

Costa's new president, teasing out houseplants, CannaSuns and caladium festival



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:
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CannaSun Available at YPPs
It's Caladium Festival Time!



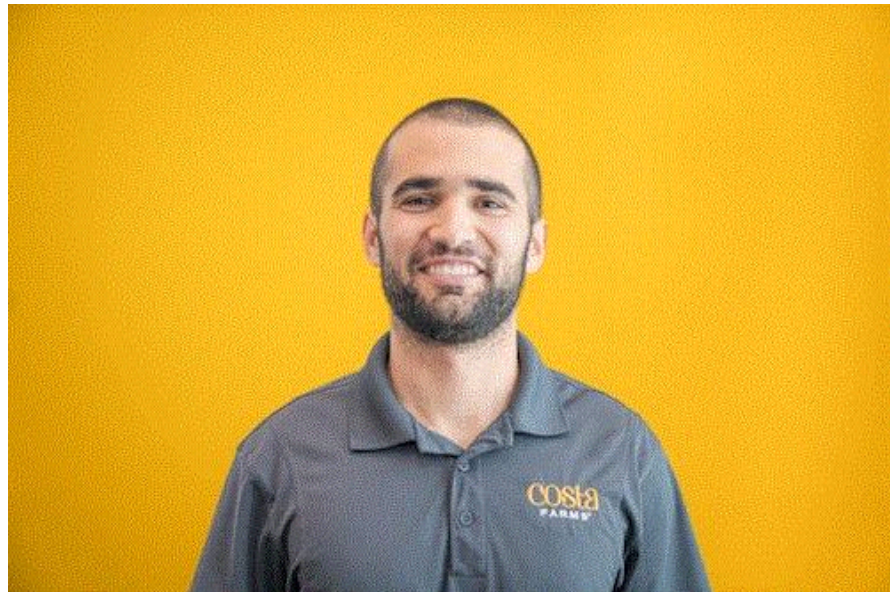
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Costa's New President

Costa Farms, one of the world's largest horticultural growers if not *the* largest houseplant/tropical grower, is getting a new President, and the nameplate on the corner office door needs only an adjustment of one letter. Joche Smith Sr., who has been CEO and President of the company for 30 years, will be placing his son, Joche Smith Jr. in the position of President. Joche Jr. will take on the job of overseeing day-to-day operations of Costa's domestic and international business units, as well as lead the company's strategic initiatives for growing the company.

Costa won't be going cold turkey with Joche Sr., however. He has valuable experience to share! He will remain as CEO and will hold his seat on the company's board, providing guidance for the company overall. He'll also continue to lead the legal and human resources functions. Chief People Officer and General Counsel Arianna Cabrera de Oña will continue to report to Joche Sr., allowing him to continue to shape Costa's company culture. Remember just a few weeks ago I mentioned Costa was named a 2025 Top Workplace by *The South Florida Sun Sentinel*—that's in large part to Joche Sr. direction around the working culture at Costa.

Joche Jr. is impressively a fourth-generation member of the Costa family. His promotion marks the next chapter in the company's long-term leadership vision. With more than a decade of experience at the family business, he has played a pivotal role in expanding the company's national retail presence and enhancing its merchandising programs across major accounts. As Senior Vice President of Sales & Commercial Operations, he has led teams responsible for strategic planning, product placement and customer engagement, ensuring Costa's plants reached millions of consumers in stores nationwide. He has worked closely with supply chain, production and marketing teams to streamline operations and deliver best-in-class plant assortments that align with retail trends and shopper behavior.



Proud father Joche Sr. says of the promotion, “Joche Jr. has an innate understanding of our customers and our mission to bring plants to every home. He’s ready to lead us forward with clarity and purpose.”

Also promoted recently is Juan Rodriguez, who was formerly Director of Sales for Lowe’s and who is now Senior Vice President of Sales and Commercial Operations. In this position Juan will lead customer-facing strategies and support cross-functional alignment across major retail accounts, as well as leading the commercial teams of Category Management, Demand Planning and Marketing.

If you know Joche Jr. and Juan, give them a big congratulations next time you see them.



Teasing Houseplants out of Tropicals at Retail

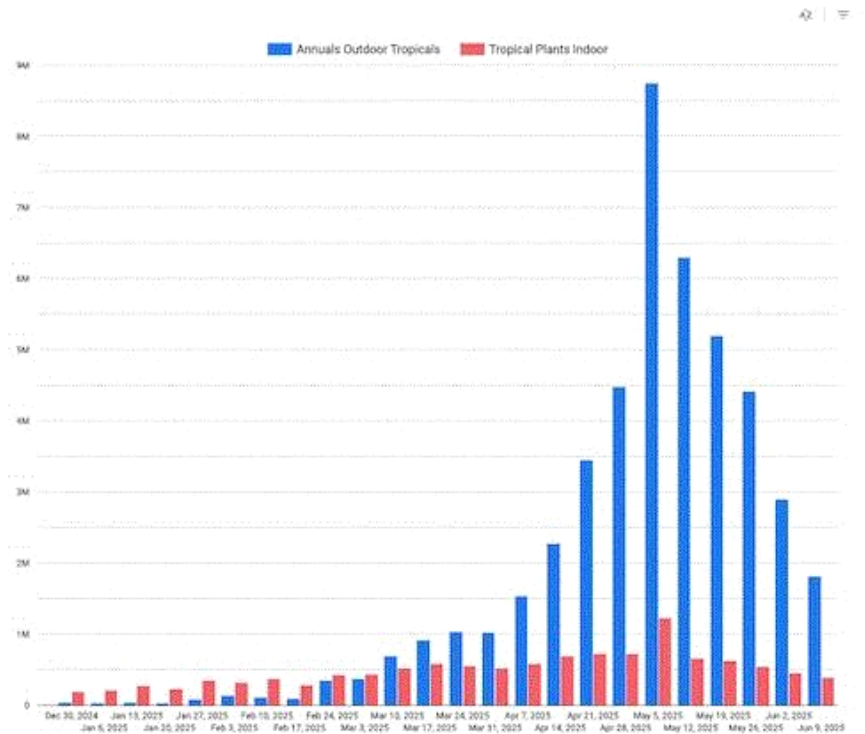
I included this information in my *buZZ!* newsletter last week, but it bears repeating in this houseplant/tropicals-focused newsletter. The news is that colleague Jen Polanz had mentioned to me that The Garden Center Group has teased out reporting information about indoor tropicals and houseplants from the general “tropicals” category in The Group’s member sales tracking. She told me that the resulting numbers were “interesting.” I like “interesting” and wanted to know more, so I contacted The Group’s managing director Danny Summers to ask what exactly they did with the reporting and what they saw as a result.

“Yes on our taking outdoor tropicals and moving them into the Annuals category so to leave indoor tropicals (houseplants) more isolated,” Danny replied. He then directed me to The Group’s numbers guy, Tim Quebedeaux of RetailKPI Consulting.

“I made the call last year to start measuring indoor tropicals on their own as we were hearing anecdotes of sales decreasing,” Tim wrote. “The problem is that we always recorded [indoor tropicals and houseplants] sales with outdoor tropicals because of the way they were being purchased and shipped in,” he explained.

What did Tim and Danny find that was interesting? “How steady the sales are for indoor tropicals,” Tim said. “They have had one peak week when all business does.” You can see that in

the following graph:



Indoor tropicals and houseplants provide a steady flow of revenue. “I still think many garden centers overstock this category in overall slower traffic times of the year, but slow times are still only a third of what busy times are—and you better be loaded when it hits because after that it’s back to ‘normal,’” Tim wrote.

Tim and Danny and Group members will use this year’s data as a baseline for comparing going forward, “not muddled by outdoor tropicals,” Tim explained. “It’s awesome to be able to have so many centers share their data—The Garden Center Group centers rock!!!”

I’d have to agree, Tim! I’ve always believed it’s better to help each other out—in business and in life—than it is to go it alone. If you’re not a Garden Center Group member, why not think about what good could come from joining this beneficial peer group? Give them a looksee [HERE](#).



CannaSun Available at YPPs

I told you about Perry Wisman’s Lucanne B.V. [back in February](#) in regard to the line of heliconias the company purchased from Dümmer Orange. But did you know they also have cannas? I do now.

Perry recently announced the young plant producer network that is growing the CannaSun series, bred by GreenWorks. It debuted at the trial gardens at Young’s Plant Farm, and when it did, it got a lot of young plant producers interested in offering this series to their customers.



Who are those young plant producers that you can get the CannaSun series from? There are five so far:

- American Farms LLC, Naples, Florida
- D.S. Cole Growers, Loudon, New Hampshire
- Natural Beauty, Denmark, Wisconsin
- Knox Horticulture, Winter Garden, Florida
- Pacific Plug and Liner, Watsonville, California

Maybe you're not familiar with the CannaSuns. A quick synopsis of the series is that they are grown from seed, known for their uniform pot production and are an excellent "thriller" in a mixed container if that's how you choose to use it.



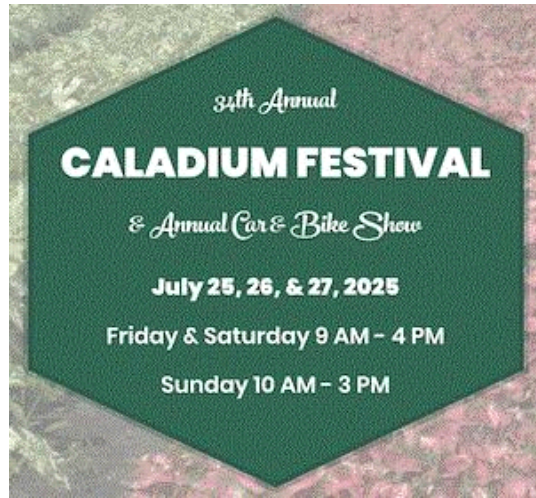
If you are going to [Cultivate'25](#) next week, you'll get a chance to see them in person.

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It's Caladium Festival Time!

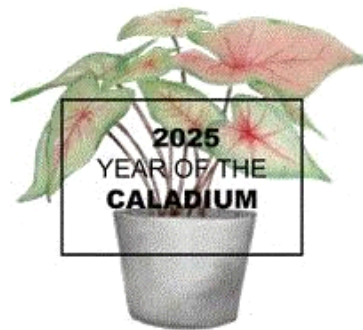
Did you know that Lake Placid, Florida, is the caladium-growing capital of the world? About 90% of all caladiums are grown in this small town midway between Fort Meyers and Orlando. Maybe you do know this fact, because I tell you about it every year when the town of Lake Placid hosts the annual Caladium Festival. This year's installment is the 34th—older than some of you, I bet—and it happens July 25-27.



Lake Placid has ideal growing conditions for caladiums with its sunny skies, sandy soils and Zone 9b temperatures. Why wouldn't Lake Placidians celebrate the bulbs that are their claim to fame? During the Caladium Festival you'll be able to hop on a bus and tour the caladium fields with the actual growers to get the scoop on the planting, harvesting and science that makes it all happen. For those in your party who are not plant nerds, bring them anyway because they can visit the car and bike shows, live music, local vendors—a local brewery has even made a specially brewed watermelon Kolsch to be served at the event and elsewhere. Your friend can have a beer and you can explore the caladium bulb vendors. That's a perfect day right there.

"The Caladium Festival is a proud tradition for our community," said Jennifer Bush, Executive Director of the Greater Lake Placid Chamber of Commerce. "Each year we welcome visitors to discover not only the breathtaking caladium fields, but the stories and passion behind the people who grow them." You know that passion to be true.

By the way, did you know that 2025 is also National Garden Bureau's Year of the Caladium? They've put together a wonderful information page covering everything about caladiums, from its history and different types to growing and where to buy. It's an interesting read if you know nothing about caladiums! Read it for yourself [HERE](#).



Find the schedule, directions and tickets for the 34th Annual Caladium Festival [HERE](#).

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions for content, email me about them at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

Ellen Wells

Senior Editor
Green Profit

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