

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

5/1/2018

In Memoriam: Helmut Kientzler

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Helmut Kientzler, one of the owners of the Kientzler/InnovaPlant group of companies, passed away unexpectedly on March 7. He was 68. You know his last name: The Kientzler family has been well-known in Germany and around the world for generations as renowned horticulturists and breeders.

Born to Else and Ludwig Kientzler, Helmut grew up as the child of horticulturists and discovered his love of plants at an early age. When Ludwig passed suddenly, Else took over management of the family business specifically to ensure that her three children, Iris, Ludwig and Helmut, would have a family business to inherit. After earning his degree in economics, Helmut entered the company at the age of 22.

Brothers Ludwig and Helmut managed the company together for decades and jointly laid the foundation for the world-wide presence of the Kientzler group of companies. The corporate management was a yin-yang relationship between the two brothers, with Ludwig a driving force and Helmut pensive and strategic.

Helmut's contributions to the industry includes the establishment and successful expansion of the international Proven Winners network. But if you never met or even heard of Helmut, it's because he never wanted to be in the limelight. He was much more comfortable operating from behind the scenes, always gathering information and opinions, always thinking things through carefully. He was circumspect, pensive and enjoyed debating about recent developments in the industry and how these would affect the overall Kientzler strategy. He had a strong love of plants and garden culture, and the aesthetic value of plants. These traits led to a fundamental change in how plants are used in gardens, balconies and terraces to this very day. On his desk, one found the quote, "Plants transform inert material into living beauty." **GT**