

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Southeast Color Connection Cancelled

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The members of the Southeast Greenhouse Conference (SEGC) announced that the 2011 Southeast Color Connection in Greenville, South Carolina, has been cancelled. According to a press release, the SEGC membership and accordant assets have suffered great decline as a result of the unfortunate economic climate among the member states and they therefore have no choice but to cancel next year's event.

Responding to inquiries via e-mail, Jeff Mast of Banner Greenhouses in Nebo, North Carolina, and current chairman of the SEGC said, "Shortly after this year's event, I convened a meeting of the executive council to discuss the preliminary financials. We followed up with a full board and management company conference call, to review and share the bleak realities. We did this as soon as we had firm financials, in advance of our yearly planning meeting in September. The decision was self-evident, as we reviewed the performance of this year's facts and trends from the past seven years. It was a difficult and heartfelt decision, but it was unanimous and the recommendation of the executive council. Our decision to cancel the show reflected our fiscal responsibilities and commitment to honorably represent our state organizations."

Brian Whipker, professor of horticulture at North Carolina State University and a supporter of the conference, said the cancellation was a culmination of things, including a decrease in exhibitors. "We peaked in 2004 and had a small downturn starting in 2005. This corresponded with saturation of the floriculture market and fewer new people entering the industry, along with the strong consolidation of the input industry," he said via e-mail. "The 2008 drought was a killer for us—Georgia lost 30 to 40% of their growers. We had more growers exit the market and profit margins were tight."

In the meantime, OFA will continue to act as show management and can be contacted with any questions. **GT**