

Egon Molbak, suggestions for Cultivate, PanAmerican's awards and on your radar

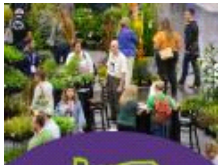


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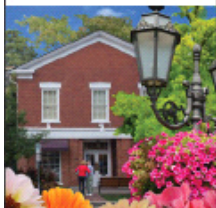
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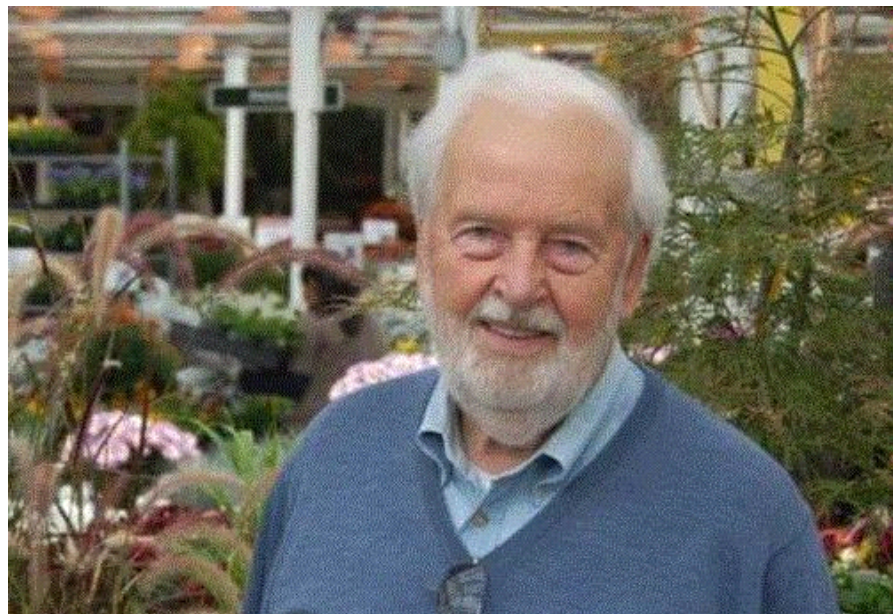
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In Memoriam: Egon Molbak

Bossman Chris Beytes wrote a lovely tribute to a titan of the IGCs, Egon Molbak, and I'll share that with you today.

We lost the garden center that bore his name a couple of years ago, and now the man himself is gone: Egon Molbak, founder with his wife, Laina, of Molbak's Garden + Home in Woodinville, Washington. Egon passed away June 22 at the venerable old age of 100 after a long and influential career in the garden center business. That business, founded in 1956, went on to become one of the most important independent garden centers in the world.





As his obituary stated, “His life was a testament to vision, hard work, generosity, and a deep appreciation for the beauty and wonder of nature.

Born in Denmark, Egon first came to the U.S. in 1948. He returned to Denmark to marry Laina in 1950, and they immigrated to the United States immediately after. In 1956, they bought five little glass greenhouses in Woodinville, a rural area on the east side of Seattle, where they began a small flower-growing operation. Through decades of dedication, innovation and effort, they transformed that modest nursery into Molbak’s Garden + Home, one of the most respected and beloved garden centers in the country, hosting more than a million visitors each year.

Egon’s influence reached far beyond Woodinville. In addition to local awards, he was recognized with numerous national and international honors. In 1990, he was inducted into the Floriculture Hall of Fame by the Society of American Florists, one of the industry’s highest distinctions.

I met Egon a few times over the years and visited Molbak’s several times, but the most memorable was with my wife, Laurie, when we were given a personal tour of the business from the great man himself. During our walk, Egon mentioned that he liked a garden center that encouraged you to just “poke around.” Laurie was thrilled to hear him say that—she uses that exact same term herself to describe the fun of exploring a well-laid-out garden center. We call it “poke-around factor” and Molbak’s had it in spades.

Rest in peace, my friend!

Thank you for that, Chris.



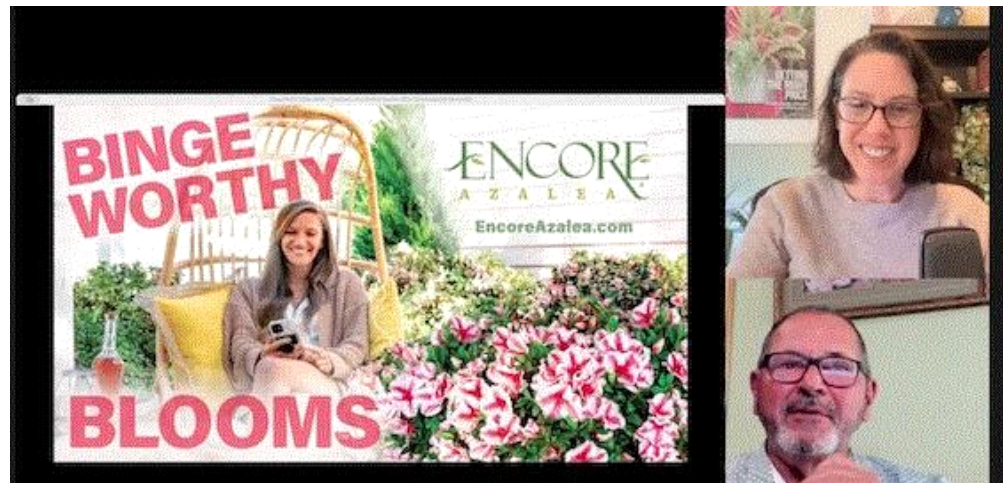
Suggestions for Cultivate

Many of you, like myself, are preparing for Cultivate’26 starting in just ... well, soon! These next few items are all Cultivate-related. But even if you are not attending the must-attend horticulture industry event, this information is still totally relevant.

Such as?

For instance, Plant Development Services Inc. (PDSI), who will be exhibiting in booth #2725, has been featured in two Trending Now videos in recent issues of *Green Profit*. Hosted by colleague extraordinaire Jen Polanz, these videos go into depth on two new PDSI intros.

This one is all about the new **Encore Autumn Kiss azaleas** with the breeder of these rebloomers himself, Buddy Lee.



And this video is all about aspidistra, specifically the new variety **Tokyo Skies**, with PDSI's Director of Marketing Corrina Stellitano Andrews.

Tokyo Skies

CAST IRON PLANT

Aspidistra elatior 'Itaku No 1' PDSI

Hardy to USDA zones 8-10

2-3' H x 1-2' W

- Houseplant or Landscape!
- Water-wise, "tough as nails" perennial for partial to full shade areas.
- Satisfies consumer demand for visually dynamic shade plantings.

Plant Development
PDSI

Southern Living
PLANT COLLECTION

Sunset
PLANT COLLECTION



When you walk into their booth at the show, just tell them, "Hey, I saw those videos you did with *Green Profit* and wanted to see them for myself."

Watch for Green Vests

On the Tuesday of Cultivate, you'll be seeing several dozen folks—probably on the younger side—walking the show floor. Those will be student and teacher participants of the second annual **Seed Your Future** Career Day. They will be knee-deep in getting familiar with what this horticulture industry is all about. And, they could potentially be your future employees—or even employers!

If you see them walking around, say hi, welcome them to the friendliest industry out there and reassure them that they are indeed making an excellent career choice.



SYF Career Day participants at Cultivate'25—green shirts, not vests that year.

Speaking of Seed Your Future, the organization that helps promote our industry as a career, their recent Seed to STEM immersive event brought together 30 high school horticulture, floral design and floral business educators, along with four peer mentors to spend four days immersed in the industry at five incredible sites: Longwood Gardens, Lucas Greenhouse, Overdevest Nurseries, DVFlora and North Creek Nurseries.

Events like these are truly transformative. The teachers described arriving with a narrow view of horticulture and leaving with an entirely new understanding of the industry and a renewed commitment to share our careers with their students. They left seeing an entire world of careers spanning technology, sustainability, business, research and environmental solutions. The great news is that with this new insight into the industry, they will all be bringing that expanded vision directly to their students.

As Seed Your Future reminds us, one educator can reach hundreds of students a year. And the price to bring just one to an event such as Seed to STEM is in the thousands. Help make Seed to STEM 2027 happen by [donating to Seed Your Future](#) today.



IDYS & RCA Opportunities

For those of you definitely attending Cultivate'26, here are two opportunities just calling your name:

- My [I Dig Your Story](#) podcast mics will be hot and ready to record you! I'll be camping out in the AmericanHort "parklet" across from the Dramm booth from 4-5 p.m. on Sunday and Monday. Come share a 2-minute story about how your passion for plants led to a career in horticulture. I'll compile them all into one sure-to-be-fun future episode. By the way, if you haven't caught the latest episode with ecological horticulturist Kelly Norris, you're

missing out on a really important shift in how consumers and commercial enterprises are now considering their landscapes. Listen to it [HERE](#).

- Be a Retailers' Choice Awards judge! Danny Summers of The Garden Center Group could use a few more retailers like yourself to walk the show floor on Sunday, then gather to share your finds that evening and determine which dozen or so products you would collectively offer or use at your own store. And as Danny is fond of saying, as judging participant, you get to see what everyone else discovered that you may have missed. It's really a win-win for you and your store. Get yourself on the judging list by signing up [HERE](#).

Heliopsis 'Forged in Fire'
New to Proven Winners
Perennials for 2026-2027!



New AAS Winners

I've just confirmed that the first three new [All-America Selections](#) Winners for 2027 will be on display at Cultivate. You can head over to the AAS Display in the New Varieties Zone to check out all three, which as it happens are all from a single breeding company, [PanAmerican Seed](#).

The newest AAS Winners for 2027 are:

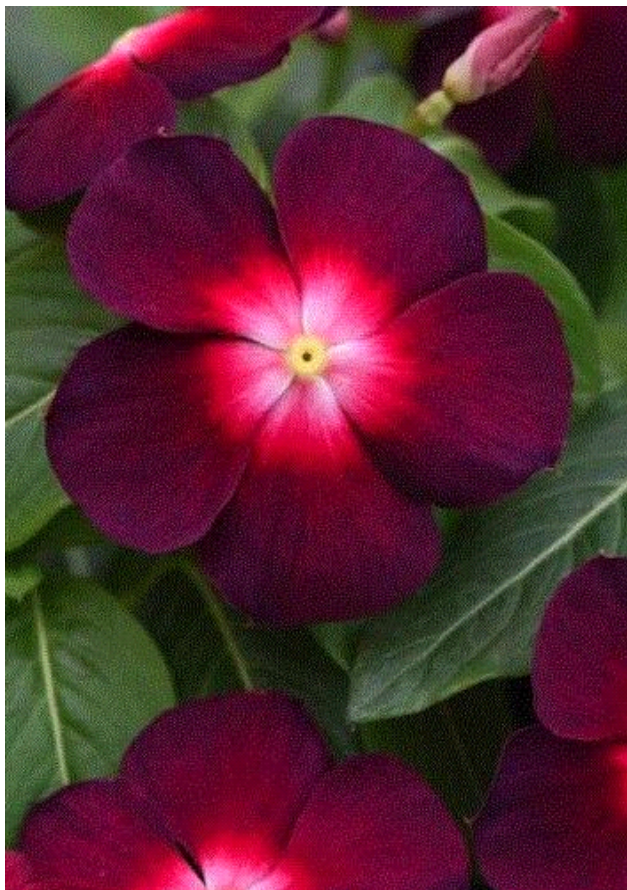
Impatiens Solarscape XL Red Glow, National Winner, seed. This impatiens thrives in full sun and shade tolerance. The "XL" varieties are 20% larger than the standard Solarscape varieties, and the color on this one is outstanding with its iridescent red blooms and a glowing violet center. How tropical!



Sunflower Always Sunny Gold F1, National Winner, seed. Standing at about 5 ft. tall, Always Sunny Gold's velvet-gold petals surround a 100% pollen free, deep-chocolate center. While it won't drop yellow dust indoors, it still produces plenty of sweet nectar to keep local bees happy. Because this variety is naturally well-branched, no pinching is required to get multiple blooms.



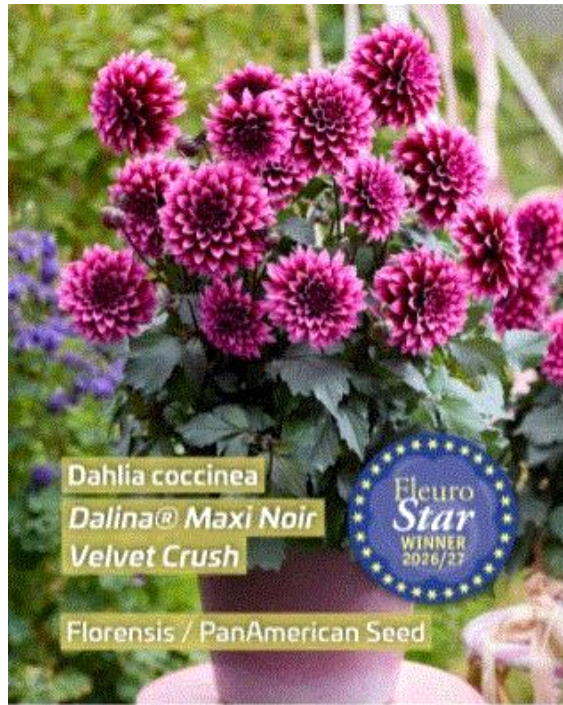
Vinca Tattoo Boysenberry F1, National Winner, seed. Each bloom features moody, velvety dark purple red ombre petals with boysenberry-colored brushstrokes that look airbrushed on, delivering a striking, modern aesthetic. This resilient plant thrives in full sun and stands up exceptionally well to heat and drought.



As always, all AAS Winners are marketed through social media, public relations and trade shows and are grown in AAS Display and Introduction Gardens across North America. They are definitely getting the word out about these winners.

The Awards Continue

PanAmerican Seed, please remain standing to accept the 2026-2027 FleuroStar Award for Dahlia Dalina Maxi Noir Velvet Crush, which was commercialized in partnership with Florensis. Presented by Fleuroselect, Dalina Maxi Noir Velvet Crush “crushed” the awards competition during the European Flower Trials. And you can see why—it’s gorgeous!



The variety combines near-black leaves with large (4-5 in.) double flowers in rich velvet-purple shades. It's quite floriferous and continues flowering for long periods, making it an excellent item for both retail sales and for a satisfying consumer experience. Use it wherever—gardens, containers, patios—it'll look stunning everywhere it's placed.

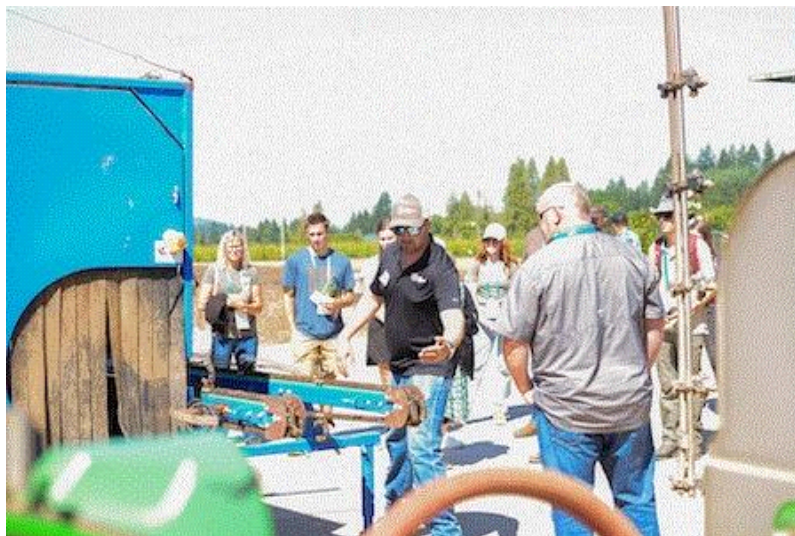
Okay, PanAmerican, you can now sit down (at least until the RCA judges are finished).



Put These Two On Your Radar

There are so many events coming up, it could make your head spin. I wanted to put two on your radar now, with the right to include more in the coming weeks.

If you're going to Farwest, get yourself on a bus tour! By all accounts, the weather in Oregon is delightful during the last week in August, and a tour of the countryside and its various nurseries would be a great way to experience it.



They'll have three tours taking place on Tuesday, August 25, the day before the show opens. Choose from three different tours:

Wholesale Grower Tour of four wholesale nurseries— Buchholz & Buchholz Nursery, Eshraghi Nurseries, Gold Family Farms, and Krueger's Tree Farm & Nursery—to explore every stage of production.

Propagation Tour of Alpha Nursery, Fessler Nursery Co., Microplant Nurseries, and Youngblood Nursery to discover the art and science behind successful plant production.

Automation Tour of Kuenzi Turf & Nursery, Oregon Flowers, Oregon Pride Nurseries, Smith Gardens, and Wurdinger Manufacturing to explore how today's leading nurseries are using automation to improve efficiency, sustainability and profitability.

To learn more and register for the nursery tours, visit FarwestShow.com/Tours.

And the Second

If you feel like taking a relatively last-minute trip to Europe, I believe the International Garden Centre Association annual Congress still has registration opportunities. This year's tour will be based in Munich, Germany, August 16-22. You can check out the itinerary [HERE](#). It all looks staggeringly Teutonic!



Maybe they've had these options in the past, but I'm intrigued that they have three different participation levels for which you can register—the Interactive Tour, a guided experience where you're expected and encouraged to join conversations and so forth, the Non-Interactive Experience which is a more relaxed and informal experience, and the Next Generation Tour for folks 18-40 years of age that is designed to be a learning experience.

If you ask IGCA Congress frequent flyer Bossman Beytes, these tours are well-planned, highly professional and a ton of fun. You deserve a working vacation, don't you?

Espoma Correction

A small correction, but details matter when it comes to fertilizers and amendments. Espoma's new a smaller 6.75 lb. size fertilizer covers up to 675 sq. ft., not 700 sq. ft. as I mentioned.

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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