

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Gotta Get MEE Some

Chris Beytes

A cross section of retailers from 20 countries learn about Dark Get MEE Campanula, bred and produced by Gartneriet PKM in Denmark. PKM was the only grower stop on the International Garden Center Association's tour of Denmark, held August 9 to 14.

PKM is world-renowned for campanula, which they began growing in 1960. Today, campanula production peaks at an amazing 500,000 pots per week during the spring, with total annual production reaching 16 million pots from 45 acres of greenhouse. (They also grow schlumbergera, rhipsalidopsis and helleborus.)



Labor costs in Denmark are high—20 Euros (\$23) per hour, plus an additional 35% for benefits—and PKM has several strategies for controlling those costs. One way is to take cuttings in Poland, where labor is cheaper. But PKM's stock plants are in Denmark. How do they do it? They harvest the tops of the stock plants, cool them, then ship them to Poland. The cuttings are shipped back to Denmark for sticking by hand.

A second method is through automation of the sticking process. PKM already has machines for sticking their holiday cactus cuttings; they hope to have a working campanula-sticking machine within the next six to nine months, says PKM's R&D Manager Christian Hald Madsen.

In the U.S. and Canada, PKM has licenced Dark Get MEE to Rocket Farms and Sunrise Greenhouses. **GT**