As a traditional January meeting place for many of the industry’s top growers and retailers, TPIE’s attendance figures offered positive, albeit realistic signs that the North American market is positioned for a good spring. Buyer attendance was up 5% from last year. Interiorscapers were up a very healthy 32%, and growers/brokers were up 16%. The final attendance figure was down from 2009 by just 86 registrants because exhibitors brought 300 fewer folks to man their booths—a sensible, cost-saving move, we think, and not a negative trend.

Plus, attendees all told us the “right” people were there. Said Dave Neal, CEO of Dyna-Gro Nutrition Solutions, “While the traffic was certainly slower than in prior years (as has been the case with all shows in the past two years), I was quite pleased with the quality of the contacts this year. … It was definitely a worthwhile show.”

TPIE invited attendees to “Get Connected to Tropicals” in the 200,000 sq. ft. exhibit hall, which featured the greatest collection of tropical plants available to the industry under one roof. More than 500 companies showcased a wide range of tropical plants and related products.

Opening the three-day trade-show was a high-energy session titled “Tropical Plant Revue: Think Outside the Pot.” Combining the world’s most exciting and diverse tropical plants with the talents of world-class floral designers from the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD), Deborah De La Flor AIFD and J Paul Jaras AIFD presented creative ways to use tropicals in retail displays. Later, their creations were on display in the main lobby for everyone to enjoy.

The TPIE New Plants and Products Room continued to be one of the most popular spots of the show. With 40 new items on display, attendees were impressed with the mix of new plants and products coming into the marketplace. Buyers were given the opportunity to vote on their favorites, with the following coming out on top: Favorite New Foliage Plant: Kalanchoe thyrsiflora Fantastic by Hawaiian Sunshine Nursery, Inc. Favorite New Flowering Plant: Gloriosa Lily by Deroose Plants, Inc. Favorite New Product: All-In-One-Bucket by Gloves, Inc. Costa Farms took home the coveted Best of Show booth award for their display and use of outstanding plant material.
“New Money”
TPIE offers a great feature for retailers who attend: the “Retailers’ Choice Award.” A group of independent garden center owners and managers walked the show and picked out their favorite products. Then retail consultant Robert Hendrickson of the Garden Center Group presented their top 10 picks, with the help of representatives of the various companies selected, at a special seminar. Robert says these products help generate what he calls “new money.” Meaning consumers buy these in addition to other products, not instead of other products.

Three of those also earned TPIE “Favorite” awards: the All-in-One Bucket—From Georgia’s Gloves, Inc.; Fantastic kalanchoe from Hawaiian Sunshine Nursery in Hawaii; and Crimson Flame gloriosa from Deroose Plants.

The 10 Retailer’s Choice award winners give you a flavor of the diverse products available at TPIE:

**All-In-One Bucket, by Gloves, Inc.**
The wheeled plastic bucket was not only the hit of TPIE, earning two new product awards, but it also sold out a week later at a show in Ohio. Tel: (770) 944-9186

**Deck & Patio Planter, by Marchioro**
Retailers liked that this patio planter is 1) self watering and 2) has an attached metal trellis (coated for corrosion resistance). [www.marchioro.it](http://www.marchioro.it)

**Half-Pallet Citrus Display, by Duarte Trees & Vines**
This California company specializes in fruiting plants for professional producers as well as the retail trade. They developed a retail display that fits on a half-pallet that includes attractive point-of-purchase signage. [www.duartenursery.com](http://www.duartenursery.com)

**Florida Cactus**
Florida Cactus, a 49-year-old company, capitalized on that in their display, which featured a wide range of succulents in clever planters—including antique lampshades! 407 886 1833

**Plantsonwalls.com**
Another trend: vertical gardening. Two San Francisco gentleman have created a wall-planting system using polyester felt from recycled soda bottles. [www.plantsonwalls.com](http://www.plantsonwalls.com)

**Fantastic Kalanchoe, by Hawaiian Sunshine Nursery**
Owner Dave Fell discovered a uniquely colored Kalanchoe thrysiflora at his Hawaii Nursery, and selected it until it was perfect. [www.hawaiinursery.com](http://www.hawaiinursery.com)

**Petaluma Wrap, by A-Roo**
Everyone is looking for a way to spent 20 cents to upgrade a plant and then sell it for $2 more. The retail attendees at TPIE felt that the trendy colors and patterns of A-Roo’s Petaluma wrap would help them do just that. [www.a-roo.com](http://www.a-roo.com)
Urban Collection Deck Boxes, by Braun Horticulture
Trendy galvanized steel planters are perfect for urban apartment and townhouse dwellers. Available in horizontal and upright styles in several styles. www.braungroup.com

Kalanchoe Magic Bells and calathia Tasmania, Northland Floral
Retailers liked Magic Bells for its novel shape and funky flowers; Tasmania’s deep burgundy foliage and orange flowers are perfect for fall. www.northlandfloral.com

Crimson Flame Gloriosa vine, Deroose Plants
This tropical vining bulb will come back year after year, producing stunning red flowers. www.derooseplants.com

Want a video tour of TPIE to see these products for yourself? Go to www.tinyurl/TPIE2010.