

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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In Memoriam: Harry Hollander

Chris Beytes

Harry Hollander passed away from natural causes on July 28. He was 77. Born in the Netherlands in 1940, Harry's father was a dairy farmer, but as a teenager, Harry found work at a local bulb nursery, Van Zyverden Inc., and took a liking to the industry.

Harry first visited the U.S. in 1960 as a seasonal warehouse man for the company, then got involved in sales. Five years later, he and his new wife, Hetty, moved to the U.S., settling in Dallas to set up a new sales territory for Van Zyverden. In 1974, he founded his own company, IPCO (International Products Company). In 1981, he bought out competitor Abbot Industries and merged the two into today's Abbott-Ipco.

Meanwhile, caladiums had become a big part of Harry's business, so in 2000, he and tissue culture expert/caladium breeder Bob Hartman founded Classic Caladiums in Avon Park, Florida. I visited Classic in 2010 and featured them on the cover of the January 2011 issue, much to Harry's delight.

Harry was responsible for the massive display of tulips and other spring bulbs at the Dallas Arboretum and other public parks across northern Texas. He even had a breeder in Holland develop two warm-climate tulip varieties, which he dubbed "Dallas Blooms" and "Laura Bush."

Much of what I know about Harry I learned from his book "Pushing Up Tulips," which he self-published in 2016. It's his life story, with names changed to protect those who did some pretty wild things with Harry back in the day. But Harry puts his own foibles right out there for all to see—such as his penchant for fast cars and even faster driving. He could normally get out of a ticket by flashing his Dutch license and pretending not to speak English. Although he once got five tickets in one traffic stop. Harry also had a passion for soccer, and in his spare time, coached numerous teams to state and regional titles, even reaching the final four for the national championship.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Hetty, his son Richard (Janice), his son Marvin (Felicia) and four grandchildren, Jake, Katie, Ryan and Jason. **GT**