

# GROWERTALKS

## GT in Brief

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## NGB, AAS to Merge

*Chris Beytes & Jennifer Zurko*

Two industry non-profits are becoming one: National Garden Bureau (NGB) and All-America Selections (AAS) have completed an organizational merger of the two organizations into one. National Garden Bureau is now the parent organization, with AAS being the plant trialing program under National Garden Bureau.

Why? Operational efficiencies and overhead cost savings, they say, along with reducing duplication of efforts, identifying more synergies and creating more opportunities for leadership by professionals in our industry.

Previously, the “sister” organizations worked closely to vet and promote great growing material, support the green industry and connect with the gardening public. In fact, with Diane Blazek serving as executive director of both, it often felt like they were one organization, even though they weren’t.

Externally, you won’t see much of a change after the merger, as the two separate websites ([aaswinners.com](http://aaswinners.com) and [ngb.org](http://ngb.org)) will remain, with NGB doing even more promotion of the AAS Winners. All committees that were part of the two organizations are now programs run by Vice President Board members.

Besides Diane and her staff, here are the new Board of Directors for National Garden Bureau:

- President: Alicain Carlson, Syngenta Flowers
- Past Presidents: Jeannine Bogard, Syngenta Vegetables, and Scott Rusch, Express Seed
- Treasurer: Marissa Verdi, Harris Seeds
- Secretary: Pat Racey, National Garden Bureau
- AAS Trials Program VP: Chelsey Lenczyk, Bejo Seeds
- AAS Display Gardens Program VP: Penny Merritt-Price, Youngs Plant Farm
- AAS Combined Judges Program VP: Denise Mullins, Smith Gardens
- Non-Plant Promotions Program VP: Paula Douer, Crescent Garden
- Special Projects Program VP: Josh Kirschenbaum, PanAmerican Seed
- Surveys and Membership Program VP: Lisa Heredia, Danziger
- Year of the Program VP: Alec Charais, Bailey Nurseries
- AAS Winners and New Plant Promotions Program VPs: Joe Cimino, Sakata, and Alisha Burns, Johnny’s

## Seeds

NGB and AAS also announce details for the 2024 Summer Summit in Auburn and Opelika, Alabama. The dates are June 4-5, 2024, which coincide with the Southern Garden Tour dates for 2024.

The event begins with a Welcome Reception on Tuesday, June 4. Wednesday, June 5 will be a tour day visiting several sites on the Auburn University Campus, Young's Plant Farm and Bonnie Plants, and ending with a tour and dinner at Botanic garden center. You can also extend your stay to visit the other AAS Trials participating in the Southern Garden Tour, such as the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia, and Metrolina Greenhouses in Huntersville, North Carolina.

This event is open to anyone (growers, breeders, retailers, brokers, industry reps, educators, media, garden communicators, etc.) interested in these organizations, the trials and other local sites. [GO HERE](#) to register for the AAS/NGB Summer Summit. **GT**