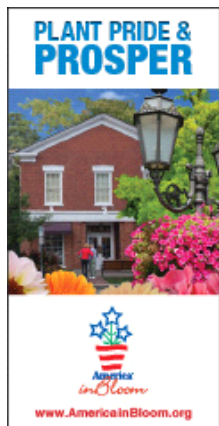
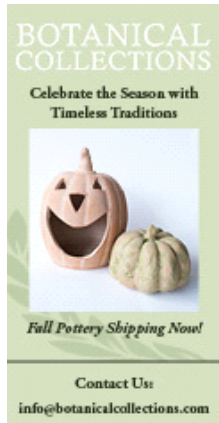


Centennial Ruby, PPA's PPOY, a live stream, a chat and happy 20th, buZZ!



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Retail news from inside and outside the green industry

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

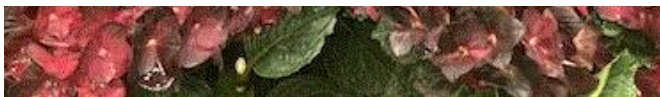
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Centennial Ruby

Last week I introduced you to Centennial Ruby, Monrovia's Retailers' Choice Award-winning hydrangea. But as I mentioned, there's more to the story than winning an award at Cultivate.





Hydrangea macrophylla Centennial Ruby was chosen to be the crown jewel in Monrovia's centennial celebration, marking 2026 as the nursery's 100th year in business. The stunningly ruby-red bloomer will have limited availability just for Monrovia customers and partners in 2026. They're also creating buzz and collectability around Centennial Ruby by including a special tag with a limited-edition number, much as an artist would with numbered lithographs. An early spring marketing push by Monrovia will drive interest in this stunning variety.

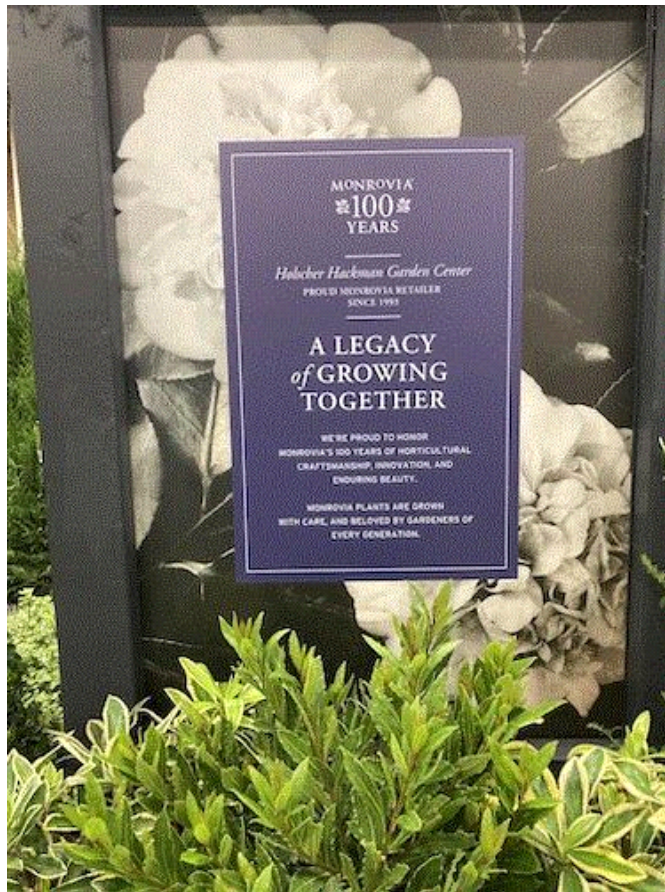
Speaking with Monrovia's Chief Marketing Officer Katie Tamony at Cultivate, she explained that Centennial Ruby originated from a florist cut flower breeding program. It's a tetraploid, which florist hydrangeas tend to be, and as such has strong, sturdy stems to hold up really large blooms. About those blooms—Katie says Centennial Ruby's flowers last for 130 days. And with a color as deep and rich as that, it slides into a "goth gardening" color palette with ease, and will certainly be a choice for anyone craving bold, romantic tones.

Topping off at just 3 ft. tall and wide, its compact nature and long bloom time make it a great plant for the front of a border or even as a container plant. As for hardiness, it's suited for Zones 4 -9, making it an option for a good swath of the country. A press release about Centennial Ruby's release has this observation from Monrovia CEO and president Jonathan Pedersen, "When we saw this hydrangea in our trials, we knew it was special. This is the dramatic red hydrangea everyone has been waiting for with intense color and outstanding garden performance. It is the perfect plant to celebrate Monrovia's milestone." Learn more about Centennial Ruby in [THIS VIDEO](#).

To further inform garden center customers about Monrovia's centennial and its long horticultural heritage, they've developed posters garden centers can showcase within their Monrovia product assortment. For an order of \$1,926 worth of shrubs, Monrovia garden center customers will receive this Landscape Legends poster.



For orders of twice that amount, Monrovia will customize a poster with your garden center's name, such as the one below. Garden centers will need to commit to orders by January 15, 2026, to receive the posters.



After a century, there are a *lot* of varieties to celebrate! The folks at Monrovia have sorted through them all and have highlighted 100 varieties in a book titled “Monrovia: 100 Years of Growing Beautifully.” Paging through it you’ll definitely see some of your best sellers. You’ll also find a short history of Monrovia and some great stories about how these 100 legends were discovered. Find out more about this book and Monrovia’s centennial celebration by visiting [Monrovia.com](https://www.monrovia.com).



Containers from Cultivate

Speaking of things I saw at Cultivate, I have a few containers I thought you’d love to see.

First up, I’m calling this the “Hey, Koolaid!” container, but I am sure the folks at Very Good Stuff have a different name for it. I love it. Plus, I love that it’s just hangin’ out on a swing. What a wonderful life that container is having.



I spotted this gorgeous container planted with succulents at Pope's Plant Farm. I don't believe they were selling this, per se, but I was told that it was there for inspiration. Set one of these out in your succulent area to inspire your customers with a "Yes, you can do this!" message. In fact, I'm inspired myself.



The folks at the DeGroot booth told me a large retailer had the exclusive on this Peek-a-Boo Strawberry Grow Kit for a couple of years, and experienced much success with it. Good news—it's now available for everyone. The planter comes with 10 bareroot strawberry plants and coir media. I have in my notes that it's available in a case of nine and as a display of 27. "Nice teacher's gift!" I have written down, too.



And I'll close today's Containers from Cultivate segment with another cutey pot. These foul-mood fowls are adorbs, as the kids say. Sure, it's a cute plant container, but use it for pens, toothpicks, spare pennies ... you get the idea. It's just cute to set around.



I have a bunch more containers to share with you later on, so stay tuned!



PPA's PPOY

The Perennial Plant Association's National Symposium is always right on the heels of Cultivate, and every year it's where the organization announces its upcoming Perennial Plant of the Year. For 2026, the honor goes to *Andropogon gerardii* Blackhawks, also known as Blackhawks big bluestem.

Why did PPA's membership vote for this variety? It certainly stands out in a landscape with its dark-colored foliage and strong, upright yet compact (5 ft. tall and wide) growth habit. While other bluestems can overwhelm gardens with their larger size, Blackhawks is ideal for the smaller garden—and there's a lot more of those nowadays.

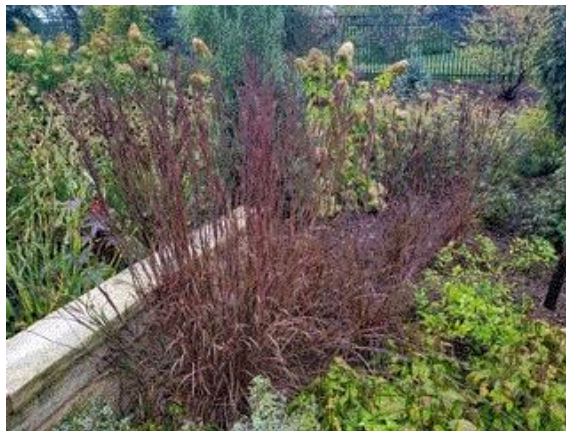


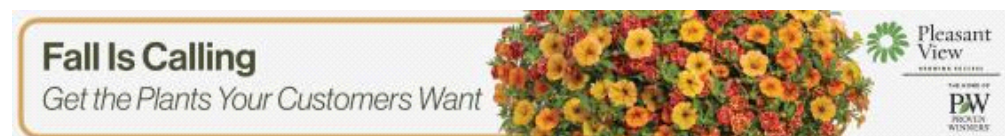
Photo courtesy of Ed Lyon

Plus, it provides interest throughout the seasons, emerging with dark-green leaves in spring, turning reddish-purple in summer and becoming deep purple by September just as its inflorescences appear.

For habitat and wildlife lovers, Blackhawks big bluestem's dense foliage and sturdy stems offer nesting sites and cover for birds, and they are also a larval food source for several skipper butterfly species.

The PPA press release on the announcement calls this variety "remarkably low maintenance, with no major pest or disease concerns." It just needs cutting down in late winter. Also, while it does form a single clump, it may reseed in the garden—so keep an eye on it. They also suggest pairing it with stunning fall-blooming perennials such as black-eyed Susans, tall stonecrops and asters—Blackhawks' dark foliage sure would help those perennials pop.

If you're a Perennial Plant Association member, you'll have access to several marketing resources that'll help you promote Blackhawks big bluestem to your customers next year. Want more information? There's a website for that. Find it [HERE](#).



Natives' Supply and Demand

On an adjacent topic, I ran across [this piece about native plant demand](#) on *Fast Company* recently. As you know, horticulture businesses aren't topics mainstream business publications cover all that often, so I was intrigued!

The title says it all: "How a growing demand for drought-tolerant, local plants is changing the landscape industry." The angle here is that landscape architects are "finding that the plant industry is straining to keep up" with demand.

From the article: "We're trying to create designs with plants that use less water, have deeper root systems, and are more resilient," said Tyler Krob, a senior associate and landscape architect at Denver-based Superbloom. "And the reality is, the nursery market just isn't capable of supplying those." Those folks at Superbloom, according to the article, are having to buy in plants from other states and also work directly with local nurseries to grow plants specifically for certain projects. Other landscape architecture firms are opening their own nurseries for internal use and retail sales.

The piece ends with this supply and demand conundrum being a good problem to have. "Demand is probably just going to continue to go up," said one person quoted in the article. "It's industry growing pains, but it's exciting that we're at this point."

What's been your experience with demand at consumer retail? Drop me a note about it [HERE](#).

Rudbeckia 'Treasure Trove'
New to Proven Winners
Perennials for 2025-2026!



Speaking of Nurseries and Landscapes

If your garden center has a nursery or landscape division, AmericanHort is leading a tour for professionals in those fields that you can jump on. The 2025 Nursery & Landscape Tour will take place September 30-October 1 in and around Baltimore, Maryland. It's a two-day immersive tour that will bring together nursery growers and landscape pros to explore their shared challenges and opportunities.



The tour will top at seven nursery and landscape operations in the area, offering a behind-the-scenes look at production, sourcing strategies and installation procedures. You'll see innovations in automation, native plant trends, jobsite logistics, crew comms and much more that you can take back to your own business.

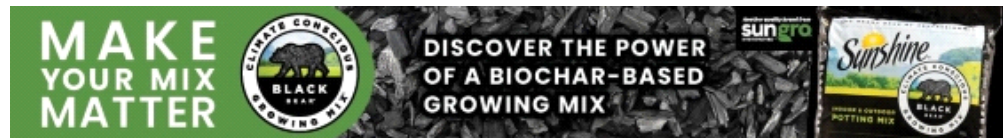
The tour stops and insights you'll see include:

- Babikow Greenhouses (Baltimore) – Bedding Plants
- Perennial Farm (Glen Arm) – Perennials, Drone Use

- Manor View Farm Inc. (Monkton) – RFID, Landscape Distribution
- Foxborough Nursery (Street) – Field Plants
- Raemelton Farms (Adamstown) – AI-Powered Farm Digitization
- Ruppert Nurseries (Laytonsville) – Wholesale Trees
- Ruppert Landscape (Laytonsville) – Commercial Landscape Operations

“This tour exemplifies what AmericanHort is all about—bringing the industry together to share best practices, spark innovation and build stronger connections across the supply chain,” said Ken Fisher, AmericanHort President & CEO. “When growers and landscapers better understand each other’s operations, everyone benefits, from improved efficiency to elevated project outcomes.”

One insight gained from one tour stop will more than pay for the trip. Space is limited, so get in on this tour ASAP. Head over [HERE](#) to register or call AmericanHort at 614-487-1117.



Live Stream Alert!

Or webinar, or whatever terminology you folks out there are using to describe important-to-know education that you can grab from the internet—whether it’s live or not. Anyway, I have news of one of those from us here at Ball Publishing.

It’s called “Spend a Little, Save a Lot: How the timely use of pre-emergence herbicides can save you time and money.” If you’re a grower, you know your use of pre-emergence herbicides help reduce hand weeding and spot spraying costs. The folks at Envu (formerly Bayer) recently sponsored a third-party study that looks at the actual costs and savings that you can expect from a comprehensive weed control program. The results show which products and practices offer the greatest return for your investment. The results also show that your greatest cost is ... the cost of neglect!

The guest experts lined up include Janna Beckerman, Ph.D., the ornamentals technical specialist at Envu and part of their Green Services Team (and former professor and extension plant pathologist) and Steve Larson, Greenhouse and Nursery Specialist for Envu and an experience grower and a technical sales rep in the turf & ornamental industry.

As is often the case, Bossman Chris Beytes will be your host and moderator for this event. Oh, and it takes place Wednesday, August 27, at 1:00 p.m. Eastern/Noon Central. Thanks to the folks at Envu for sponsoring! Head over to growertalks.com/LiveStreams to sign up or to catch it as an archive after the fact.

And Another

This one is actually being billed as a “fireside chat” by the folks at TapOnIt, a visual-first SMS marketing platform. They are hosting “Cultivating Growth: SMS Strategies from Top Garden Centers.” It’ll be a conversation with Kate Terrell, owner of Wallace’s Garden Center and Bobby Lewis, vice president of Meadow Farms. The two veteran hort retailers will chat about how garden centers are using SMS marketing to grow their customer base, drive foot traffic and track real ROI.

Cultivating Growth: SMS Strategies from Top Garden Centers

Thursday, August 21, 2025
11:30 AM – 12:30 PM CST

Featuring



Kate Terrell
Owner of Wallace's Garden Center



Bobby Lewis
VP of Meadows Farms

brought to you by  **taponit**

The fireside chat/webinar/live stream is free and tailored for garden center owners, managers and marketers who are looking for modern ways to connect with customers. The conversation takes place Thursday, August 21, 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Central. Register for the event [HERE](#).



**THE BIGGEST GREENEST
TRADE SHOW IN THE WEST**

**AUGUST
20-22**

REGISTER

Happy 20th, buZZ!

Bossman Chris Beytes informed me that 20 years ago this week, then-*Green Profit* Editor Bill Calkins pressed send on the very first *buZZ!* e-newsletter. Wowza! If Chris's math is correct (at four sends per month for 20 years) this edition would be the 960th edition.



It has been a great honor to have written this newsletter for you since March of 2008. When I signed on, *buZZ!* had not nearly 9,000 subscribers. Now we're dropping into more than 28,000 inboxes. Beytes suggested I include some highlights of past editions. Gosh, remember that time I showed you container that looks like the Hey Koolaid guy? Good times.

All kidding aside, I hope *buZZ!* has been a valuable asset in your business *and* in your life.

Again, if Chris's calculations are correct, the 1,000th edition of *buZZ!* should be happening the first week of next June. And my own 1,000th, sometime in January 2029, during which time I will say, "Hey, remember that time I showed you the Hey Koolaid guy container?"



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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ellen".

Ellen Wells
Senior Editor-at-Large
Green Profit

This week's BuZZ! was sent to 28,352 loyal readers!

If you're interested in advertising on BuZZ! contact [Kim Brown](#) ASAP!

