

K-shaped economy, Hort Fed ceases, get PW certified, and Bee a Winner

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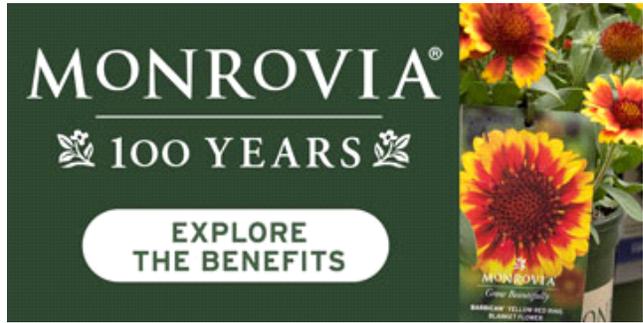



Green Profit's **buzz!**

Retail news from inside and outside the green industry

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- The K-Shaped Economy
- Marvin Has Questions
- UK Hort Federation Done
- A Peek at Peak Beak
- It's Seed-Starting Time
- Get PW Certified
- Bee a Winner!
- IDYS – Helen Lawson!

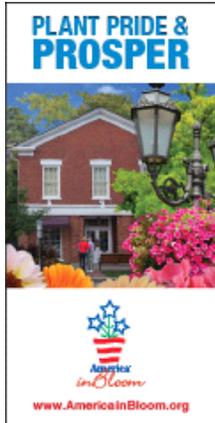
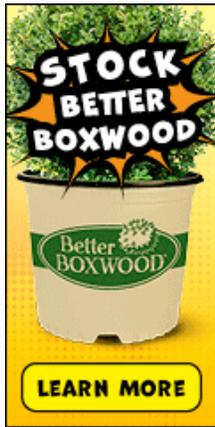


The K-Shaped Economy

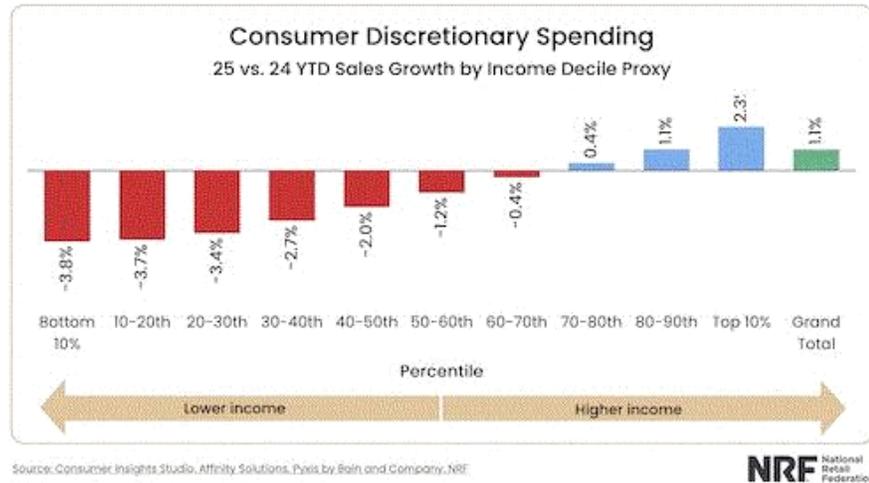
An interesting bit of research about 2025 spending came out of the National Retail Federation this week. It boils down to this: On the surface of things, 2025 retail sales grew robustly. But if you dig deeper into who was spending and on what, that seemingly rosy spending assessment has some darkening clouds. K-shaped clouds.

First, let's understand what economists mean by K-shaped and a K-shaped economy. This describes an economy where different income groups grow at drastically different rates. The performance of these different groups can be graphed, and that graph kinda-sorta looks like the arms of the letter K (on its side).

NRF analyzed credit and debit card data broken down by spending deciles (defined as "each of ten equal groups into which a population can be divided according to the distribution of values of a particular variable"). When graphed, you can see differences in the spending growth for



discretionary goods when broken down by consumer spending levels.



It's more of a "I" with a "/" slicing through it and then turned 90 degrees.

In the graph above you can see that the bottom seven deciles, or consumer spending levels, saw negative growth in discretionary spending. "But you just said 2025 retail sales grew, Ellen. Right?" Retail sales growth for 2025 is positive only because the top 20% of spenders made up for it by accounting for 60% of total spending. In other words, that positive retail sales growth we've been told about is hiding the weakness in spending among the lower income segments.

And again, this explanation is itself a bit cloudy. Digging into the numbers, NRF found that not all sectors saw this K-shaped spending. For instance, spending on utilities—a necessity—saw growth that was somewhat even. For growth of items that are staples, you can begin to see negative growth for the lowest of the income levels. And for discretionary items, the K shape becomes quite apparent (the graph above). Spending growth for department stores was positive only among those in the top 10% of income levels. And very interestingly, growth in spending for wholesale clubs such as Costco was up across all income segments.

NRF stated that they expect to see continued growth for retail in 2026, "but it is clear that not all segments of the consumer will be driving this growth."

You can see visuals of all these spending categories [HERE](#).



Marvin Has Questions

Ball Horticultural's "hortistician" Dr. Marvin Miller has questions for you readers. He recently read about a variety of issues, from wage increases in South America and Africa to the increased cost of horticultural inputs and the impact on prices due to the 2025 tariffs, which have reportedly cost the American household an average of \$1,000 in 2025. His questions to you are these:

- Are you raising prices or are you able to absorb cost increases by means such as changing the size of your finished product?
- Are you seeing consumer resistance to buying?
- Are you increasing your marketing budgets to be sure your customers feel the need to buy garden products from you this year?

In fairness, IGC customers do tend to lean toward those upper income levels mentioned in the K-shaped economy item above. In that instance, might you be considering messaging that would keep your customers shopping your business and not heading toward the racks outside of BJ's?

Thoughts? I'll send **YOUR REPLY** to Marvin.



UK Hort Federation Ceases Operations

For any of you who have been working with the likes of Gardenex, the UK's trade association for garden and leisure manufacturers and exporters, you may already know that they ceased all operations as of last week. That's because the Federation of Garden and Leisure Manufacturers Limited, which is compiled of Gardenex, PetQuip and Commercial Horticulture Association (CHA), discontinued all activities last week. Gardenex was established in 1961 as a not-for-profit organization and was closely linked with the UK government's Department for Business & Trade (formerly UK Trade & Investment) to support exporting. PetQuip was focused on the international trade of pet equipment and care products, and CHA represented companies that make and supply plants, horticultural products and services to commercial growers worldwide.

The Federation of Garden & Leisure Manufacturers Ltd



According to a press release on the topic, the Federation found it difficult to regain a financial footing post pandemic. Add the Brexit turmoil, declining support from the British government and the Trump administration's market disruptions on top of covid troubles, and the Federation's financial situation was untenable.

The Garden Industry Manufacturer's Association (GIMA) is stepping in to provide exporting supporting to its members now that Gardenex is no more.

"This is a very sad day for the industry," the Federation team stated in that press release. "Gardenex, PetQuip and the CHA have been stalwarts of their relative sectors helping hundreds if not thousands of businesses to generate millions in export income for the UK over the years."

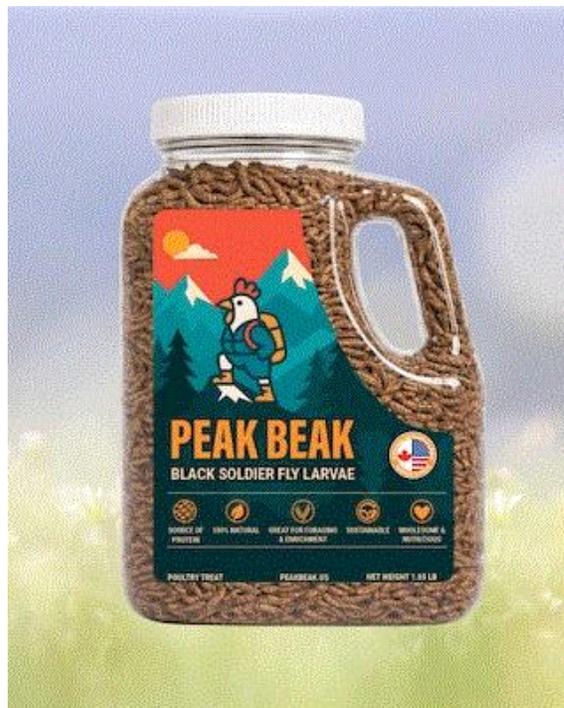
This is another instance that helps to prove in part the adage, "all politics is local." A perfect storm of disparate circumstances can come together to impact any aspect of life and business. Stay aware, pay attention and when necessary be in the room to represent your interests. Associations are vital for business, so advocate for those to which you belong.



A Peek at Peak Beak

Do you have new or experienced backyard chicken keepers in your community? A new product line from Oberland Science will keep those their little chirpers happy and healthy and lead them toward a productive egg-laying adult life. The line is called **Peak Beak** and includes functional treats and supplements that support strong shells, beautiful yolks, healthy feathers and flock vitality.

You may remember Oberland Agriscience as the company that released 2nd Nature, a soil amendment that contains the frass of black soldier fly larvae (BSFL). Peak Beak is crafted with these same BSFL to provide protein and gut-health supporting compounds.



“When we listened to chicken keepers, one thing was clear: egg health matters most,” said Greg Wanger, Founder and Chief Technology Officer at Oberland Agriscience. “We saw a hole in the industry between fun treats and complete feeds. Peak Beak was created to elevate the treat and supplement category by delivering functional nutrition that supports flock health in a way that feels intuitive, sustainable and grounded in how chickens are meant to eat.”

The first introduction in the line is Whole Dried Poultry Treats, 100% natural dried BSFL that supports foraging behavior and everyday vitality. Next up will be products that support feather development, laying and a pelletized format delivering concentrated nutrition.

There’s a sustainability angle to this product, too. These BSFL upcycle pre-consumer food waste from farms and food manufacturers into a highly efficient, regenerative protein source, resulting in less waste, fewer emissions, and better nutrient efficiency. This message will really resonant with these eco-conscious chicken parents.

Interested in carrying Peak Beak? Head over to [HERE](#) to learn about becoming a retailer.

THE SEASON IS HERE!
Get the tags & labels you need. As requested.
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It's Seed-Starting Time

If customers haven't been in to load up on seeds and propagation supplies, they soon will. Oasis Grower Solutions has a new retail propagation kit that will come in handy.

It's called the **OASIS RhizoPlug Sheet Propagation Kit** and it brings the latest engineered substrate tech to hobbyists, home growers, market farmers, gardeners—in other words, lots of folks.



The RhizoPlug Sheet Propagation Kits features the same commercial media product that professional propagators use, developed for easy and damage-free cutting insertion, faster cutting/close rehydration and vigorous and uniform rooting. And now this media is available for the home grower.

The RhizoPlug Sheet Propagation Kit includes:

- 2 1020 trays (one primary tray with drainage holes, one solid bottom tray)
- 1 50-count or 104-count OASIS RhizoPlug Sheet propagation substrate
- 1 instruction sheet for proper use and optimal results

For the folks who shop at IGCs such as your own, this type of product hits the mark. Independent garden centers and other retailers will also appreciate the broad appeal of the new kit.

"We're all aware of the millions of new gardeners who fell in love with plants during the pandemic and stuck around," said Dr. Vijay Rapaka. "As those gardeners continue to mature, they're naturally curious about propagation. This kit can help support their success and strengthen their connection to horticulture and garden retailers."

Kits and kit refills (consisting of two substrate sheets) can be purchased through the Oasis Grower Solutions online store or from leading distributors and retailers. Interested in larger orders? Reach out to your Oasis Grower Solutions Territory Sales Manager or contact [Oasis Grower Solutions Technical Customer Service and Sales](#).

Get PW Certified

A well-informed garden center staff can elevate your store's performance and bottom line. Proven Winners knows that and so is once again offering its Certified Garden Center Training program. They started this training program more than 20 years ago to educate retailers on the need-to-know info about their Proven Winners plants, programs and other products. After all, the more you know about their products, the better able you are to sell them.

Best of all, the PW Certified Garden Center Training program is online and on-demand so your staff members can learn at their own time and pace. During the 50-minute video, they'll find information about consumer trends, free resources, Proven Winners' top plants, promotional programs, merchandising, their sustainability efforts and answers to customers' most frequently asked questions. At the end of the video, employees simply complete a short survey and voila, they are certified!

Once completed, Proven Winners Certified garden centers will receive:

- Priority listing on provenwinners.com through their Find a Retailer tool
- Free inventory listing
- A choice of hat or T-shirt for each Certified employee
- A pizza party courtesy of Proven Winners (yum!)

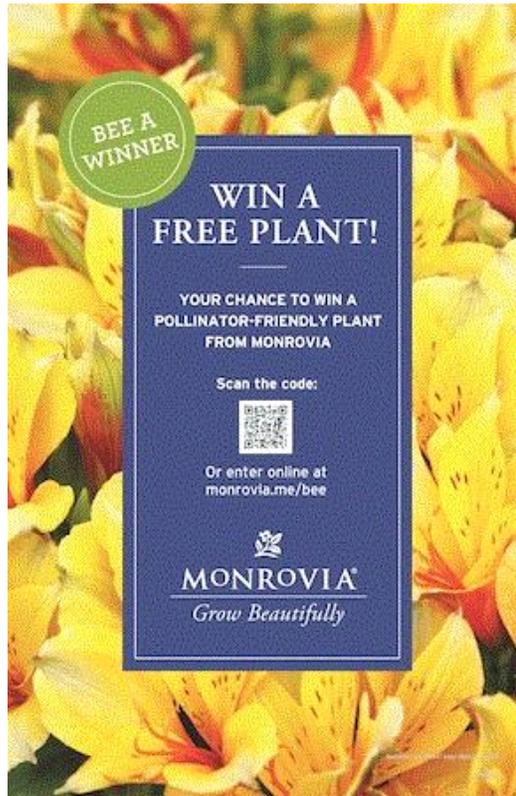
By the way, the video includes closed captions in English, Spanish and French, too.

Get on this training before the to-do lists gets too long. Head over to [Proven Winners Staff Training](#) to learn more.

Bee a Winner!

It's time to register for Monrovia's Bee a Winner program, the annual pollinator plant giveaway created to generate some buzz for sales and customer engagement. This year will be the fifth year that Monrovia is offering the program to garden centers across the country.

It's a win-win-win sort of program, where your garden center customers get a chance to win a free pollinator plant (and a shot at the national grand prize), you get customer engagement and contact information, and the pollinators get more pollinator plants to visit for sustenance.



Monrovia makes this a hassle-free endeavor for garden centers by managing all the entries and choosing local winners specific to participating garden centers. After the giveaway period ends, Monrovia selects and notifies your winners and provides a list of new email and SMS contacts. Pretty hands off on your part.

To participate, registered garden centers must place a \$2,000 minimum order for Monrovia's array of pollinator-friendly plants in order to receive 10 free additional plants to give away as prizes. You'll receive POP, posters with contest QR codes and other marketing tools. Your job is to create a fun display of pollinator plants and use other communication channels to spread the word about the program. New this year is Monrovia's collection of both SMS/text opt-in contact information and email addresses from giveaway entrants.

The Bee a Winner program has two registration deadlines based on your location.

- Spring program deadline for southern states: February 27
- Summer program sign-up date: March 13

Think of the bees—[REGISTER](#) today!

IDYS – Helen Lawson!

Speaking of Monrovia, the latest episode of my "I Dig Your Story" podcast happens to be a conversation with Monrovia's Retail Marketing Partnership Coach Helen Lawson, the person who came up with the Bee a Winner program. What a fun conversation about all sorts of things—being an outdoorsy kid, her time in publishing, and how attending a meeting of the Garden Writers Association (now GardenComm) changed the trajectory of her career—and she loves it!



Find the latest episode on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [Amazon Music](#) and [iHeart](#).

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 that reads "Ellen".

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