

NGB's Year of, Purpose-driven, Monrovia's Trends and Get Artsy



WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

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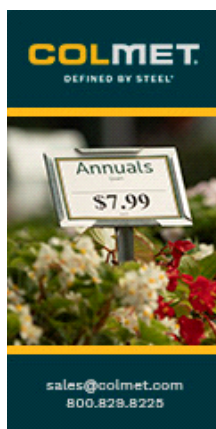
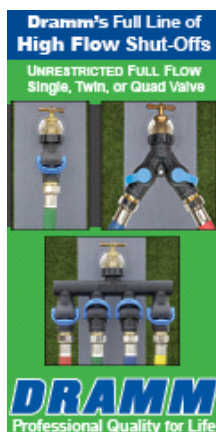


NGB's Year of ...

National Garden Bureau (NGB) just announced its featured crops for their "Year of" program and I like them all. The "Year of" program for six categories of plants exists to help market genera that are easy to grow, have lots of genetic diversity with the chosen genera and offer a lot of new breeding. In other words, the "Year of" program generates interest and sales for these crops.

Those six crop categories and the genera promoted are:

- Bulb—Year of the Crocus
- Annual—Year of the Impatiens
- Edible—Year of the Hot Pepper
- Houseplant—Year of the Ficus
- Perennial—Year of the Sedum
- Flowering Shrub—Year of the Azalea

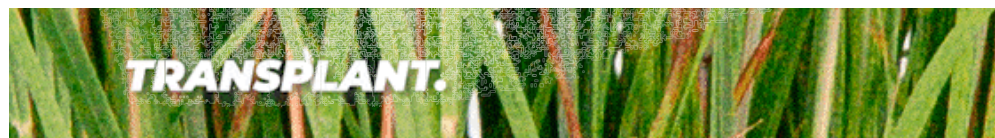


A special cherry-on-top bonus of NGB's "Year of" programs are the beautiful illustrations they create for each category. You may have seen the one for ficus in my *Tropical Topics* newsletter earlier this week. I also quite like the illustration for the crocus, too.



Beginning November 1, NGB will have a bunch of new photos for all of these genera provided by its members on its [website](#) (we'll let you know when and with a link). These are downloadable for use by breeders, brokers, seed companies, growers, retailers and garden communicators for use in their marketing initiatives. NGB will also have PDFs of fact sheets, flyers, handouts, signs, posters, etc. Use these to market non-branded, non-specific varieties to consumers.

You'll want to access those files ASAP in November and get your marketing plans squared away by the end of the year because NGB will start its consumer publicity of the "Year of" crops beginning in January—which is a short 16 weeks away!



Purpose-Driven Gardening

This week we're getting into the meat of Garden Media Group's 2026 Garden Trends Report by diving into the first trend on the list, Purpose-Driven Gardening.

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"It's not just what I plant, it's why I plant it," is the quote that begins this section. This is not about planting a hedge to block road traffic—that's not the kind of purpose they're talking about. The "why" is about self-expression and collective impact.



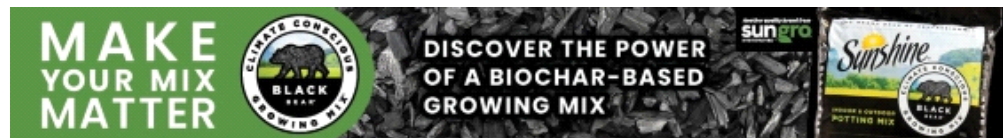
Many folks now, especially Gen Z, lead with a democratized, hands-on, values-led approach in what they become involved in. Consumers support brands that support local initiatives that align with their "why" or their purpose. How? GMG has found that retailers can see participation rates as high as 20% when customers are invited to round up their purchase for a charitable cause (I do that at my local Ace whenever it's a cancer-related funding ask, for example).

For these purpose-driven gardeners to support you, you have to know and communicate your own "why." They suggest aligning your own brand ethos with what matters to your organization, communicating that clearly through purposeful storytelling, building customer loyalty through meaningful community programs and making customers feel like partners in your brand's mission.

Read the 2026 Garden Trends Report [HERE](#) and stay tuned next week for my take on the next trend.

By the way, have you considered or revisited your company's (or even your own) "why" lately?

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Monrovia's Take on Garden Design Trends

I didn't have time to participate in Monrovia's New Plants and Garden Trends webinar that took place a couple of weeks ago, but I reached out to them to get a synopsis of what all their Chief Marketing Officer Katie Tamony and Plant Selections Manager Georgia Clay (best name in the business) had to say on the topics.

Their trends analysis is based on their consumer research with more than 1,400 homeowners and also on media, consumer behavior and the design, food and art industries—in other words, they're looking at a whole world of influences to see what trends are on the horizon for horticulture.

"Our latest research has shown that interest in gardening overall is holding steady year over year despite economic worries and pressures," said Katie. "We see that edible gardening is a top goal for next year across all age groups and the main motivation in gardening continues to be about

creating spaces that help us lower our stress.”

I'll do my best to synopsise Monrovia's top gardening design trends for 2026:

Patio Culture: Creating a place to relax and unwind is a primary motivation for many gardeners, with older gardeners seeing the space as an extension of the living room. Plants soften the patio's hardscape and add greenery, pops of color and fragrance.

Exquisite Edibles: Monrovia found this trend to be more than just homeowners growing their own food when times are tough. Instead, they're finding that folks are getting more adventurous and “world aware” in what's going in their gardens. Think kiwi, persimmons, figs and unique forms such as compact, columnar and espaliered fruit trees and bushes.

Wild But Refined: A continuation of the Modern Meadow trend, folks are continuing to be drawn toward a wild design, but want a more curated look. They're combining interests in natives, pollinators and sustainability with an aesthetic that's natural, but not unruly.

The Sunday Garden: Gardens are seen as places to where one escapes and should be easy as pie to maintain. Homeowners want a place to relax, one with a soothing backdrop, some quiet luxury and a touch of romance. Picture a place with evergreen hedges, interesting foliage, some jasmine and definitely climbing roses.



Monrovia's picks that fit the Sunday Garden Trend.

Watch the entire webinar [HERE](#) to get more details about these trends and the Monrovia varieties that fit the aesthetics.

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



Cost, Convenience, Health & Wellness

These are the three overarching mega-trends that the folks at Europe-based Food Navigator say are about to disrupt the food and beverage industry. And you know what I say about food and beverage—where food and beverage go, so goes gardening. And many other industries, too, but let's stick with what we're familiar with.

Here are some reasons why Food Navigator zeroed in on these three items as disrupters.

Cost of living: The ongoing cost-of-living crisis has normally brand-loyal customers trading down for products that are more affordable. For younger consumers this could result in changes to long-term spending habits and patterns. While the food industry has noticed increased purchasing of cheaper types of meat (chicken over steak, say), they've also noticed something else—a rise in spending on little treats. A slice of cake over a bathroom renovation, for instance. Hey, we can work with that!

Convenience: While food shoppers are trading down due to expense you also have to consider that time is money. That's a big part as to why global convenience food usage has gone up 3%, which is a lot, globally speaking. And something for you, the retailer, to keep in mind is how intertwined convenience foods (or convenience anything) are with digital payment convenience, i.e. tap-and-go, mobile ordering and payments, and so forth.

Health and wellness: This one may be more specific to food and beverage than gardening and speaks to the rise in consumer awareness of how diet impacts gut health, mobility, aging and all that. But, wait, growing their own food is healthy, what with all the exercise, mindfulness and organic practices. Health and wellness is driving everyone to seek better nutrition and exercise to support them as they age.

Read the Food Navigator piece [HERE](#)—and you may as well sign up to receive it, as it's got good stuff in most every issue.



Get Artsy

Friend, colleague and owner of Garden of Words consultancy Katie Elzer-Peters is *a*/so an amazing artist. If you don't believe me, just check out [her Instagram page](#). Amazing, right?



It's clear she loves doing art. We all have that itch to create—including your customers—and Katie knows that. That's why she's offering a webinar on how you—plant shops, garden centers, anyone and everyone—can host a watercolor collage workshop.

Here's how she describes it on the registration page:

"Tired of running the same workshops? Want to jump on the crafting trends that Gen Z and Gen Alpha enjoy? Thinking of ways to combat loneliness with your business? Feeling like you could use 45 minutes to chill?"

It's a totally free webinar. She just wants to share this with you so you can host a fun and enjoyable and arts-and-craftsy workshop for your customers. Or just learn some new skills for yourself!

The webinar takes place October 8 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern. Register for it [HERE](#).



When Markets and FIFA Collide

Planning on attending the June 2026 Dallas markets? If so, Dallas Market Center wants you to

make your hotel reservations sooner than you think you'd need to.

It just so happens that you'll be competing for rooms with rabid soccer fans from the world over. Turns out that the FIFA World Cup dates in nearby Arlington, Texas, will be coinciding with Dallas Market Center dates.



Good for you, then, that Dallas Market Center has secured hotel room blocks with its preferred hotel partners at rates consistent with usual June markets. No surge pricing! As a reminder, the markets happening in Dallas in June are the Apparel & Accessories Market (June 16-19) and the Total Home & Gift Market (June 24-30).

Folks at the Dallas Market Center can help you book at any of their partner hotels with rates beginning at \$135 per night. Buyers may book through Market Travel online or by calling (214) 744-7444.



Potpourri

I have several additional reminders for you, in no particular order:

Griffin is expanding their West Coast distribution with the opening of a new, state-of-the-art facility in Reno, Nevada, replacing their facility in Gresham, Oregon. It's anticipated to open October 6. There will be a few transitional moments to make that happen, including no customer shipments processing between Monday, September 29 and Monday, October 6, as they transport inventory between the two sites. If all goes well, shipments will resume from Reno on Wednesday, October 8. Plan accordingly and call your rep with any questions.

The **University of Connecticut** is hosting a **Biological Control Conference for Ornamental Growers** on September 18 in New Haven, Connecticut. Growers will learn how to implement a

biocontrol program from folks with practical experience. You'll learn about new tools and products and also how to train staff to get your biocontrol program up and working. Open to commercial growers producing ornamentals in greenhouses and nurseries. Register [HERE](#).

Also from the folks at UConn, they'll be hosting the **UConn Native Plant and Pollinators Conference** November 13 in Storrs, Connecticut. The day will feature current science-based research and information on supporting pollinators in managed landscapes. The program is designed for growers and other green industry professionals, landscape service providers, landscape architects and designers, town commissions, municipalities, and home gardeners. Contact [Alyssa Siegel-Miles](#) to register.

The **University of Florida's Institute of Food & Agricultural Sciences Extension Greenhouse Online Training Program** is offering a new course in its online greenhouse training program open to all industry members. The course is **Substrates for Container-Grown Plants** and is intended for nursery, greenhouse and CEA staff to help them understand the science of substrates to improve water and air availability for plants. Fellow Ball Publishing newsletter editor Dr. Jeb Fields will be among the course teachers! Offered in English and Spanish, the course runs from October 6-31 and is available completely online and at any time of day. Find more information and register [HERE](#).

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



Ellen Wells
Senior Editor-at-Large
[Green Profit](#)

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