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## Psyched for Spring

*Ellen C. Wells*



How do you get gardeners excited for spring? You invite them to your nursery just as it's coming into bloom.

That is exactly what Monrovia Growers did for a select group of horticulture-focused social media influencers, bloggers, container designers, garden directors and media people such as myself. I joined about a dozen individuals for a day of touring Monrovia's Cairo, Georgia, nursery. We were taken on a behind-the-scenes tour of the facilities, fields and growing houses to see—some for the very first time—how the horticulture industry makes the springtime bloom magic happen.

Aside from beautiful flowers, the artfully sculpted trees and a hint that plants awaited at the end of the day, one of the major themes highlighted the steps Monrovia takes in pursuit of sustainability and worker safety. We

saw the automated Lommers upright pruner in action; drove past the series of constructed wetlands that filter and clean runoff for reuse; admired the mountain of composted materials; and listened as staff explained the work of Monrovia's silent army of craftsmen—the beneficial insects. As someone who's been involved with the green industry for more than two decades, even I was happy to hear that horticulture is striving to be as green as its moniker implies.

None of this was lost on the attendees, either. Claudia Weekes, an Instagrammer behind The Organized Homemaker account, said: "My visit to Monrovia was the opportunity of a lifetime. I have always dreamt of going on a nursery tour to see the behind-the-scenes workings of the flower growing industry. I was highly impressed with their commitment to quality, efficiency, their use of automation and their commitment to the environment. I now consider it an honor to plant Monrovia plants in my garden know(ing) the care and time that their craftsmen put into growing their plants."



This tour was a great idea, wasn't it? Identify the Instagrammers, TikTokkers, vloggers and other social stars in your area and invite them for a behind-the-scenes tour some day before your store's opening hours. That'll give these folks plenty of time to grab pics and reels and information about the good things your store does—without those pesky customers photobombing their shots. And, as you know, it's the best time of day for the most complimentary lighting for both them and your benches of beautiful blooms. **GP**

*Pictured: Claudia Weekes, seen here taking a selfie, is behind The Organized Homemaker account on Instagram.*