look at all the goodwill it'll bring. Find out more about the PSC program and register for it HERE. Early bird registration ends December 31, after which the program fee increases by $50.

By The Way …

I am looking for some anecdotal accounts of how pollinator-friendly plants of all kinds have performed over the last several years. Up? Down? No movement? It's hard to find stats on this, or maybe I'm not asking the right people.

If you have any information on the topic, I'd truly appreciate hearing from you. Drop me a note about it HERE.

There's a Class for That

While we're talking about educational opportunities in the field of horticulture, you should know about the courses friend and horticultural rockstar Leslie Halleck is leading through the UCLA Extension. There are two:

The Business of Selling Plants is a six-week course starting January 8. It's for anyone starting, running or working in a plant-based business. The class is a deep dive on live inventory buying, management, buying skills, inventory turns, sales, marketing and all the other stuff (there's so much more!).

Indoor Plants: Care and Maintenance is an 11-week course starting January 7. It's another one of those educational opportunities for staff who are elbows deep in caring for plants, whether it's for clients or for the business itself.



Registration is open for both courses now and continues up until the classes start. These courses are open enrollment, meaning anyone from anywhere can register and join. They are all online and Leslie has developed the content so students can work through it asynchronously. She does offer live office hours on Zoom every week for Q&A and open discussion. I hear it's pretty fun!

Further out Leslie will once again offer The Business of Horticulture and General Botany, which Leslie says are great plant science training for staff or industry members who are looking for continuing education. Look for registration for those to open sometime in January.

It's the Color Trend Time of the Year

Pantone will be releasing its 2025 Color of the Year in mere hours, but its unveiling will be too late in the week for me to include here. We can discuss whatever it is and the flowery language it is announced in next week.

For now, let's talk about the Floral Trend Color Palette of the Year 2025 announced by the folks at Thursd., the Europe-base "floral meetup spot." The color palette is Aurora Glow. Take a look:



This palette, the Thursd. folks say, “promises to bring a touch of ethereal beauty to flower arrangements, or their decor setting. Each color adds visual appeal, carries its symbolism, and brings an emotional aspect to a design.”

One of these colors gets to be Thursd.’s Floral Color Trend of the Year for 2025, and that honor goes to Amethyst Glow.







“This color embodies tranquility and calmness, making it perfect for creating soothing floral arrangements,” Thursd. says of Amethyst Glow. Pairs well with deeper purples and contrasting greens.

As for me, I’d rather not, thank you. Of the six in the palette, I prefer Light Pink, which is the second on the right. For me it’s the most calming of the bunch, and calming tones, textures and talk are on my wish list for the foreseeable future.

Next week we’re on to Pantone.

Don’t Forget the Poinsettias

How could you? It’s that time of year, after all. If your 2024 poinsettias are on autopilot and you’re thinking of changing up your varietal options for 2025, *GrowerTalks’* Jen Zurko and videographer extraordinaire Osvaldo Cuevas put together some great video footage of their recent trip to the N.G. Heimos Poinsettia Open House. Ball’s own Dr. Marvin Miller makes an appearance as the

novelty-loving hortistician (it’s really more of a Dr. Jeykll and Mr. Hyde sort of thing, but with a lab coat).



Christmas Beauty Prince, one of Jen’s favorite’s from the trial—and I love it, too! This counts as a novelty, right Dr. Miller?

Jen Z. writes all about it in last week’s *Acres Online*, which you can read HERE. Find the links to the videos within that newsletter, or click the image.

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, etc, drop me a line if you'd like at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



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