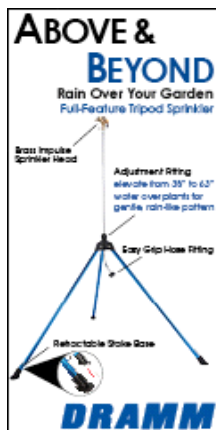


Next Level, award winners, U-pick cut flowers and new houseplant soil



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 2025

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**Green Profit's**  
**buzz!**  
*Retail news from inside and outside the green industry*

#### COMING UP THIS WEEK:

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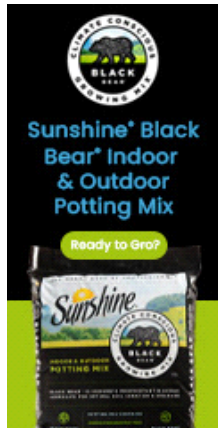


## Taking It to the Next Level

I know most of you are involved in garden centers in some way, but many are involved with nurseries, too, whether that is a company division or a full-time gig. This next item is for you.

A new paid-membership organization just got started for folks in the container nursery business. Called Next Level Nursery Group, this leadership community's purpose is to help its members reach, you guessed it, the next level. Louisianian Rayne Gibson is the founder— he is also from a family nursery business. With a hort degree from LSU, he worked in numerous horticulture businesses, realizing there weren't a lot of resources for container nursery folks. So he went and created one—Taproots Horticultural Consulting. Love the gumption!





The enterprising Rayne Gibson

And you know, he took his own business to “the next level” by partnering with others who had skills he may have been lacking himself. Folks like Megan Morrison of [MTM Coaching & Consulting](#), Katie Dubow of [Garden Media Group](#), Katie Elzer-Peters of [The Garden of Words](#) and Todd Downing of [Best Human Capital](#). All told, these are the folks you can call resources as part of the [Next Level Nursery Group](#).

In a press release announcing the organization Rayne said, “We built the Next Level Nursery Group to offer two things: a real community with real solutions. Members get powerful insights from peers who understand the grind, plus access to specialized experts who know how to move the needle.”

What’s in it for members? Participation includes regular sales metrics and KPIs, advisory meetings, strategy calls, marketing and coaching help and maybe most valuable of all, the chance to network with peers. Like with other organizations, it has member levels, each with different benefits. Find out all about them [HERE](#).





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## GGIA's Jake Tinga Award

One of your own has just been given the Jake Tinga Distinguished Professional of the Year Award by the Georgia Green Industry Association (GGIA) at the Southeast Green Conference and Trade Show this month. Tommy Morgan, owner of **Coweta Greenhouses** and **Morgan's Market** is that honored recipient.



Morgan's Market is the retail portion of the Coweta Greenhouses wholesale greenhouse operation, which services the likes of Kroger, Publix, Ace and IGCs in the vicinity of Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina and Florida. While the Market sells the plants grown right there in the wholesale business, it also has an emphasis on local and small-batch producers. At Morgan's Market you can find pasture-raised beef, goat and cow cheeses, soaps, candles, peanut brittle, pottery jams, jellies, outdoor and indoor art and a whole lot more.

Enough about the business, let's focus on Tommy. He's a 2006 graduate of Auburn University, where he met his wife, and put his degree in landscape design to work at a local design firm. Tommy's father-in-law, Marshall Cawthon, who founded Coweta Greenhouses, invited Tommy to join the business in 2008. He did! And in 2017 Tommy bought the business.

He built Morgan's Market in 2019, right at the entrance to Coweta, and in 2025 he opened a second location in Griffin, Georgia. In addition to running three businesses at two locations, Tommy also participates in M.I.R.A.C.L.E.S. Ag relief, a nonprofit started by his wife in 2024 after Hurricane Helene devastated North Carolina. Tommy is a GGIA board member and also is in the Heart of Georgia Growers group.

After hearing all that Tommy is involved in, no wonder he's receiving the Distinguished Professional Award. Congratulations, Tommy!



## The FleuroStar Award Goes to ...

Here's another award winner—this time a plant!



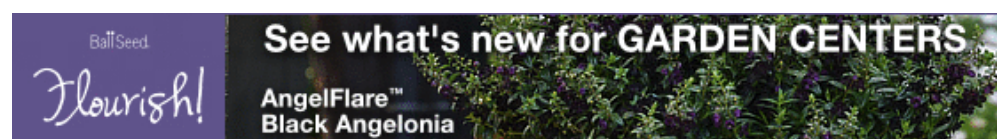


This is *Digitalis purpurea* Hanabee F1 White, and it has recently won Fleuroselect's FleuroStar Award for 2025-26, given out at the end of the European FlowerTrials. Hanabee White was bred by Takii and commercialized along with the folks at Florensis. The judges on the selection team, who judge plants based on point-of-sale attractiveness and commercial potential, said this about the variety: "Thanks to its pure white color and outstanding branching, this compact Digitalis is a true innovation for the pot and bedding plant market, opening up additional sales possibilities."

What's different about it? There's a hint to it in its name—if you know Japanese. "Hanabee" is a contraction of the Japanese word for fireworks ("hanabi") and "bee." The numerous branches emanating from the bottom of the plant creates this explosion of white blooms like the bursting glow of fireworks. Those white blooms are bee and bumblebee magnets, too, hence the "bee" incorporated into the name.

According to the judges, Hanabee's bright blooms and branching quality will really catch consumers' attention at retail. Plus, its compact habit makes it easy pick up off the retail bench and take home in your car.

Hanabee F1 White has some siblings, too! There's also Pink and Deep Rose. I'm a fan of this one for its size and pure white color.



## U-Pick Cuts

I receive e-newsletters from a number of you and a recent one from [Jenne's Garden Center](#) and

**Farm** in Myerstown, Pennsylvania caught my attention. Not because owner Jenne Martin mentions June being both Pollinator and Perennial month (such a good reminder!), nor because she reminds customers that annuals and veggies can still be planted in June (another good reminder!). What caught my eye was the announcement that the U-Pick Cut Flower Field would be opening soon.

*Another project we have been busy with is our cut flower field ... Make plans to come out and enjoy the beauty of the flowers and relax in the binzebo. Of course, we have already-put-together bouquets sold in our store available daily. Remember we offer free delivery to Myerstown!*

Great message! So I reached out to Jenne to ask her about why she does U-pick flowers and what the logistics of a U-pick flower field are like.

"For the past two summers we have grown cut flowers to sell already-put-together bouquets," she responded. "But the market is kind of flooded with that in this area, plus garden center traffic is down during summer. I did a U-pick sunflower field last year and it was a hit, and I had people asking if we will have other flowers to U-pick. We also moved a grain bin that was no longer in use and made it into a binzebo. That project was finished early this year and is located near the cut flower field.

"The downside of a cut flower field is it should be planted and prepped in April and May when as a grower/retailer garden center it's already crazy. But this year I made a point to be more organized and invested in some things that make the planting and prepping more efficient. So far, the field looks great (fingers crossed). We will use the binzebo as a place to put the cutting supplies like clippers and buckets. Plus, it has a picnic table and benches that people can relax in and a swing set close by to occupy the kids."



This was the flower field that Jenne grew for the store's use last year. Jenne is hoping this year's will look just as nice for customers.





They turned an unused grain bin into a swanky place to get out of the summer sun.



## The Logistics of It

As for pricing, mason jars of flowers will go for \$17 each and a bucket for \$35. I asked about clipper logistics (do people return them, etc.?) and she said that with the sunflower field she didn't charge for clippers and everyone returned them without a problem.



The U-pick flower field as it currently looks this June.

“The goal is to create a summer activity to get customers in the door,” she wrote. “I have big dreams with the goal of adding a U-pick raspberry patch next year or the following year. I am fortunate to have 28 acres to work with. I am a little restrained with regulations with the county and township on how much I can build permanent structures, so I am looking for ways to bring in income with other avenues.”

I like the ingenuity Jenne exhibits in creating income out of a patch of ground and an idea. Anyone else doing this? If so, how’s it going? Drop me a note about it [HERE](#).

Oh, and feel free to put me on your newsletter list, too.



## Speaking of Pollinator Month

A recent newsletter from Fast Company revealed the recipients of their annual World Changing Ideas Awards. These awards are for no slouch! They honor businesses and organizations that are developing thoughtful and creative solutions to some of the most challenging issues the world faces.

So I scrolled through their list of 100 recipients to see if anything adjacent to gardening or horticulture was in the mix. There was! In amidst the AI tech to eliminate counterfeit drugs, enzymes that break down textiles and plastic-eating microbes, there is the BeeHome from robotic beekeeping company [Beewise](#).





Did you know that nearly half of the U.S. honeybee colonies died in 2023? That's a big deal since one-third of the world's crops depend of pollinators. These colony die-offs are often linked back to a mite called varroa. Beewise's BeeHome has a chamber that kills 99% of varroa without using chemicals that can harm bees and disrupt honey production. BeeHome uses AI to apply heat where and when necessary to kill these mites. Genius!

Interested in finding out about the other 99 world-changing ideas? Read about them [HERE](#).



## Flourish's New Product

The folks at Flourish Plant told us at TPIE that they had another houseplant-specific product in the works. Last week they unveiled their new Organic Houseplant Potting Soil, their first completely new product since the introduction of their plant food (smart of them to name the company Flourish Plant and not Flourish Plant Food—opens them up to provide a whole range of products).



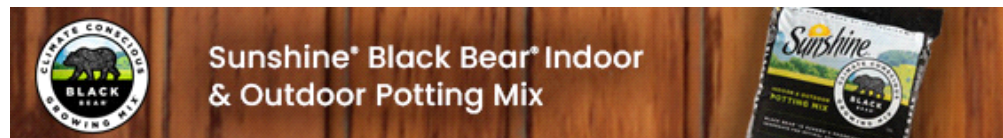


I love this line from their press announcement in particular: “Over the years, you’ve trusted us to feed your plants—now, we’re giving them a place to thrive.” The message there is that this is not just a medium but a place that promotes growth. The new soil does that by being a bioactive soil blend to support houseplants from the roots up. Flourish Soil is a not-fussy, all-purpose blend formulated with organic components that balance drainage, aeration and long-term nutrient delivery.

What’s in it?

- Sustainably sourced peat moss for optimal moisture retention
- Upcycled composted manure for a steady supply of nutrients
- Perlite and aged bark for airflow and to prevent soggy roots

The Flourish Soil is available in a 4-qt. bag. Read more about it [HERE](#) and contact them [HERE](#) for orders.



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If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, etc., drop me a line if you'd like at [ewells@ballpublishing.com](mailto:ewells@ballpublishing.com).

Ellen Wells  
Senior Editor-at-Large  
Green Profit

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