

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

6/30/2017

Coloring Within the Lines

Chris Beytes



Ball Horticultural Company's summer ground crew staff plant annuals in preparation for the annual Ball Seed Field Day & Landscape Day, which is always held the last Friday of July (this year, that's July 28).

We asked our sister company if they could provide some statistics about the 2017 garden and they obliged with the following impressive numbers:

- The garden and grounds crew is made up of eight year-round employees and 22 full-time temporary employees for the summer.
- Of the 60 total acres that make up the Ball Horticultural Company campus, 10 1/2 acres are the display gardens, and about 4 acres of that is planted each year.
- The crew will plant about 130,000 individual plants in the garden, which includes more than 1,200 varieties of annuals in 230 genera and 324 different series.
- More than 70 different breeding companies are represented in the garden.
- In addition to annuals, Ball added more than 4,600 perennials to complete the Darwin Perennials bed upgrade that was started in 2015.
- The container garden trials show off more than 500 items.
- It takes four to five weeks to install all landscape beds, as well as place all the display containers and movable plant structures.

There have been some changes in the garden management for 2017. Jim Nau, who managed the gardens for 34 years, has moved on to a new role as Culture Advisor and Corporate Historian. Replacing him as Manager of the Gardens and Grounds is Jim Kerwin, formerly of Terrona Farms in Peotone, Illinois. Sam Schmitz is responsible for the design of the garden beds and Rachel Prescott plans production of all the material needed, not only for the gardens and grounds, but also other trials or internal projects. Rachel joined Ball last fall after a stint with Ron Clesen Ornamental Plants. She's no stranger to the Ball Gardens, having been a summer intern in 2010. **GT**