

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Benary Announces Joint Venture in China

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Interesting news from Germany, where well-known bedding and potted plant breeder Ernst Benary has announced that they're forming a joint venture in China to grow young plants. They're partnering with two Chinese firms, Jintian Seedling Company and ICAN Seed, to create a new company focused on providing young plants to what they say is the "rapidly growing" Chinese bedding plant market.

The joint venture, called Jinpin Flower Seedling Company (Jinpin means "golden quality" in Chinese, says Benary), is located in Pixan, which is part of Chengdu, the capitol of the Sichuan province, which is in the southwest portion of the country.



Pictured: Check out the artist's rendering of the facility they plan to build—spectacular! The German flag on the roof is a nice touch.

The business will be on 40 acres of land granted to them by the Chinese government. It will serve as both a young plant production greenhouse and trialing facility. It'll be located near the city of Chengdu, which has more than 15 million inhabitants and is one of the largest and most important economic, cultural, transportation and communication centers in western China.

Jintian Seedling Company, a local young plant producer that's produced vegetable young plants for many years, will be in charge of the management of the organization, including local production and regional sales. ICAN Seed, a leading sales and distribution company with a sales network all over China, will provide the national sales force for young plants. And Benary will contribute its genetics and know-how. The three companies are not new to each other; Benary has done business with them both for years.

Via email, we asked Matthias Redlefsen, President of Ernst Benary of America, for the "why" and "how" of

Benary's venture. Here's his reply:

"China is growing. It has over 1.4 billion inhabitants and a growing middle class. If we sold just one pansy to every Chinese, I would be a very happy man. [He added a smile face emoji here.]

"Over the past years, floriculture there has started to professionalize at an enormous speed. And in this trend, young plants are starting to become more and more important. For many of our signature products, like begonias, this is great news, because the Chinese market seems to be ready for more sophisticated products (which are better grown from a young plant than from seed). Benary has been present in China for decades and we have been doing good business with the two partners of this joint venture. It is the perfect match, because each of us can contribute our key strengths.

"Yes, the culture (and language) is different in China. But we feel very comfortable there. And once you understand how the culture and decision making works, doing business is pretty straightforward." **GT**