

Foremost dracaenas, LiveTrends x 2, Espoma's new houseplant mix



The logo for the Tropical Plant International Expo 2027 is displayed in a horizontal banner. On the left, the acronym 'TPIE' is enclosed in a double-bordered orange and brown square. To its right, the text 'TROPICAL PLANT INTERNATIONAL EXPO 2027 FT. LAUDERDALE' is written in a dark brown, sans-serif font. On the far right, a vertical orange-to-yellow gradient bar contains the dates 'JAN 20-22' in large, white, bold, sans-serif letters.



A blue horizontal bar contains the text 'News and Inspiration from the world of foliage and tropical plants' on the left. On the right side of the bar are two logos: 'GROWERTALKS MAGAZINE' and 'greenPROFIT MAGAZINE'.

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# TROPICAL TOPICS

**COMING UP THIS WEEK:**  
Foremost's Dracaena Partnership  
LiveTrends Accolades x 2  
New Espoma Houseplant Mix  
My Tropical Summer Samples  
Email Oops!

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## Foremost's Dracaena Partnership

Tropical young plant grower **Foremost** has expanded its partnership with Dutch dracaena nursery De Plaats and the Dracaenakwekerij De Plaats by securing exclusive European rights for the sale of rooted and unrooted cuttings of the Dragontree dracaena brand.



Left to right: Dragontree breeder Ruud Scheffers, Foremost's Joe Roberts, Foremost's OSV Farm (Costa Rica) Manager Jordan Arnott and Agnes Scheffers.

"This development is the result of many years of working with these dracaena varieties in the North American market," Erika Santa Correa, Foremost's Marketing Director, wrote to me. "Foremost has supplied and distributed Dragontree genetics to growers across the United States and Canada for many years, building a strong relationship founded on experience, trust and a shared commitment to the long-term success of these varieties."

The new exclusive European license gives Foremost the opportunity to carry that legacy forward into new markets and expand the presence of these established genetics across Europe. It represents a natural next step in a relationship that has grown steadily over time and reflects the

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confidence placed in Foremost to support the future of the Dragontree portfolio.



**Dracaena Lemon Surprise**

“This expanded role further strengthens our approach to the market and gives us additional resources and capabilities to continue supporting our customers as they grow,” wrote Foremost CEO Joe Roberts. “By combining proven genetics with Foremost’s experience in propagation, tropical plant production and supply chain management, we are well positioned to support greater consistency, availability and long-term opportunity for growers in both North America and Europe.”

According to news from Floral Daily, De Plaats owners Ruud and Agnes Scheffers recently announced that they are ceasing operations at the end of this year.

“I give a lot of credit to our Mary Corujo who spearheaded the project along with Ruud and Agnes, and also Lennard Van Vliet from Florali Licensing who worked closely with us to put everything together,” Joe continued. “We all had to move quickly to make sure we create a smooth transition for our customers!”



## **LiveTrends Accolades x 2**

I emailed congratulations (and a few questions) to [LiveTrends'](#) Founder and CEO, Bisser Georgiev, after I read on LinkedIn that he had been named a finalist for the Entrepreneur of the Year 2026 Florida Award by Ernst & Young LLP. And when he replied, I learned he wasn't just a finalist—had actually won!



This graphic should say "Florida Winner!"

Now in its 41st year, the Entrepreneur of the Year program celebrates the leaders who disrupt markets through the world's most ground-breaking companies, revolutionizing industries and uplifting communities. The program honors entrepreneurs whose innovations drive economic growth and help shape the future of business.

"The Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year for Florida was the biggest surprise," Bisser replied. "The process was extremely competitive: over 300 companies were nominated, with 30 finalists selected back in March. On June 12 the final winners were announced at a fancy gala reception in Miami: still can't believe we won."

Bisser said that the companies in that final round were "exceptional," some of them quite big, too. "I'm so happy that a huge company like EY still values culture, people growth and impact on the world."

Note Bisser said "the biggest surprise." That's because LiveTrends also received the Top Workplaces Culture Excellence Award this spring.

"We have been working on creating an exceptional place to work since day one (13 years ago)," Bisser explained to me. "Our culture model is not coincidental: it is rather intentional and well-designed. We always put our people's needs, aspirations and growth before anything else. Regardless, I'm very honored to receive this recognition. It confirms that we are on the right path."

But wait, there's more. In addition to the Top Workplaces culture recognition, LiveTrends also won the following categories:

- Leadership Award
- Purpose & Values Award
- Innovation Award
- Employee Appreciation Award
- Professional Development Award

I could say these accolades are impressive, but as Bisser himself said, this is the natural outcome of building a culture like the one they've created at LiveTrends.



## New Espoma Houseplant Mix

Selling houseplants at retail? Maybe you would like to offer a new houseplant soil mix to your customers. Espoma is introducing five new products for the 2027 season—including one for houseplants.



Espoma's new Houseplant Mix is a rich, lightweight organic soil blend enhanced with earthworm castings and mycorrhizae, available in a convenient 8-quart bag that helps retailers capitalize on continued consumer interest in indoor gardening.

Espoma also redesigned its website this year, bringing its consumer and dealer resource sites together under one domain at [Espoma.com](https://Espoma.com). The new platform gives dealers direct access to a dedicated [Dealer Portal](#) featuring marketing materials, product information, merchandising resources and account support in one convenient location.

Keep those new products coming, Espoma!



## My Tropical Summer Samples

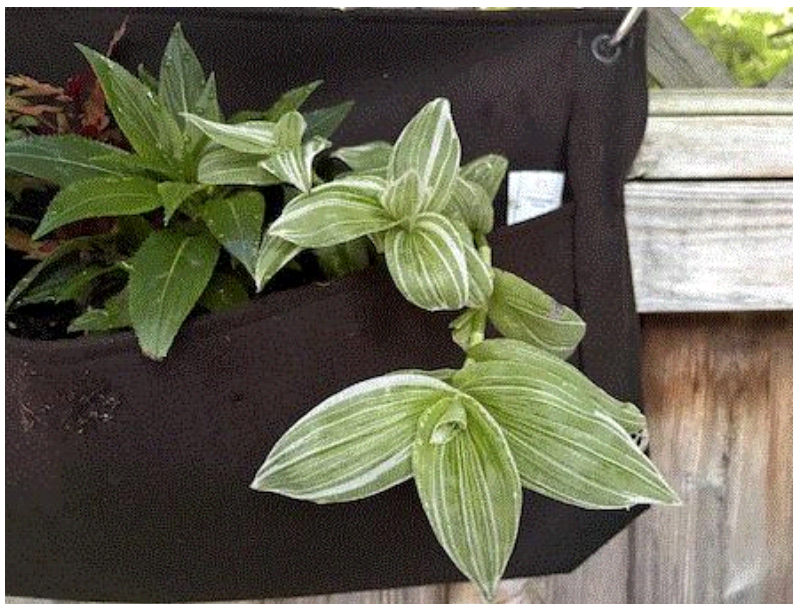
I am annually grateful for the new variety plant samples I receive each year, as I know my Ball Publishing colleagues are. We received a few plant samples that are appropriate to talk about in this space. Let me introduce you to them.

Suntory sent three new Sun Parasols—FiredUp Magic Pink, XP Maui Sunset and Original XP Pink. I've written about FiredUp Magic Pink and XP Maui Sunset in my TPIE coverage from [earlier this year](#) when they won a Cool Product Award. And I just now realize that the Original XP Pink was introduced last year and is essentially an improvement over the original Sun Parasol breeding of 20 years ago; i.e. the plants have more flowers, are earlier to flower, have superior branching, bigger and more flowers and brighter colors. I've planted all three together, so let's see how they do.



Honestly, I'm not sure which variety is which at this time.

Both colleague Jen Polanz and I received a new (or at least newer) tradescantia called Sanna in the Dümmer Orange sample box. It's part of Dümmer's Welcome to the Jungle collection of houseplants (also appropriate as container filler items, as you see I am doing with mine).



Says Jen about Sanna, "Mine is doing OK, and I always have terrible luck with Tradescantia." Mine is doing well, too, and I really like the larger leaves on this variety.

I'll keep you posted on how they do this summer.

## Email Oops!

In the last *Tropical Topics*, I told you about Justin Hancock's new book, "The New Complete Guide to Houseplants." I misspelled the last name of the contact for wholesale pre-orders. My bad! The correct email address is [Lauren.Flors@quarto.com](mailto:Lauren.Flors@quarto.com).

Thanks to all who wrote in to let me know and my apologies!

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions for content, email me about them at [ewells@ballpublishing.com](mailto:ewells@ballpublishing.com).



**Ellen Wells**  
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