

# GROWERTALKS

## GT in Brief

1/31/2017

## In Focus at Season Premier

*Chris Beytes*

Garden writer Marianne Wilburn gets the shot at Costa Farms' Season Premier Trial Gardens at Costa Color in Homestead, Florida. Marianne was traveling with a group of Garden Writers Association members to visit Costa and other stops during the Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition January 18-20.

We met Marianne, who gardens in northern Virginia and writes the blog SmallTown

Gardener.com (check it out; she's a good

and clever writer), amongst 150 mixed containers that Costa was testing. She was paying close attention to containers featuring edibles and ornamentals (what Costa calls "Flowers and Flavors"), which she says are big with her readers.



Marianne was also impressed with the amount of work and thought Costa and the industry in general seems to be putting into the selection of plants for retail. Such as a test of six different biodegradable pots planted with three different sun or shade annuals. They planted them out to see how well they perform in the ground compared to a control of plants grown in plastic and planted in traditional fashion. (We noted that the pots by SelfEco seemed to be outperforming the others, especially with fibrous begonias.)

Despite having an online presence, Marianne takes a hands-on, real-world approach to gardening. In fact, on her blog, she warns against spending too much time online.

Here's a quote we like: "Gardening is hard work, but it's some of the most spiritually and mentally rewarding work you can do. If you do too much of it in a virtual world surfing Pinterest boards and chat forums, you are in grave danger of losing the point." **GT**