

JP on IGC, plus tariff talk and new things to do with evergreens



THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2019

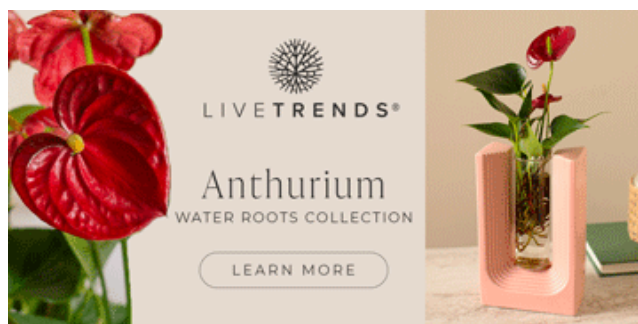
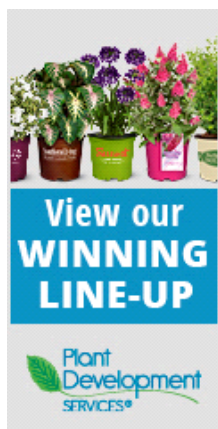
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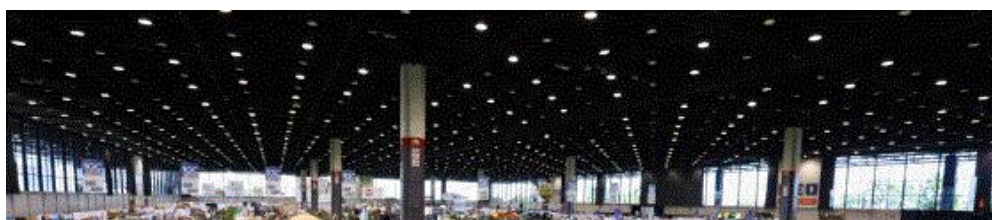
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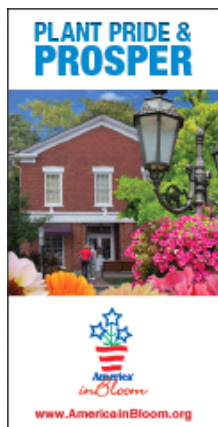
Finally II ...



The New Digs

I'm pretty sure Jeff Morey, the IGC Show's founder, is feeling pretty proud right about now. Moving a well-established trade show from one known venue—where the organizers and the attendees know what to expect and feel a comfort even in the things that don't work—to a completely new place is risky! But by all accounts, the vendors and attendees were happy with the move. Why? More space and more natural light to see all the products.





Jeff was able to grab a few testimonials from folks and he shared them this week. A central theme emerged from them: Everything is now in one spot. The products, the classes, the networking—all of it in close proximity created an energy that hadn't been apparent at Navy Pier. And because everything was way more accessible with the increased square footage and all-in-one floor plan, the high-energy atmosphere helped create standing-room-only crowds at this year's Continuing Education @ IGC series.

In fact, this year's event and new venue went so well that Jeff and the folks behind the scenes of the IGC Show are pumped to do it again next year. Put August 11-13, 2020, on your calendar!



IGC Hits & Highlights

Colleague Jen Polanz was at IGC Show and can attest to the vibrancy the new space allowed. Here are a few thoughts she'd like to share with Buzz readers.

Coming off a trade show like IGC Show in Chicago, I always like to give it a day or two and let the dust settle to really think about what stood out. Of course, with hundreds of vendors there's always something for everyone. And this year's move to McCormick Place allowed for all exhibitors and even the educational seminars to be on the same floor in one place, which made it easier to navigate. Having double the square footage vs. Navy Pier's location didn't hurt either, along with lots of natural light, making it an inviting environment.

Product-wise, there were a couple of standouts for me (and you'll see these and many more in the October issue of *Green Profit*). For example, the Omega Tree Stand, which has the tagline "the marriage saver," features four adjustable nylon clamps versus metal screws for easier adjusting of live Christmas trees. According to Omega Plastics President Grant Eckenswiller, the clamps provide up to 3,000% more coverage than the head of a screw. These have been in Canada for a while, as the company manufactures them in Barrie, Ontario, Canada, and is now bringing it to the U.S. market. Suggested retail price is around \$49 for the product, and retailers get them in a 12 pack. www.omegatrestand.com



These beautiful hand-painted containers from Sunshine Ceramics caught my eye right away. There was something stunning about the colors and finishes on these pots. They are made in Spain (where the rain stays mainly in the plains—that was for the “My Fair Lady” fans). Salesperson Mose Lenowitz told us the company’s owners are from the UK and fell in love with Spain when they visited there. That’s why they’re made there and why all the lines are named after cities in Spain. The style of this one is Cadiz, and comes in lots of different sizes and shapes. www.sunshineceramica.com



Pot!

The plant that probably stopped the most people, if I had to guess, was in the A Pot for Pot booth. There was an actual cannabis plant gracing this year's IGC Show. Never in a million years would I have guessed I'd see that when I started in this industry 20 years ago. And yet, here it is. The company is selling grow kits for retail, sans the plant. Consumers get a card, including a discount code, with information to order on a website. Company founder Jason Levin said they had a good reception at the show, and I noticed it even caught the eye of the *Chicago Tribune*, which ran a story about them Thursday. As more states come online with recreational marijuana, or even medicinal laws that allow for home grows, these types of products are likely to get more popular. www.apotforpot.com

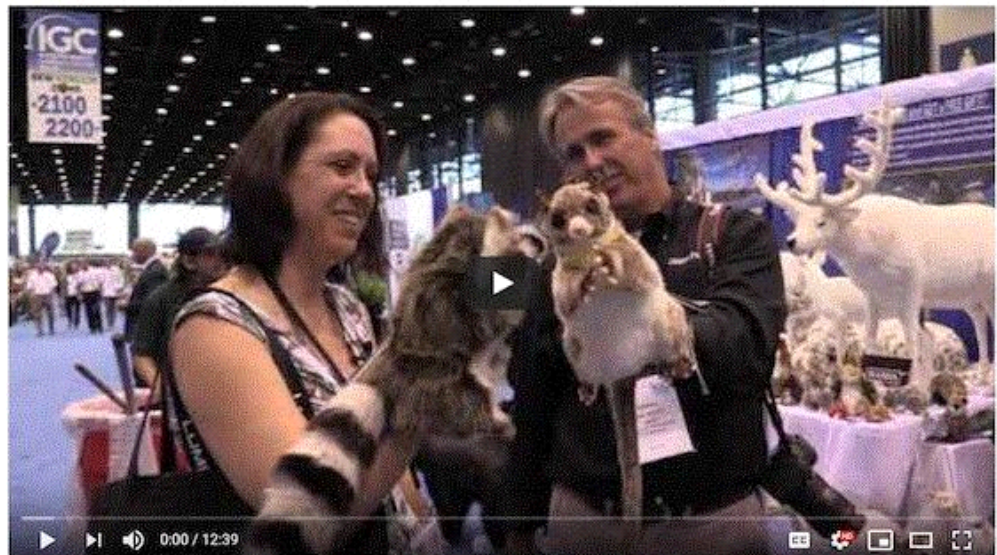


One last hit I'll mention here I didn't find—columnist Amanda Thomsen did. I saw her mention it on her Facebook page, and the next day I visited ModFountain, which had unique, minimalist modern fountains in multiple sizes. Sculptor Randy Bolander, who has installations all over the country, says he uses Corten weathered steel for many of his creations, which is an architectural steel that will rust but won't break down. Each fountain is signed and comes with a certificate of authenticity, making it a piece of collectible art as well as a garden feature.

www.modfountain.com



Oh, hey! Chris Beytes just uploaded the [VIDEO](#) the gang took while at the show. Not having attended, I LOVED all of the products they featured here, even the Faucet Grip (thanks to some slowly worsening arthritis).





Talk on Tariffs

While Jen Polanz didn't hear much talk about tariffs while at the IGC Show, the Las Vegas Market CEO Summit, held July 30, did. For those gathered for the home-furnishings and gift market discussion, there were no easy answers and no end in sight for the U.S. trade war with China. And, the consensus was that this will become a "much more than just China" issue as companies look toward Vietnam, India and other countries to source their goods.

Regardless of which end of the political spectrum the speakers came from, they all agreed that tariffs were not the solution for resolving trade differences. And as companies look to move manufacturing elsewhere, key speakers noted that Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries were next up in the tariff crosshairs.

"The tariffs are downplayed in the minds of consumers right now because most manufacturers have not passed them on to retailers," said Michael Amini, president and CEO of a successful home décor company. "That is something that is not sustainable in the long run and will impact consumer opinion as the tariffs are eventually passed on to the American consumer to pay."

Read the summary of the Las Vegas Market CEO Summit [HERE](#). And then [GET BACK TO ME](#) with what you've experienced concerning manufacturers passing the costs along to you. Will you then pass them along to your own customers? And are U.S.-made goods making sense to you in the months to come?



Speaking of ...

... U.S.-made goods (or maybe those from our friends to the north), evergreen season is almost upon us. I know this because there are pallets full of Halloween chocolate melting on the summer sidewalks as they await shelf space inside Walgreens.

Our friends over at M&M Wintergreens have a really useful blog about all things evergreens. Have you read it? You should, because you might find some new ways to use—and thus promote the sales of—these products. In the latest blog post, Wintergreens' VP Shannon Kuhrt came up with three uses for evergreens you may never have thought of before. Those are:

- **Using with gift wrapping.** Okay, so if you're also a florist, maybe you've thought of this idea. But if you haven't, try using evergreen twigs, some twine and a little hot glue to give gifts that extra something special. Not only will it look nice, it'll smell nice, too. Do this for your store's gift wrapping AND create a few dummy packages and display among your evergreen supplies as inspiration for your customers.
- **Vase décor.** This might be my favorite idea: Using snips of holly or pine or anything evergreen in clear glass containers. They could just be placed in an empty jar and set on a table to add a festive holiday look, or added below floating candles. The folks at the 33 Shades of Green showed this lovely example:



Nice, huh? Make them as grab-and-go holiday gifts this year!

- **Fragrancifying a small space.** (Look at that! I made up a word!) What small spaces could use a little fresh cedar scent? Shannon suggested replacing those fake Little Trees car air fresheners with actual evergreen tree twigs. Bathrooms are small spaces that could use a little fragrance, too (and come to think of it, the cat's litter box could benefit from a fragrant branch, as well). How to sell this idea? Maybe have a display and signage incorporating those Little Trees and real-life evergreens.

Read and sign yourself up for the M&M Wintergreens blog [HERE](#).

Pollinators at UConn

I believe you garden center folks would agree that pollinator plants are big sellers. They may not flow out the door like spring bedding plants and baskets, but you get a steady demand for them all season long. And with all the interest in pollinators and their beloved plants, this segment of the industry is seeing lots of goings-on in the form of research, new (and new-to-you) varieties and the market in general.

Get up to speed during UConn's upcoming Native Plants and Pollinators Conference taking place October 3 on UConn's campus in Storrs, Connecticut. The all-day event is taking early-bird registrations (\$50) until August 30 (\$60 after, and \$25 for students). And with that registration, you will get the chance to listen to the following topics and speakers:

- Monarch Waystations from Adam Baker, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Entomology, University of Kentucky
- Asters & Goldenrods: Autumn's Pollinator Banquet from Heather Holm, Author and Pollinator Educator, Minnetonka, Minnesota
- Evaluating Pollinator Attraction of Herbaceous Perennial Nativars from Annie White, ASLA, PhD, Owner at NECTAR Landscape Design Studio & Consulting, Burlington Vermont (and former Ball Publishing editor! Go, Annie!)
- Aronia Up Close: Built-in Complexity and Potential from Dr. Mark Brand, Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture, University of Connecticut

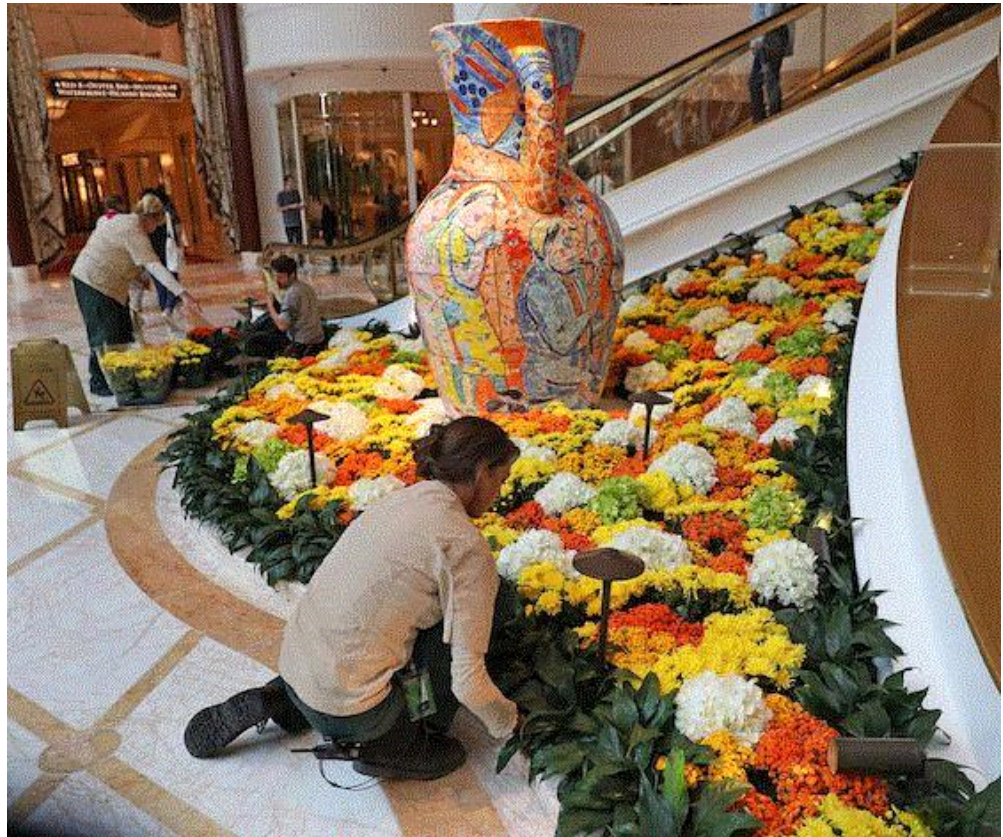
- What We Know About Nativars, Pollinators, and the Nursery Industry: Making Informed Decisions from Dr. Jessica Lubell, Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture, University of Connecticut

Registration also gets you a chance for pesticide recertification credits (ask [Alyssa Siegel-Miles](#) for more info), lunch and parking. How do you register? Head over to [THIS WEBSITE](#). Easy-peasy.

Finally ...

What does it take to deck out a casino with flowers?

First, you start by calling it a resort. Then, you landscape acres of land that had been a Superfund site, plan seasonal color change-outs to surround all the structures every few weeks and put at least one plant in each and every hotel room (more if the room/suite is pricey). And that's when you start to worry about the potted plants, cut flower bouquets and over-the-top displays that occupy all of the gaming rooms, lobbies, lounges, and reception areas.



Lobby photo borrowed from the *Boston Globe* article. Thank you!

Massachusetts' second full-service resort casino, the Encore Boston Harbor, opened a few months ago just about five miles up the road, and once all the articles about table game tactics, traffic and Paul Anka had run their course, the *Boston Globe* turned to its efforts on how they created a horticultural wonderland out of a former Monsanto mess.

Here's the [ARTICLE](#) about what it takes to get the job done. The plant stats will dazzle you.

Finally II ...

People ask for free stuff all the time. And by “people,” I mean social media influencers, folks who “ask” for product in exchange for some exposure on their social media feeds.

Joe Nicchi—an ice cream truck vendor and part-time actor in L.A.—not only said no, he displayed a sign on his truck that made it loud and clear that “asks” were going to cost, and they would cost DOUBLE!

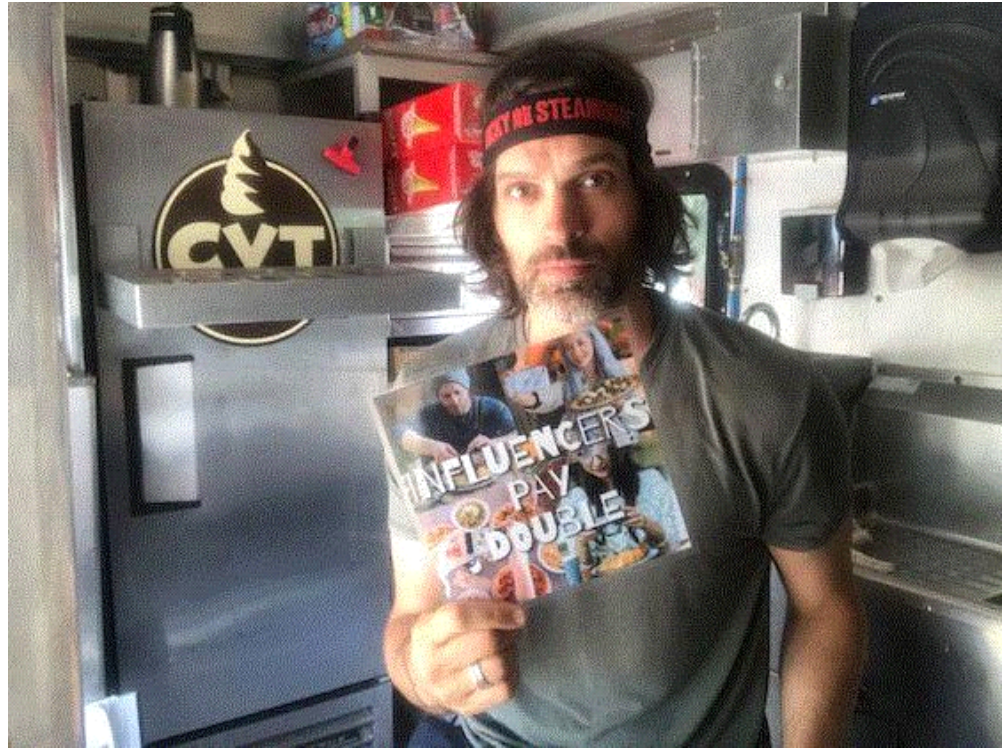


Photo borrowed from the Yahoo! Lifestyle article on Joe Nicchi.

I admit, I've gotten my share of free stuff. But please read the [ARTICLE](#) about how Joe was bold enough to say no and his reasons why. And then tell me how and why you deal with similar requests. I know it can be a bone of contention for some of you out there. Let me know what your strategy is [HERE](#).

Comments, questions, suggestions? Send them to ewells@ballpublishing.com.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ellen'.

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

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