

How was May 17-18 (and May 19, Victoria Day in Canada)?



Turbo Hybrid



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

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- Up in Canada
- Meanwhile, down in the USA ...
- Great week, great vengeance
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Finally ...

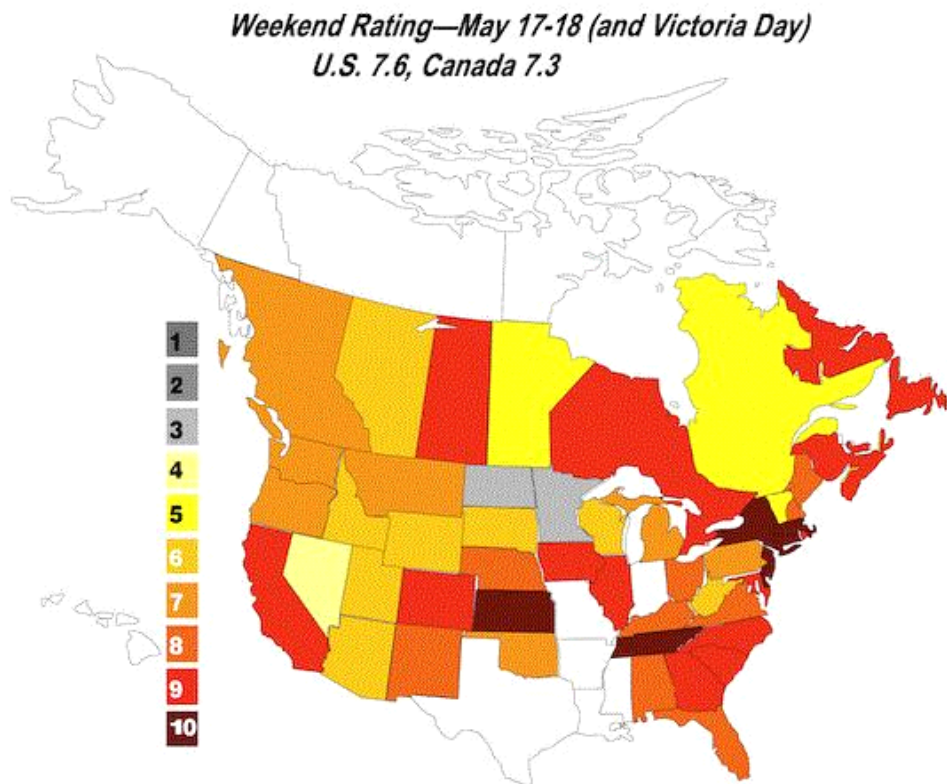


Ho-hum for some



It was pretty ho-hum for about 45% of you, I'd say, after recording 112 scores and reading your notes of explanation. The final tally for the weekend? **7.6 in the U.S.** and **7.3 in Canada**, which was celebrating its three-day Victoria Day Weekend. Meaning the score should have been about a full point higher (the average for Victoria Day is 8.5). Down here in the U.S., the average for this third weekend in May is 7.7, so we were pretty much right on it.

Here's the map:

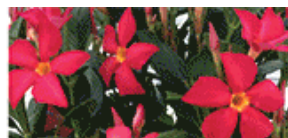


That's based on 112 scores from 42 states and 10 provinces.

I said "ho-hum" for 45% of you—that's because 19% of you scored your weekend a perfect 10 and another 21% scored it a super-strong 9, adding up to 40% of you having a fantastic weekend. But I count 15 scores of 4 or less, or about 15% of you, who said it stank. A wash-out. One fellow from Minnesota who scored it a 4 wrote, "You know it's going to be slow when customers start showing up in winter coats and stocking caps."

Boy, that's hard to relate to from my Orlando office, where a record-breaking heat dome has pushed temperatures into the mid 90s ...

Sun Parasol
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Up in Canada

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HAPPY TO PRESENT:



I'll show you Canadians some love first since it was your big spring three-day weekend. I got 19 scores from Canada covering 10 of your provinces (nothing yet from the territories, doggone it!). Of those scores, there was just one 10, from Ontario. But there were five 9s total from Ontario, the Atlantic provinces and British Columbia, making six great scores out of 19, or about 31% of you who rated it excellent. And another three of you (16%) scored it a very good 8.

But that means more than half of you rated it 7 or lower, and there were scores of 3, 4 and 5 coming from Quebec and Manitoba, dragging down the overall average. Rain and cold were the culprit. A pity, since this is your big weekend of spring! Still, there are more weekends available, and as the weather warms and dries out, there's every indication that customers will emerge from hibernation ready to garden!

Some Canadian comments:

British Columbia (9). "It was a typical May long weekend: cool with rain. That being said, sales were very strong. Annual flowers always lead the way, however, this is the weekend to plant a vegetable garden. Growers are finally figuring that vegetables need to be available up to May 24 and past it, so we were not turning away customers because we did not have what they wanted—tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers. We even had melons! Go us!"—*Pamela Pilling, Canadian Tire*

British Columbia (8). "Fighting weather all weekend. Cold, rain, wind and even some bright sunny spots. Made for an okay weekend, but not your patio weather yet."—*John Derrick, Elk Lake Garden Centre*

Alberta (7). "Cool and rainy—not an ideal weekend, but it was steady. On the bright side, it gave us a chance to spend more time with each customer."—*Trudy Watt, Parkland Greenhouse*

Alberta (6). "Weather conditions (cool and rainy) and the economy are definitely affecting annual flower sales. We had a perfect type of busy the entire Mother's Day Weekend. However, the Victoria Day/May Long Weekend was very sporadic. None of the days were hot and sunny, which would've definitely affected our sales. The nighttime and daytime temperatures over the last few weeks have not been very cooperative and definitely haven't encourage people for planting."—*Donna Burgess, Coal Trail Greenhouse*

British Columbia (5). "On Saturday, the raindrops fell like water balloons ... A washout of a long weekend. I give it 3 for Saturday, 8.5 for Sunday and 4 for Monday for an average of 5. Next weekend's 'Lower Rainland' forecast isn't half bad, though 'January' resumes thereafter."—*Renata Triveri, Grow & Gather Thrive Farms*

Quebec (3). "Rain on Saturday and Sunday and very cold on Monday. A high of 45F. Sales are down 50% for this long weekend. And it is cloudy and cold all this week."—*Mireille Bourgon, Ball Superior*

BLOOM·ables

Stop selling plants.
Start selling a garden.

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Meanwhile, down in the U.S. of A. ...

Looking at the regional scores, the East came out on top, followed by New England and the South:

East	8.9
New England	8.3
South	8.1
Mountains	7.1
Plains	7.0
West	6.8
Midwest	6.6
Northwest	6.5

The state you wanted to be doing business in this week was New York (10, 10, 9.3, 9, for an average of 9.6) or perhaps Illinois (three 10s and two 9s, plus an outlying 5, for an average of 8.8). California (9, 10, 9) did extremely well, as did Connecticut, with just two scores, but both perfect 10s. Iowa averaged 9.0 thanks to a 10, two 9s and an 8.

On the dismal side of the ledger, Minnesota sticks out like a sore thumb—1, 4, 4, 6, 1, for an average of 3.2. North Dakota had just two scores, 2 and 3, for an average of terrible.

From great week to great vengeance

Your comments ran the gamut, from “great week and fantastic weekend” to “great vengeance and furious anger.” Maybe you’ll feel better knowing you’re not alone!

Illinois (10). “Another great week and fantastic weekend. Everything is selling well, lots of attention for shrubs, trees and perennials this year. Last year, it slowed down fast after this weekend, so it would be great if sales keep going for another couple weeks to make it a real good season.”—*JP, Countryside Flower Shop, Nursery & Garden Center*

California (10). “We have had good weather for several weeks now. We are located in a rural county with lots of people who work elsewhere. Business has been very good this spring after a slow start. This is a little surprising considering the cost of living and our economic uncertainty. Summers are brutal here, so the longer spring lasts the better for us.”—*Tanya Striedieck, Star Gardens Nursery*

Alabama (9). “What happened? Holy Moly! We start slowing down a little the week before Mother’s Day, then a little up for Mother’s Day, then a big drop off. Not this time! Outstanding week and weekend. Attribute a lot to the weather and our marketing some specific plants. Eight weeks ago, we were down 20% for the year. Now up about 3%. Pleased.”—*John David Boone, Dothan Nurseries*

Utah (6). “The weekend was sub-par in results and weather. The buildup to the weekend was challenged by weather inconsistency, as well. Things just did not materialize for a great positive outcome this weekend. We’ll see what we can get done this week. Can’t win them all, Charlie Brown ...”—*Scott Engh, Sun River Gardens*

Ohio (5). “I think Mother Nature is not playing nice this spring!”—*Brian Sabo, Sabo’s Nursery*

Kentucky (5). “Right in the midst of the tornado train through south-central Kentucky—165-mph winds measured, 27 dead, three towns devastated that we pull [customers] from heavily. No damage here, but all around us.”—*Jesse Shelton, Shelton’s Greenhouses*

Minnesota (4). “Well, I mean it could have been worse and we were expecting worse. We did about one-third of the sales compared to the same weekend last year. Absolute 180 in terms of weather from last week. We went from temperatures in the 90s to temperatures in the 40s and low 50s (those are daily HIGH temperatures, by the way), with a couple nights nearing frost, plus some severe weather and large rain events between. Absolutely has shut down sales. We will need a stretch of sun and 70F to claw back out of this, but we still have two weekends in May left, so anything is possible and we are trying to remain positive.”—*Jay Holasek, Fred Holasek and Son Greenhouse*

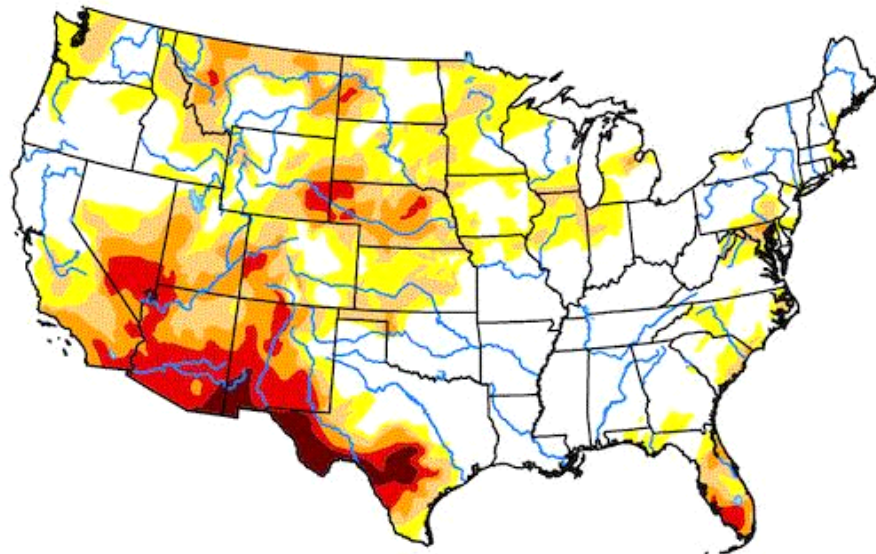
Minnesota (4). “After a hot start to May, we suffered weather whiplash this weekend with a high of 49F and wind chills in the 30s on Saturday. You know it’s going to be slow when customers start showing up in winter coats and stocking caps. Sunday saw a slight improvement, but still cold.”—*John Wickens, Olympic Trail Greenhouse*

Minnesota (1). “Mother Nature blessed us with two weeks of sunshine ... then brought us back down to reality with great vengeance and furious anger just in time for the weekend. Gains on last year were swiftly erased over the course of just three days. If my team needs me, I’ll be praying with everything I’ve got to avoid wrapping up the month with more of the same slow sales that plagued us last year from this point on.”—*Derek Lynde, Lynde Greenhouse & Nursery*



With the rainy spring ... what’s the drought monitor look like?

Too much rain is not a good thing (especially when it happens on the weekend), but too little is almost as bad. We’ve been in a bit of a drought in Florida this spring, and I was curious what the precipitation situation looked like elsewhere, so I called up the National Drought Monitor Map as of May 22 (the darker the color, the worse the drought):



To summarize: As of May 20, 2025, 26.6% of the U.S. (including Puerto Rico) is experiencing drought, with 33.24% of the lower 48 states affected. Florida has seen significant drought relief, particularly along the East Coast thanks to recent rainfall, with most areas now out of drought or only abnormally dry (D0). However, the Southwest continues to worsen for the 19th straight week, with severe (D2) to extreme (D3) drought expanding, impacting agriculture through low water supplies and crop stress. The Upper Midwest and parts of Nebraska also saw drought conditions degrade, while the Northern Plains and East Coast, including Florida, show major improvements.

We need to find a way to send some of that Southeast and Mid-Atlantic rain farther south and west.



Raker-Roberta's to grow HilverdaFlorist's potted dianthus

Dutch flower breeder **HilverdaFlorist** has signed a license agreement with **Raker-Roberta's** Young Plants of Litchfield, Michigan, to produce its complete dianthus program. That's due to the sale of Aris-Green Leaf Plants (which I announced a couple weeks ago), which had been doing the program.

The new partnership with Raker-Roberta's will continue and secure the production and sales of dianthus cuttings—including the Sunflor, Beauties, Odessa, Specialties and Kahori Series—for the North American market. Aris-Green Leaf will continue to supply dianthus cuttings until Week 40. Raker-Roberta's will begin supplying cuttings effective this month.



HilverdaFlorist dianthus at the 2025 California Spring Trials.

Raker-Roberta's already has a relationship with the Dutch breeding company, rooting and shipping other varieties, such as their Gerbera Garvinea and Echinacea Moodz.

Susie Raker, Vice-President of Raker-Roberta's Young Plants, said, "Raker-Roberta's Young Plants is excited to partner with HilverdaFlorist to ensure a robust and reliable supply of dianthus for the U.S. market. This collaboration reflects our shared commitment to cultivating exceptional quality and introducing impactful varieties. By strengthening this partnership, we solidify Raker-Roberta's position as a leader in the perennial industry, driving innovation and excellence forward. Together HilverdaFlorist, Raker-Roberta's Young Plants and Aris Green-Leaf Plants are committed to ensuring a smooth transition during this period of change."



Glowing chrysanthemums update

Last time, I teased you with a photo of a glowing chrysanthemum from Light Bio, the Firefly Petunia people. The year-old photo came from their Facebook page. I'd reached out to CEO Keith Wood to find out more about the plant, but he didn't have a chance to respond before I went to press (meaning press the send button on the newsletter).

Anyway, Keith did get back to me and said this about the glowing mum:

"We did make a bioluminescent chrysanthemum as a part of our early proof of concept. The photo was really impressive, but the actual flower is too dim presently for commercialization.

"As a startup company, we need to focus our limited resources. For now, that means improving the underlying genetic configuration needed for the bioluminescence. As we approach our next generation designs, we'll begin putting these into a broader variety of plants.

"The chrysanthemum is a peak at the future, but it will take some time before we are there."

Ah, well! Still, it'll be fun to see what they make glow next ... and just how bright they can make Firefly!



Two weeks left for a Sidney B. Meadows scholarship

If you or a student you know who happens to be from the Southeast and needs additional funds to help with horticulture school, act now to apply for a Sidney B. Meadows scholarship—the deadline for 2025 is May 31!

To be eligible, you must be currently enrolled as a junior, senior or grad student in an accredited undergraduate or graduate ornamental horticulture program or related discipline at a four-year college-level institution in the USA and be a resident of any of the 16 southeastern states covered by the scholarship* (you can be attending school in any state). Last year, they awarded 12 scholarships of \$2,000 each. This year, a similar amount is anticipated.

Additional required eligibility details and the application can be found [HERE](#).

Also, previous single-award recipients can apply for a second award (for a maximum of two awards).

**Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.*



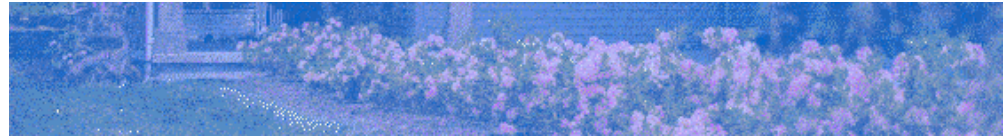
Finally ...



A hearty congratulations to Hans Hansen, plant breeder extraordinaire at Walters Gardens, for being awarded second place at the Chelsea Flower Show for his hosta called Silly Strings. As best as I can tell, it's pretty rare for an American-bred plant to be recognized at Chelsea. Well done, you!

Per the official Chelsea description: This hosta has narrow blue leaves with intensely wavy margins—a dramatic departure from the usual heart-shaped leaves. Vigorous and fast-growing, it forms a cascading mound of foliage with pale purple flower spikes in summer. Perfect for containers or the front of a shady garden.





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".

Chris Beytes

Editor-in-Chief

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