

# GROWERTALKS

## GT in Brief

10/25/2010

### Pansy Season in Japan

*Chris Beytes*



Just like much of the Southern U.S., Japan's bedding plant market is dominated by pansies and violas in the fall.

*GrowerTalks/Green Profit* spent a week in Japan with the International Garden Centre Association, which made Japan its annual tour stop this year—the first time in the association's 52-year history it has visited Asia. Some 200 garden center owners, managers and related interested folks took part in the trip, which visited more than a dozen garden centers, wholesalers, gardens and historic sites between Tokyo and Kyoto.

What we noted about the garden centers we toured was a tremendous diversity of plant material, but generally small quantities of each item. Note that there is only one tray (20 9-cm pots in this case) of some of the pansy and viola colors. Prices are comparable to what we might pay in the West: about \$1 to \$3 for 9-cm pots, depending upon variety. Many of the pansies and violas are branded with the breeders' names on the tags; we noted varieties by Sakata, Takii and Suntory.

Tidiness was impeccable everywhere, as was the customer service: there were generally two employees at each cash register. And talk about polite! You really knew they were happy to have you visit and shop with them. We could take a lesson from them on those two points.

Stay tuned for features in future issues on Japan's breeding and retailing industries. **GT**