

# GROWERTALKS

## GT in Brief

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### Ball Acquires Danish Potted Plant Breeder

*Chris Beytes*

Ball Horticultural Company has acquired majority ownership in the Danish potted plant breeding company Ex-Plant A/S. Ex-Plant's genetics—namely a range of peppers (both ornamental and edible), solanum and exacum—will become part of PanAmerican Seed's collection. The deal was finalized in January.

As always, the main question is “why?” Why does Ball want to buy a Danish potted plant breeder/producer? We guessed that Ball sees potential to reinvigorate the North American potted plant business. Turns out we're only partially right, according to Matt Kramer, Research Director for the corporation.

“Why?” he answered. “Because in emerging markets—Southeast Asia, China, other emerging markets where there's growth—these are the kinds of products customers are looking for. PanAmerican is mostly bedding plant annuals.” Matt points out that most people in those regions live in apartment buildings or other small spaces. “They need plants that will go on a balcony or go indoors. People aren't putting plants out into the landscape.”

PanAm offers some crops that are grown as potted plants, such as sunflowers, gerbera, primula and campanula, but they aren't catalogued specifically as potted plants.

Ex-Plant owner Carsten Leth will retain minority ownership and will take on the new position of Global Business Manager—Potted Plants for PanAmerican Seed. Carsten and his team will continue breeding at their Glamsbjerg, Denmark, headquarters; plus, his connection to the Danish potted plant market opens up opportunities to bring new genetics into the fold from third-party suppliers.

If you're an Ex-Plant customer, rest assured that Carsten will continue to manage the Danish operation and will remain the main contact for Ex-Plant key accounts. Daily business and customer service will continue to be available out of the Denmark office. Beginning May 1, 2017, the complete Ex-Plant assortment will be available worldwide through PanAmerican Seed distributors. **GT**