

Seed Your Future, Digging for Dopamine, Flower Trials & More



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Seed Your Future
Testimonials
Digging for Dopamine
CSU Flower Trials
TPIE Registration Open
MANTS Registration Open
PDSI's New Hydrangea



Seed Your Future Testimonials

A couple months ago, I shared a promotion from Seed Your Future, an organization that's dedicated to promoting horticulture and inspiring people of all ages to turn their horticultural passion into a fulfilling career. They've been sharing videos from horticultural leaders in a series called "Seed Your Future Powered By You." These are fantastic testimonials from so many well-respected leaders, highlighting how they got into their careers and how Seed Your Future can support the future of our industry. Each video is just a couple minutes long and is well worth the watch.

If you have a few minutes you might want to check out these videos:

- **Mari Carrasquillo**, VP of Marketing at Costa Farms
- **Andrew Levi**, Founder and CEO of PlantTAGG
- **Anna Ball**, CEO of Ball Horticultural Company
- **Paul Redman**, President and CEO of Longwood Gardens
- **Julie Caulfield**, Director of Business Operations at BioWorks
- **Aubry Field**, Co-Founder and Lead Scientist at Lizzy Blossom
- **Mark Broxon**, CEO of Proven Winners
- **Chris Drummond**, President of Penny's by Plaza Flowers
- **Kay Chubbuck**, VP for Engagement and Learning at Longwood Gardens
- **Dr. Leonardo Lombardini**, Head of the Horticulture Department at UGA
- **Jake Scott**, General Manager of Piedmont Feed & Garden Center
- **Makenzie Pellissier**, Intellectual Property Manager at Proven Winners
- **Dr. Jon Mahoney**, Cell Biology Scientist at Ball Horticultural Company
- **Dr. John Dole**, Professor at North Carolina State University Department of Horticultural Science
- **Ajay Nair and Barbara Clawson** of Iowa State University
- **Alyson Upshaw**, Social Media Manager at Ball Horticultural Company
- **Lisa Nason**, Senior Director of Marketing and E-Commerce at Kennicott Brothers



Digging for Dopamine

Every year, the Garden Media Group gathers information on the latest trends in gardening and puts together a Garden Trends Report. This is really fun stuff that they're able to pick up on, but even more importantly, they're diagnosing what consumers are thinking. These reports can help align sales and help growers hedge their bets, so to speak. Farming is forecasting and trend reports make that forecasting a bit easier.



This year's theme is Diggin for Dopamine and what an interesting insight! From their perspective, the public have been overstimulated—and I fully agree. This constant technology and phone interaction leads to what neuroscientists call dopamine burnout. Something I can relate to, as I've been feeling more like going outside and just staring at the sky like we used to do. Although, maybe that's because the weather dipped below 80F in Florida for the first time in months! Luckily, it seems the correction is underway for the populus!

Resetting is a big theme for this year, as people are predicted to retreat from screens and back to gardens, neighbors and each other. What a great concept. Instant access and nonstop connectivity has dulled the world, so why not unplug? Its like mowing the lawn—it sounds like a chore, but its one of my favorite things to do. Working in the yard or landscape just makes you feel good, and that's this year's Garden Trial Report prediction. We've long known that plants and gardening can be therapeutic; maybe this is the answer to shaking the fact that AI and technology is slowly coming to take over the world (just kidding ... or not).

The guide isn't just about resetting and getting back to the garden. There's a bunch of other

information that can be useful, like the rise of hot sauce into cult status and how to bring that into marketing. Also, about Ancient Blue—their color of the year. (Now if they can only find a way to pair the blue with a nice orange you'll really have my attention.) The guide is great and full of information. I've only cherry picked a few parts. Download it for yourself [HERE](#).



THE MOST AWARD-WINNING PLANT BRAND™



CSU Flower Trials

You probably realize just how much effort goes into developing new plant material, but you might not realize just how much time and work goes into evaluating them and making sure they're ready for the big time. Trial gardens around the country (and world to be more accurate) organize evaluations every year to test which new plant material will make it in their respective climates and locations.

I can attest that we get a lot of amazing plants each year (some stinkers, too, but I'm not prepared to touch that) and, unfortunately, not all of them are going to make it. Countless amazing plant varieties are lost, not because they don't make it, but we can only support so many plants. That's why these regional trials are important; they ensure that the best material for each location makes it through. That's also why it's fun when we get to see annual winners. These are plants that outperform even the best new varieties on or potentially coming to market.

Dr. Chad Miller runs the Colorado State University Annual Trials and just released a long list of their winners. You can find more information about their trials and winners from previous years [HERE](#), but I thought I would share the top three from CSU's trials this season and what Chad had to say about them.

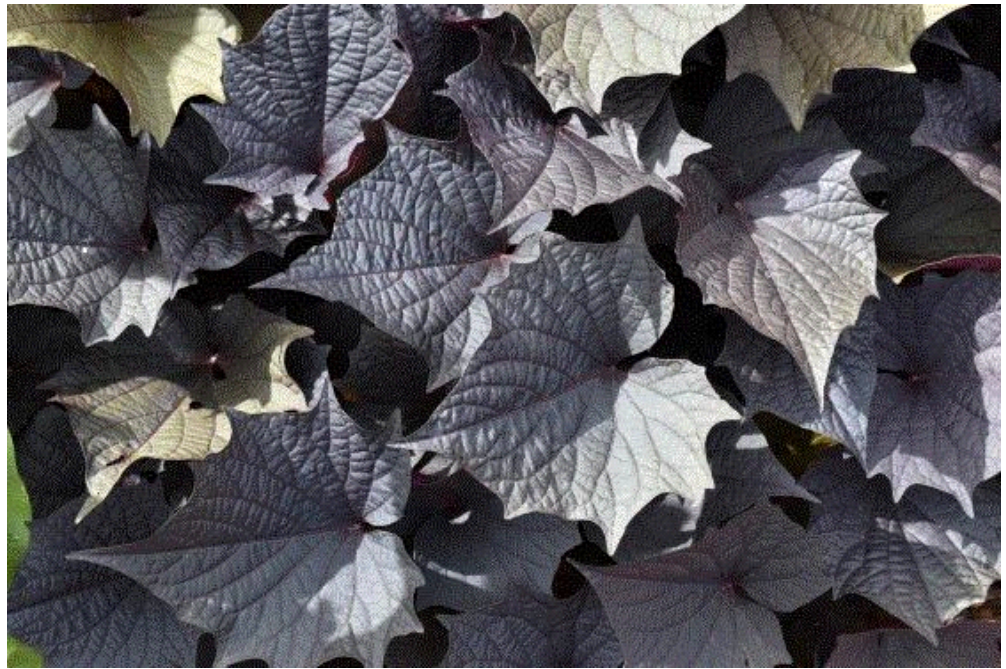
BEST OF SHOW

Terrascape Midnight Majesty Coleus (Kientzler): Such a fitting name. A magnificent plant that gets to claim the Best of the Best in 2026 at the CSU Trial gardens! This coleus definitely has a high SPF rating. With the scorcher of a summer like we had, it showed it can take the hot, beating sun—with no signs of fading or burning. The strong, uniform stems sport dark red-burgundy foliage with iridescent black overtones. Definitely consider this garden favorite for your landscape or container plantings!



BEST NEW VARIETY

Bewitched After Midnight II Ornamental Sweet Potato (Proven Winners): This ornamental sweet potato isn't your ordinary ornamental sweet potato. The deep, dark purple-black foliage had no problem with the intense summer light and heat—no crispy edges to be found on these coarsely serrated and lobed leaves. A vigorous, but tame, ornamental sweet potato that can be used in mixed containers, for landscape borders or massing to use as a groundcover. The magical, bewitching dark foliage will surely last into the late summer and fall, making a great fall display leading right into Halloween!



BEST NOVELTY

Kanga Cherry Anigozanthos (Greenfuse Botanicals): Fuzzy. Unique. Cool. Weird! All things overheard when folks spot this unique plant in the landscape. This Kanga Cherry kangaroo paw put on a colorful show of cherry-red flowers all season, with each individual tubular flower and scape boasting for weeks on end. This Australian native loves, loves, loves the heat, and with the summer we had, did wonderfully! And it does just fine with drier conditions and has few to no pest problems. Definitely one to check out.





TPIE Registration Opens

Now that most of the green industry shows are done for the year and we can get back to business, it's already time to start preparing for 2027. As we welcome the new year in January and most of us are hunkering down for the winter, it's always nice to go somewhere with some sun. Why not make plans to come down to sunny Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and visit one of the most exciting and unique plant conferences out there?

The Tropical Plant International Expo (TPIE) is one of the most beautiful and breathtaking shows you'll ever set see. The plant material that you can find there don't look like anything else in the country (I'm serious). This show boasts the most unique plant pallet and has attendees from all over the world looking for what's next with tropicals, foliage and interior plants.

They also boast a nice education session, which yours truly will be joining. I won't share the details yet, but you can be sure there's going to be some high-quality substrate science going on this year.

Registration is now open, so you can start making plans to go January 20-22, 2027. The show is hosted by the Florida Nursery Growers & Landscape Association (FNGLA) and has been going

on for more than 50 years! If you want to break the winter lulls—especially folks that will be buried in snow—come down and join us. Visit [TPIE.org](https://www.tpie.org) for more information.

MANTS Registration Open

While you're registering for TPIE, you'll need to jump over and sign up for the Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show (MANTS). Taking place January 13 – 15, 2027 in Baltimore, Maryland, MANTS is one of the biggest and well-attended nursery shows in the country. Last year, MANTS sold out their floor and expect to do so again. Thousands of people ascend on the Baltimore Convention Center for three days of sourcing, networking and building orders.

Known as the Masterpiece of Trade Shows, MANTS is a business-first show where attendees connect directly with suppliers and see new products and innovations. No time for education at this one—it's all about moving your bottom line and getting your business jump-started in the new year.

Registration is now open for the show and hotel blocks are open for 10 downtown hotels within walking distance of the show. Did I mention it's cheap to get in? Only \$20 if you register now. You can't even get a meal for \$20 anymore—what a great deal! The show is sponsored by State Nursery and Landscape Associations of Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia. You can find more information at [MANTS.com](https://www.mants.com).

Now that I think of it, a MANTS to TPIE trip sounds like a lot of fun ...

PDSI Welcomes Two New Hydrangea Brands

Plant Development Services, Inc. (PDSI) is bringing two new hydrangea brands into their portfolio to offer North American gardeners more choices. Already one of the most popular taxa in American landscapes, hydrangeas are known for their prolific blooms, unique colors and overall just a fun plant that pops in any garden. *Hydrangea paniculata* in particular has been a mainstay in most gardens and is quite adaptable, thriving from the Southeastern U.S. to the Pacific Northwest and everywhere in between.

Groundbreaker and Living Creations Hydrangea will be joining the program with sales ready for 2027. These aren't just a few new hydrangea for the garden—these are entire brands coming to PDSI with a substantial increase in varieties they're offering.

Groundbreaker will introduce three new varieties over the next two years, including Blush, Ruby (pictured below) and Greeny. All three bloom during the summer, providing lasting and prolific color. You can probably guess the bloom colors from the names.



Living Creations has 14 different *Hydrangea paniculata* offerings joining the brand. These have bold colors atop strong stems and bloom for 100 days with great winter resilience. Living Candy Love (pictured below) and Living Little Apple are just a couple of the exciting new varieties to check out.



You can find all the new releases [HERE](#).

Think big,



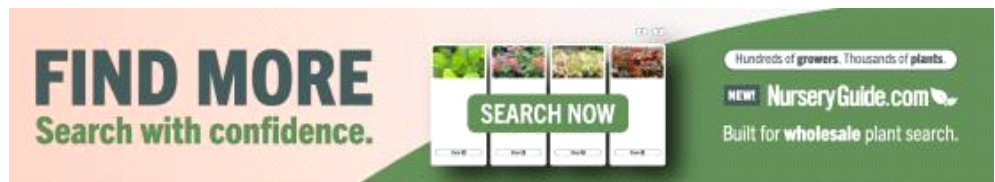
Jeb Fields

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