

Style, cash, combos and can't-miss conferences



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2018

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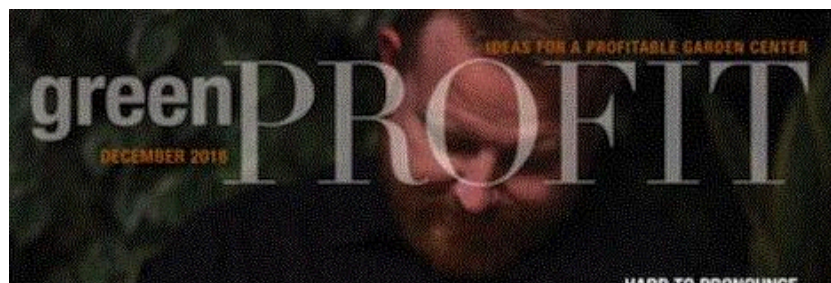
COMING UP THIS WEEK:

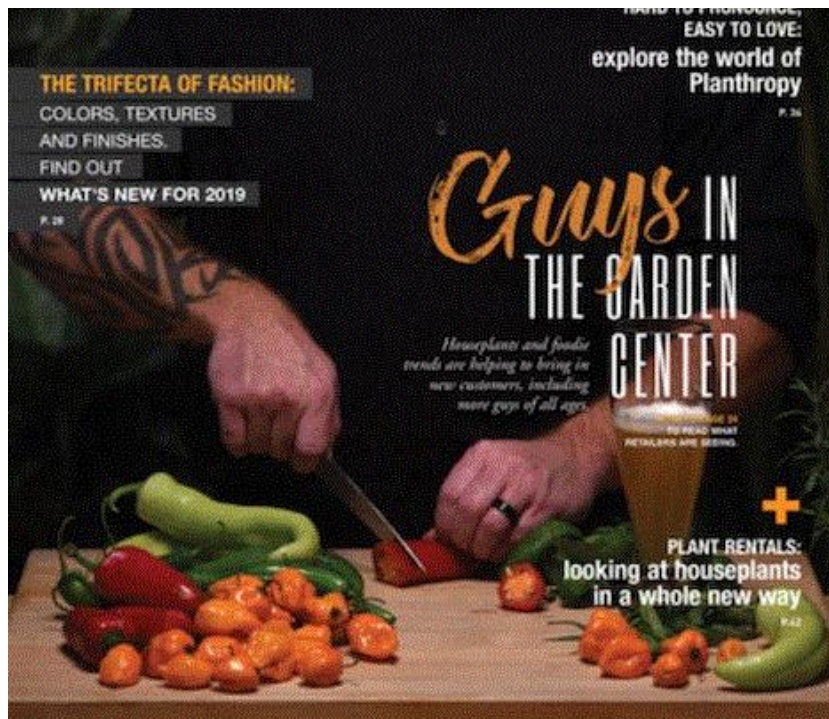
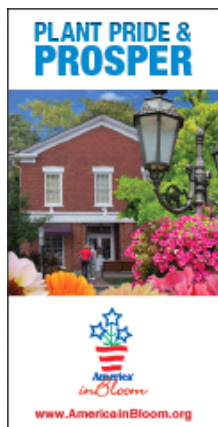
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Who Says We're Not Stylish?

The December issue of *Green Profit* proves it! Again! For the fifth year in a row, the staff has pulled together what has become our yearly capstone project, where all the content centers around fashion, style, colors, textures, trends and, most importantly, how it all pertains to plants.





In last week's *Tropical Topics* e-newsletter I told you guys about my "Trifecta of Fashion" article, where I presented the latest trends in color, texture and finishes. My friend Bisser Georgiev of LiveTrends was a big help in pulling that together. LiveTrends has scrapped its traditional demographic marketing plan and is focusing on product development based on Trendwatching's "Tribefactoring" concept. They're what? Read about what that means [HERE](#) (scroll to page 28).

Hey, have you noticed an uptick in guys shopping at your garden center? Well, your peers have, and they've taken note of what those guys are putting into their carts. Jennifer Polanz tells you all about it in her article, "Guys In the Garden Center" (page 24).

JP (as we affectionately call her among the Ball Publishing staff) also introduces you to your latest competition. No, it's not an online megastore that is open 24/7. It's called Planthropy, and they are putting a new and approachable spin on green walls. It's "mosstacular."

And there is a ton of other great stuff in the issue, including all the stuff your favorite editors loved this year (page 32). Tell me what you think of our picks and then tell me what your fave stuff is and why it's better. Drop me a line about it at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

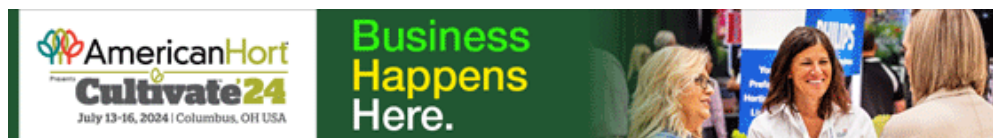


Cold Holiday Cash

A survey commissioned by Spherion Staffing Services said what seems obvious to anyone: The top holiday perk for employees is a holiday bonus. In fact, 41% of the 1,000 folks surveyed said cash was king for this time of year. But it turns out that for 46% of respondents, their company doesn't give any sort of monetary gifts for the holidays. The second most popular perk was a holiday party, coming in far behind cash at 36%. The rest of the list shakes out like this:

- Extra time off: 28%
- Holiday bonus: 26%
- Office closure between Christmas and New Year's Day: 22%
- Company-paid holiday meal: 18%
- Employee gift exchange: 18%

The survey also found that 52% of respondents described the workplace environment around the holidays as "business as usual," while 36% said the company was "generous." Speaking of generous, 46% of survey takers said their employers encouraged a "charitable environment" this time of year. Those activities include food/clothing/toy drives and volunteer events.



Walmart Going Mobile

Are you still radioing the back lot or the front checkout to see if particular perennial just requested by a customer is in stock? If so, get with the times! **Walmart has.**

Walmart's year-long commitment to making "mobile" an integral part of the in-store experience has led to a number of nifty apps and associate options for assisting the customer. For instance, they've given their employees cellular devices and Bluetooth printers in order to check out customers in their garden centers rather than requiring them to come back into the store to pay.

Nifty, huh? Well, it gets niftier. The latest app in Walmart's employees' hands allows them to order out-of-stock products for customers on the spot for later delivery in-store or at the customer's home. The app also lets customers pay with whatever payment option they wish—including cash or check.

Mobile technology is a part of our everyday life. Is your store headed in the mobile-friendly direction?



Syngenta's IDM-Resistant Impatiens

This news from Chris Beytes' Acres Online is just as important for retailers as it is for growers.

It's called **Imara XDR**, and it will be the first impatiens downy mildew-resistant impatiens to get a full launch into the U.S. market, at Syngenta's California Spring Trials exhibit next March.

Imara XDR will be competing with PanAmerican Seed's Beacon impatiens, which is getting a soft launch in 2019 and a full launch in 2020.

I got the details on Imara XDR from Scott Valentine, Syngenta's top guy in the Flowers division, whom I'd emailed after hearing continued rumors about a Beacon competitor.

Scott confirmed the news above, adding that they launched it in Europe this past spring for the UK (which was very hard hit by IDM). "We have full commercial production of seed in the bag—the product is ready to go!" he stated.

As for where the name "Imara" comes from? It's Swahili for "strength and resilience," he says.

Knowing I'd have some more hard-hitting technical questions to ask, Scott turned me over to the California-based Olivia Sellards, Syngenta's effervescent Customer Marketing Manager, who employed the classic surfer term "stoked" to describe Syngenta's enthusiasm for their new product.

First, a couple of definitions: XDR means "extra disease resistance" and will be attached to one additional crop this spring. To be labeled XDR, the genetics must be proven to be resistant to whatever disease they are labeling it for, as verified through rigorous testing in multiple settings and situations. And the disease resistance has to be independently verified by third-party experts.

Second, how is Syngenta classifying Imara XDR's resistance abilities? PanAmerican Seed is saying Beacon impatiens has "high resistance" to IDM based upon a technical designation approved by the International Seed Federation (ISF).

Olivia also used the term "highly resistant," but didn't go so far as to reference ISF. She did say that Cornell pathologist Margery Daughtrey, one of the independent testers, has classified Imara that way. Via email, Margery confirmed that, writing:

"I am comfortable with calling the Imara XDR impatiens 'highly resistant' because not only were the symptoms and signs measurably (statistically) lower than those of the highly susceptible plants they were compared to, but the plants also looked good to the naked eye rather than collapsing from downy mildew."

Margery said she made quality ratings weekly on Imara XDR impatiens exposed to downy mildew; they maintained their foliage and flowers throughout two replicated trials in which susceptible "control" cultivars defoliated and melted away. She says she made sure that the disease pressure was high by putting infected plants into the area to provide airborne inoculum, supplying overhead irrigation twice a day and giving plants 50% shade to provide conditions favorable to disease development.

What do you think, retailers? Are consumers jonesing for impatiens? Or have they learned to live with an alternative? Or perhaps they've become okay with regular ol' impatiens lasting just a few months. Weigh in with your thoughts [HERE](#).



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As Goes Grocery

I believe that as goes the grocery category, so goes garden retail. So, let's pay attention to a recent survey from McKinsey & Company of 23,000 European shoppers of the quality of fresh fruits and veggies.

The survey result I found most interesting was that quality was the biggest factor in whether or not a customer would be willing to recommend a store's fresh produce department to others. And it was the biggest factor by quite a lot! Check out this table.

Average derived importance of each attribute for customer satisfaction in fruit-and-vegetable department¹

Attributes	Overall	France	Germany	Switzerland	United Kingdom
Offers high-quality products	0.72	0.73	0.72	0.74	0.69
Is an enjoyable place to shop	0.54	0.57	0.54	0.54	0.53
Sells products that stay fresh long after purchase	0.54	0.54	0.56	0.54	0.51
Has appealing shelves, products well presented	0.52	0.56	0.53	0.52	0.48
Offers a wide range of products	0.52	0.55	0.52	0.55	0.49
Offers a good price-to-quality ratio	0.50	0.56	0.46	0.41	0.49
Sells products that have been produced sustainably	0.49	0.55	0.47	0.49	0.45
Offers appealing in-store promotions	0.48	0.49	0.49	0.44	0.44
Has the lowest prices for all products every day	0.39	0.46	0.36	0.28	0.35

¹Derived importance is the correlation of attribute and the retailer's customer-satisfaction score.

McKinsey&Company | Source: McKinsey's European Retail Benchmark on Fresh Quality, July 2017

Notice how far down price and promotions are on the list of important factors. The article goes on to say, "This is good news for grocery retailers. Quality improvements in fruits and vegetables require less investment and yield higher returns than retail-price reductions. In our experience, quality-improvement programs in a fresh-produce department can increase the department's sales by more than 10% year on year, even in a flat market." It goes on to say that these improvements lead to more customer traffic and higher sales in other departments, too.

What does this mean for garden retailers? Strive to keep your benches and nursery yard stocked with the freshest, best-looking plants possible. Don't rely on price and promotion alone.

The [ARTICLE](#) goes into some further detail about key quality items, or KQIs, that you might find interesting. I suggest you read it to determine what your own KQIs might be.

SNA Conference

If you're headed to Baltimore, Maryland, for the annual MANTS show (January 9-11), arrive a few days early and attend the SNA Conference, taking place at the Baltimore Convention Center January 7-8.

As you know, MANTS doesn't have educational sessions during the show, so the SNA Conference can be your source of the latest hort industry information. The SNA Plant Conference will reveal some of the newest varieties to hit the market as well as how to grow them, while the SNA Research Conference will update you on some of the latest horticultural research projects. You'll also have the opportunity to hear several keynotes and take part in roundtable discussions. See the full list of speakers and register for the SNA Conference [HERE](#). And with all of that education and knowledge under your belt, stick around for [MANTS](#).

TPIE Is Coming!

And according to my calendar, it's coming fast, at just five weeks away. Happening January 16-18 at the Broward County Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, this is the must-attend event for anyone who wants to get the latest trends and ideas coming out of the world of houseplants, foliage and tropicals.

What I like about TPIE (other than predictably warm weather) is that the show covers more than just the latest plants and products for our businesses. Yes, those are important to see, but it's also important to learn about what's behind the purchasing decisions that our end consumers are making. To that end, the TPIE organizers (those would be the folks at FNGLA) go to great lengths to bring in speakers who can reveal what's going on behind the scenes and explore what is driving the trends. This year's featured speaker is international trend analyst Christine Boland, who is coming back for a third keynote engagement to revisit and update the ever-changing landscape of consumer insights. Christine blends her backgrounds in psychology and fashion into explanations as to why consumers are attracted to certain styles, designs and products. Join Christine for her Principles of Progress keynote Wednesday, January 16, at 9 a.m.



Register for TPIE 2019 at www.tpie.org. And you should probably book your hotel while you're at it.

What's Up at The Western

We can't let the East Coast have all the winter horticultural fun, can we? The very center of the country has opportunities, too. The Western Show, presented by the Western Nursery & Landscape Association, takes place January 16-18 in Kansas City, Missouri. As always, show organizers have a lot planned. Here are two events that you might be interested in:

Lunch & Workshop for Garden Center Owners & Managers. "The Sheridan Nurseries' Retail Way to Success" is an afternoon-long event presented by Art Vanden Enden, Vice President Garden Centre Operation. It's a ticketed event the day before the show starts, so be sure to grab your space beforehand.

Fashion Show of New Plants. Just what it sounds like! New plants on parade down the runway for your viewing pleasure! Join the ogling crowd on Thursday afternoon.

"Green Industry Recruiting: Attract, Grow, & Keep the Right Employees." Presented by Leslie Halleck of Halleck Horticultural, this presentation is offered right as you ramp up for the spring growing and sales season. Perfect timing!

There are a whole lot of other good events, presentations and discussions scheduled, too. Check them out and then register [HERE](#). That's where you can also see the 20 plants that will be in the fashion show. Go ahead and take a peek!

Speaking of Fashion ...

What are your opinions on offering seasonal combination switch-out options? These could be anything from those pre-planted drop-in pots to offering a do-it-for-me replacement service. Is it a moneymaker for you? Have you tried it and found it not worth your time? Were there considerations about the combo switch-outs that you hadn't anticipated?

Why, yes, I do happen to be working on an article concerning this topic—and I'd greatly appreciate your help in pulling it together. If you have any experience on the topic, I'd love to hear from you. Drop me a line [HERE](#).

Comments, questions or suggestions? Email me at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



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

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