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*News and commentary for the perennial market*



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 07, 2014

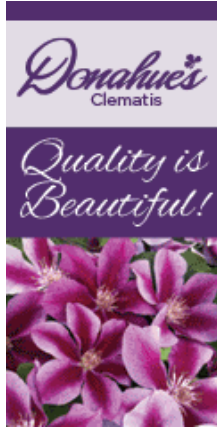
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# Perennial PULSE

News and commentary on the global perennial plant market

**COMING UP THIS WEEK:**  
Welcome to Perennial Pulse!  
Pioneer, Bulb Traders merge  
Managing botrytis  
Marketing deer-resistant plants  
Bring on the echinaceas  
Award-winning perennials



## Welcome to Perennial Pulse!

Welcome to the first edition of *Perennial Pulse*, a new twice-monthly e-newsletter that will cover news, events, crop culture and commentary on the perennial industry.

I'm Paul Pilon, your author and editor. I'm a horticultural consultant (I own Perennial Solutions Consulting) and a certified plant geek who specializes in helping commercial perennial growers with all aspects of their crop production programs.

It's a great honor to be working with Ball Publishing as the editor of *Perennial Pulse*. Like all the other great Ball Publishing e-newsletters (*Acres Online*, *buZZ!*, *GreenTalks*, *Inside Grower* and *Landscape Insider*), my e-newsletter will cover a broad spectrum of topics, including new perennial varieties, cultural tidbits, pest management, industry news and events and anything I'm hearing and seeing in my travels and visits with perennial growers. And unlike other sources of information, the subject matter will revolve exclusively around all things perennial—no petunias here!



To keep each edition fresh, relevant and timely, I need your help—after all, this e-newsletter is about providing you with the best information. Would you please add me to the list of people to whom you submit press releases, event information or new varieties. My email is [ppilon@ballpublishing.com](mailto:ppilon@ballpublishing.com). It doesn't have to be official press releases, either. Feel free to keep me posted of any cool observations, newsworthy events or even random thoughts regarding the perennial industry.

Thanks in advance for your help, and I look forward to bringing *Perennial Pulse* for many years to come.

Now for this week's news:

What do you think? Share your thoughts and read what others have to say [HERE](#).



## Pioneer Gardens, Bulb Trading Co. merge

Pioneer Gardens, Inc. and Bulb Trading Company LLC (BTC) have agreed to merge. The combined Pioneer/BTC organization offers a new expanded product assortment and support services to North American growers and finishers. The new company will be called Botanical Trading Company LLC.

Pioneer Gardens of Deerfield, Massachusetts, is a leading grower of field-grown bare root and greenhouse plug perennial starter plants for wholesale growers and finishers throughout North America. Botanical Trading Company of Hockessin, Delaware, is an international horticultural trading company that specializes in the North American market, with a focus on domestically grown plants and bulbs.

Management of the new firm will include BTC's Juergen Steininger, Ko Klaver and Ben Kneppers, along with the field and greenhouse production experience and capabilities of Pioneer Gardens' Arjen Vriend and Jaap Molenaar.

In addition to Pioneer Gardens' full product line, their offerings will feature the famed landscape collections of Hollingsworth peonies, plus specialty crops, including collector daffodils, American-bred bulbs and magnolias.

For more information, click [HERE](#).



## Managing botrytis in winter

This winter, you'll want to be on the lookout for botrytis on any perennials that you're overwintered inside structures or in minimally heated facilities. Many growers falsely assume that temperatures are too cold for botrytis infections to occur. This is often not the case, as botrytis can become established under a wide temperature range—from 34F to 84F, as long as the humidity is high and free moisture remains on plant surfaces.



Reducing the time the leaves have free moisture on them and managing the humidity levels are the most important factors for preventing botrytis infections on perennials during the late winter.

Click [HERE](#) to read more about the conditions necessary for botrytis infections, as well as cultural and chemical management strategies.

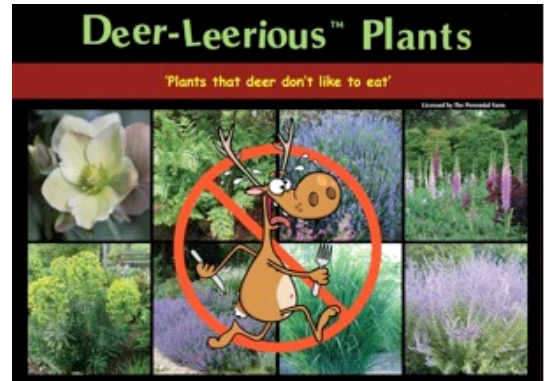
What do you think? Share your thoughts and read what others have to say [HERE](#).

## Marketing deer-resistance

How many times have you been asked, “What perennials will the deer leave alone?” Well, here’s a marketing program that will not only catch the eyes of consumers, but will help you answer that very question.

The Perennial Farm, Glen Arm, Maryland, has developed the “Deer-Leerious Plants” line, which uses signage and tags to educate consumers about which plants are most resistant to deer feeding. The perennials in the program were selected based on research, reference guides and anecdotal experience from gardeners across the country.

Using a 1 to 3 numbering system, the tags clearly show customers how resistant each particular perennial is to deer feeding.



1. “Not Eatin’ This!”—Highest Deer Resistance.

You can be highly confident that deer will not eat this plant, unless they are starving.

2. “Can’t Stand This!”—High Deer Resistance - When highly stressed, deer may nibble. You can be strongly confident that deer will not eat this - they are simply not interested.

3. “Not Likin’ This!”—Medium-to-High Deer Resistance - If hungry, deer may nibble. You can be confident that deer do not like this plant - they will almost always pass it by.

Visit [The Perennial Farm](#) website to learn more about this innovative (and trademarked) program.

What do you think? [Share your thoughts and read what others have to say HERE.](#)

## Bring on the echinaceas

The National Garden Bureau (NGB) has named 2014 the [Year of the Echinacea](#). Echinacea was chosen in the perennial category not only for the vast assortment of flower colors and shapes they offer to today’s gardener, but also because they are such an American icon in the plant world. For more information, visit NGB’s [website](#).



Oh, NGB named cucumber its edible for 2014, and the petunia its annual of 2014. Darn! I said no petunias and I already broke my own rule. Well, that's alright—in some climates, petunias could be considered tender perennials ... .

What do you think? Share your thoughts and read what others have to say [HERE](#).

## Award-Winning Perennials

Although most of these award winners are not necessarily new announcements, I thought I'd take time in this first edition to feature many of the recent perennial award winners. Please read on, as I've also added a couple of award winners you may not be aware of.

Why is it important to know (and grow) award-winning perennials? Many growers and retailers experience an increase in plant sales following the announcement of award-winning perennials or plants of the year. These increases are not only observed during the year following the announcements, but for several years thereafter. Are you capitalizing on these announcements? Here are some of the most recent notable perennial award winners:

**Perennial Plant Association 2014 Perennial Plant Of the Year**

Each year, members of the Perennial Plant Association (PPA) name one perennial as its Perennial Plant of the Year. This program showcases a perennial that is a standout among its competitors. Perennials chosen are suitable for a wide range of growing climates, require low maintenance, have multiple-season interest, and are relatively pest/disease-free. In the years following the announcement of each Perennial Plant of the Year, commercial growers typically see an increase of sales not only for the award-winning perennial, but of the entire genus of plants it belongs to. The 2014 Perennial Plant of the Year is *Panicum virgatum* Northwind.



#### **All-America Selections Winners**

All American Selections trials plants across the United States and has a long history of selected varieties that perform well over all of North America and have become staples in the bedding plant and vegetables categories. In recent years, they added perennials into their national evaluations. This year, **two perennials** received awards.

2014 AAS Bedding Plant Award Winner—Gaura Sparkle White



2014 AAS Flower Award Winner—Penstemon Arabesque Red F1 (photos courtesy AAS)



There are several organizations and societies that select and promote award-winning perennials. Here are some notable award winners.

**American Hosta Growers Association 2014 Hosta of the Year**

[Hosta Abiqua Drinking Gourd](#)

**American Hemerocallis Society 2013 Stout Silver Medal Winner**

[Hemerocallis Heavenly Angel Ice](#)

**America Iris Society Dykes Medal Winner**

[Iris That's All Folks](#)

**The American Ivy Society Ivy of the Year 2014**

[Hedera helix Teneriffe](#)

In the next *Perennial Pulse*, I'll provide some more award-winning plants for your consideration.

Thanks for reading! And feel free to [send me](#) your perennial news, information, events, questions, opinions, gossip or what-have-you.

[What do you think? Share your thoughts and read what others have to say HERE.](#)

Until next time,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted.

[Paul Pilon](#)  
Editor-at-Large  
Perennial Pulse

**This email was received by more than 40,000 readers!**

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