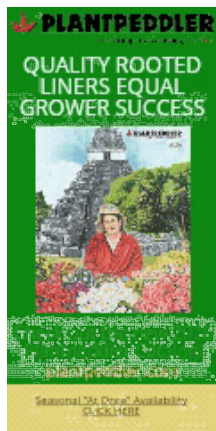


PanAm Fined, Monsanto Sold, Homeowner Sued (for nice landscape)



GrowerTalks' Acres Online

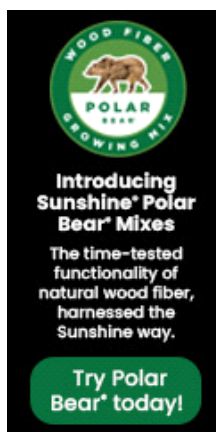
News and Commentary from GrowerTalks Magazine

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- PanAm fined
- Bayer to buy Monsanto
- Larson joins Bayer
- Their next pesticide
- Syn-RG hires director
- Some upcoming events
- Alternative cannabis businesses
- Finally ...



PanAmerican Seed fined for selling to Iran



In yet another example of “Doesn’t our government have anything better to do?”, **PanAmerican Seed** has been fined \$4.3 million by the U.S. Treasury Department for “...indirectly exporting seeds, primarily of flowers, to two Iranian distributors on 48 occasions” ... collectively referred to as the “alleged violations.”

What? That does not sound like something a Ball company would do (PanAmerican Seed is a division of Ball Horticultural Company). I know Ball, I work for them, as I’m sure you know, and the corporation is as upstanding as the day is long. They would never violate sanctions, not even to beautify a spot like Iran (which I’m sure could use all the flowers it could get).

So I went straight to Todd Billings, CFO, to find out what exactly happened.

According to Todd, PanAmerican flower seed did make it into Iran between May 2009 and March 2012, and at the time of those shipments, there were U.S. Government sanctions against Iran that prohibited the sale of most goods and services into Iran.

PanAmerican didn’t sell directly to Iran, however, it sold to two distributors working outside of Iran. They were the ones who ultimately sold much of that seed into Iran. Still, PanAm took the hit for it. Todd said it was about \$770,000 worth of seed over that three-year period, mostly cut flowers and ornamental grasses.

“At the time of these shipments, our compliance and monitoring controls were weak,” Todd admitted. “Since that time, we’ve substantially improved our compliance programs to prevent this sort of thing from happening again.”

So why the seven-figure fine, and why does the Treasury Department document make it sound as though PanAm was smuggling State secrets in every seed packet?

“We believe that the settlement was extreme,” he answered. “However, the alternative was to litigate with the U.S. Government, which could take months if not years. What we did was wrong, and we are going to put the matter behind us and move forward.”

Got an opinion to share? Or want to read what other folks have to say? Click [HERE](#).



Bayer to buy Monsanto

It took several offers, but **Bayer** has finally clinched the deal to take over **Monsanto** for either \$56 billion or \$66 billion, depending upon which source you read (*The Wall Street Journal* reports the purchase price as \$57 billion).

That’s assuming regulators approved the deal, say analysts. It’s the biggest acquisition of the year and the largest cash bid on record, and will create a company “commanding more than a quarter of the combined world market for seeds and pesticides in the fast-consolidating farm supplies industry,” as *Reuters* put it.

You know Bayer as the German drug and crop chemicals company that’s famous for launching Bayer aspirin in 1899 (at the time, “Aspirin” was their trade name). Monsanto, of course, is the big U.S. seed company famous for Roundup-ready GMO corn and soybeans, which makes the company the target of activists everywhere.

Bayer expects to close the deal by the end of the year.

According to *Reuters*, Bayer wants to create a “one-stop shop” for seeds, farm chemicals and computer-aided services for farmers.

Got an opinion to share? Or want to read what other folks have to say? Click [HERE](#).



Larson joins Bayer as ornamental specialist

Here at home, Bayer has hired Steve Larson to help build the Bayer brand with ornamental customers and distributors. Bayer announced last fall that it would begin doing its own sales and marketing of its proprietary active ingredients rather than licensing them through a third-party seller as they have in the past.

This will begin November 1, and is the key reason Steve was brought onboard.

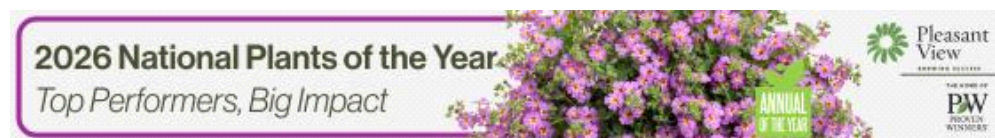
Steve has long experience in the ag chemical business and especially the ornamental side of things, with stints at Whitmire Micro-Gen, The Scotts Company and BASF. Steve holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in horticulture from Purdue University. He has also served as the plant health manager for Color Spot.



Bayer's next pesticide offering

Might as well do all my Bayer coverage at once, eh? While at Cultivate'16 this summer, I met with John Wendorff, Bayer's recently appointed Market Segment Manager for their North American Turf & Ornamentals division. John filled me in on Bayer's plans to do its own sales and marketing on nine of its products (OHP, Bayer's long-time business partner, will continue to market Marathon G, Marathon 60 and Marathon II Insecticides, Discus Insecticide, Decathlon Insecticide and OHP Chipco 26019 N/G Fungicide).

But he stressed that Bayer has a wealth of new products in the pipeline, one of which they plan to introduce as early as next summer: a non-neonic, pollinator-friendly insecticide for controlling sucking pests. Its active ingredient is flupyradifurone, which is a systemic. Stay tuned!



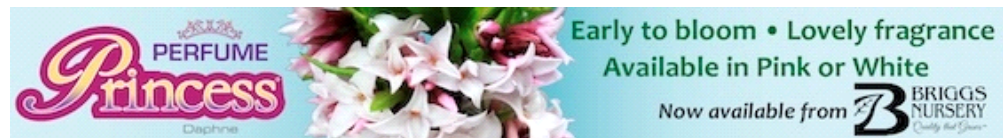
Syn-RG hires executive director

In Spring of 2015 I first told you about Syn-RG, a consortium of woody ornamental growers with the mission of bringing together plant introducers, independent growers and independent garden centers in a coordinated manner to better evaluate new plant varieties. Their ultimate goal is to develop a certification program that will give consumers the assurance of success they value when shopping—much like the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, except for plants.

Syn-RG is led by five founding members – Prides Corner Farm, Overdevest Nurseries, Willoway Nurseries, Saunders Brothers Nursery and Sheridan Nurseries—and now they have an executive director: Syn-RG has contracted with Woody Bibens & Associates, Inc. to provide Executive Director and management services. Emily Bibens Chung, Vice President of Woody Bibens & Associates, Inc., will serve as Syn-RGTM's first Executive Director.

"I'm excited to work with Syn-RG as they launch the Handpicked for You trustmark program," says Emily. "The plant selection that is available to consumers can be overwhelming, particularly for new and younger gardeners. Knowing that the plants in the Handpicked for You program are backed by multi-year trials conducted by growers and independent garden centers will provide the reassurance and proven track record new gardeners need to be excited and confident about their plant purchases."

Tom Demaline, a founding member of Syn-RG and President of Willoway Nurseries, says, "The past two years have been an exciting period as we talked with plant introducers, growers and independent garden centers about the Handpicked for You trustmark concept. We are pleased with the interest and support Syn-RG and Handpicked for You have received from the industry and are excited to report that the initial batch of plant introductions are in the first year of trials. Having Emily join us as Executive Director is one more key step in sending the first plants to market bearing the Handpicked for You trustmark."



Some upcoming events

Fall is a busy time of year in the trade show business. In fact, on www.hortcalendar.com, September looks to be one of the biggest event months. I count 31, and that's only from yesterday (the 14th) onward. Here are a few:

The Landscape Show. Ideally, I'd be at this show, but other commitments came up. Held in Orlando, it's the top show for the sunshine state's unique landscaping and nursery businesses, which run the gamut from lush tropics to pine scrub. It's this week, September 15-17, so if you're going, get a move on!

<http://www.fngla.org/thelandscapeshow/>

GoPro Series: Plug & Cutting Conference. Hosted by AmericanHort, this is the world's best event for anything having to do with plug and cutting propagation. I should know, I helped run it for almost two decades. Ball Publishing is proud to be founding sponsor, and I'll be out in Carlsbad, California, for the event, including a stint as bus captain for the Monday tour. It's September 19-21.

http://americanhort.org/AH/Events___Programs/2016/Plug___Cutting/plug_cut_home.aspx

Casual Market Chicago. This event is the home of the hottest and coolest patio furnishings. I'll be there for a day, looking for the trendiest new stuff to feature in *Green Profit's* December Style issue. It's September 20-23 at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago. The nice thing about it? You can always find a place to take a load off.

<http://www.casualmarket.com>

CanWest Horticulture Expo. Another event I just love, as much for the British Columbia setting as anything. The two-day show (September 28-29) is the largest in western Canada. It's no longer held in downtown Vancouver (it moved east to Abbotsford in 2015), which is a bit of a bummer. But then again, it's super easy to visit some of the country's best growers.

<http://canwesthortshow.com>

Berger's Technical Grower Talks. No, not *THAT* *GrowerTalks*. These are four technical "Grower Talks" on "Mastering the Craft of Growing Media," hosted by Berger, the growing media company. They're September 29 in Watsonville, California. (Oh, and it's burr-zhay, not burger.)

<http://www.berger.ca/en/tgt-california/>



Dummen potted plant open house

This event is still a ways away, but it's unique, so I thought you might want to get it on your calendar, especially if you're a potted plant grower. Dummen Orange is hosting its "Potted Plant Palooza" November 30 at the Franklin Park Conservatory in Columbus, Ohio.

What's a Potted Plant Palooza, you ask? They say it's a "sneak peek at our latest poinsettia and other potted flowering crop varieties, consumer insights and marketing concepts for 2017."

You can follow event updates on [Facebook](#). And check out [VIDEO](#) from last year's event.

Find all these and more at the world's best horticulture event calendar, hortcalendar.com. Bookmark it!



Buds and Blossoms

At Ball Publishing, we cover the cannabis marketplace only as it pertains to keeping the horticulture industry informed in case any of you are interested in pursuing that particular business if and when it becomes legal in your state.

Certainly, it's moving fast: According to NORML.com, there are 13 pending ballot initiatives coming up in November to legalize either medical or recreational marijuana.

But there are other ways to cash in on the crop than growing it, including our way. For instance, Colorado florist Bec Koop started Buds and Blossoms, a “wedding weed” and special event florist, after trimming her personal marijuana plant and deciding to try combining the pot buds with some roses. The result inspired her to start her new floral venture.

“It was one of those creative stoner moments that actually panned out,” she said.

Read the [FULL PIECE](#) in *420 Intel*.

Got an opinion to share? Or want to read what other folks have to say? Click [HERE](#).



Finally ...

Back in Florida, we called them “condo commandos”—those retired busybodies on the board at your condo complex who told you what you could and couldn’t do with your unit. Wait, that’s wrong. They only told you what you couldn’t do; there was nothing allowed.

Sounds like the Avignon Villas subdivision in Olathe, Kansas. That’s where Jim Hildenbrand is having a run-in with his homeowners association (HOA), the neighborhood equivalent of the condo commandos.



Jim apparently violated the neighborhood’s deed restrictions by—horror of horrors—having a tasteful landscape installed (the one above). We’re talking shrubs, a small retaining wall and some mulch. Yet he’s now out nearly \$300,000 in court costs over his battle with the HOA. As one former HOA board member said, “This individual was not going to stop with just putting in the wall. Next would have been a koi pond, or he would have put some playground structure or something up. We had to say no.”

You can read the full story [HERE](#).

Now, admittedly, when you move into a neighborhood with an HOA, it’s your job to know and comply with the rules. As the same fellow above said, “You knew the rules when you moved in. If you don’t like it, you’re free to move someplace else.”

A friend of my late father lived in a subdivision in Florida where you were only allowed to have

your garage door open when you were moving a car in or out. My dad said, "I wouldn't live in a neighborhood like that!" His friend retorted with a smile, "It's people like you we're trying to keep out!" (my dad was changing his oil in the driveway at the time).

Thankfully, River Ridge doesn't have an HOA, and I couldn't be happier. I like changing my own oil, too.

Got an opinion to share? Or want to read what other folks have to say? [Click HERE](#).

Rudbeckia 'Treasure Trove'
New to Proven Winners
Perennials for 2025-2026!



See you next time,

Chris Beytes

Editor

GrowerTalks and *Green Profit*

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