Cultivate ’17 Recap



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Cultivate ’17 Recap
The Winner Is …
Pre-Gaming
Let’s Get on With It
Hey, Sports Fans!
Shipping Foliage
Christmas in July
I Found a Plant!



Cultivate ’17 Recap

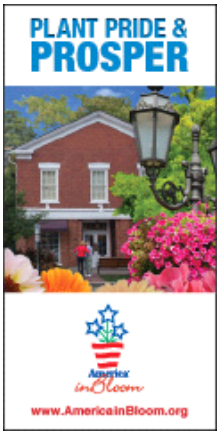
Another Cultivate is in the bag, and per usual there is a ton of information and new products to mention. But first, let’s do a little recap.

The show looked and felt a lot different this year. It felt a lot more roomy, and that’s because the AmericanHort organizers added 30,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space. The Columbus Convention Center did undergo a massive renovation and expansion, so why not take advantage of it? By the way, kudos to you, Columbus Convention Center, for a beautiful new look, new food vendors and just a really nice place to hang out for 8+ hours a day. Anyway, that extra space held 698 exhibitors, 155 of them new to the show.

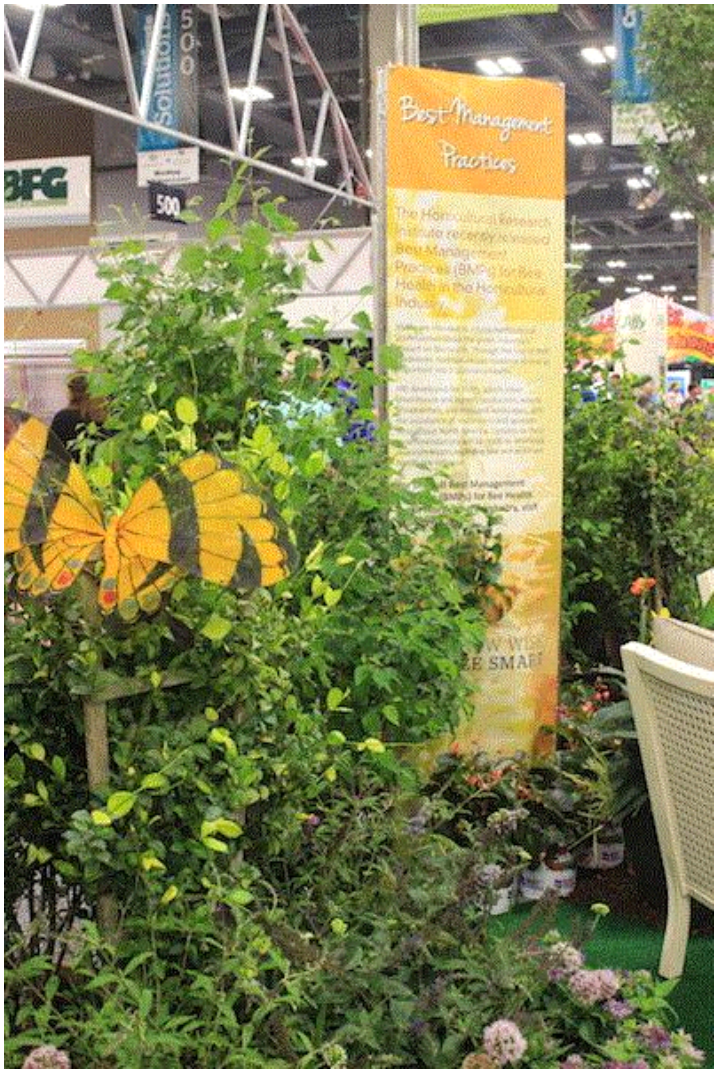
With all that extra space, AmericanHort decided to do a bit of shuffling. You didn’t find any of those “old” exhibitors where they were in previous years. Good or bad idea? Here are two reasons why I think it was exactly what the show needed: 1) It got people out of their cozy booths or their







routine patterns of walking the show and really made them open their eyes to find what they were looking for, which often leads to seeing new stuff, and 2) the reshuffling allowed AmericanHort to incorporate their own displays, previously jammed and short-shrifted on the concourse, onto the show floor. Here's a look at AmericanHort's Pollinator Park display:



Case in point, this year's New Varieties Showcase was the most extensive I've seen. Maybe it's always been that large, but being on the show floor meant I actually got to see it! Lots of folks I spoke to found the New Varieties Showcase much more inviting, better illuminated and more accessible than in previous years. For folks who couldn't make it to Spring Trials—and most can't—this is a big upgrade in seeing new varieties for the very first time.



What's your take on this? Share it and see what others have to say HERE.



The Winner Is …

My favorite part of Cultivate each year is getting to directly meet the three Young Retailer Award finalists. Each of them had big, bright smiles on their faces—and that was even before the YRA celebration began on Monday evening! They are ecstatic and smiling because of the trade show and educational session experience. There's just so much to learn and apply to make their businesses and careers even better. And it can't really be done without the help of you all who submit your best retail rock stars and, of course, our sponsors Dümmen Orange and AmericanHort. Thanks!

Oh, right … who won?

Andrea Snelgrove from Wingard's Market in Lexington, South Carolina. Well done, Andrea!



Andrea Snelgrove (center), winner of this year's Young Retailer Award, with Stephanie Genrich (left) and Vashti Kern (right).

On the grower side of things, Jill Mullaney from the Dallas Arboretum in Dallas, Texas, took home the Young Grower Award.

Congrats to you both! You have wicked bright futures ahead and I'm looking forward to picking your brains for articles as the year rolls on.

What's your take on this? Share it and see what others have to say HERE.



Pre-Gaming

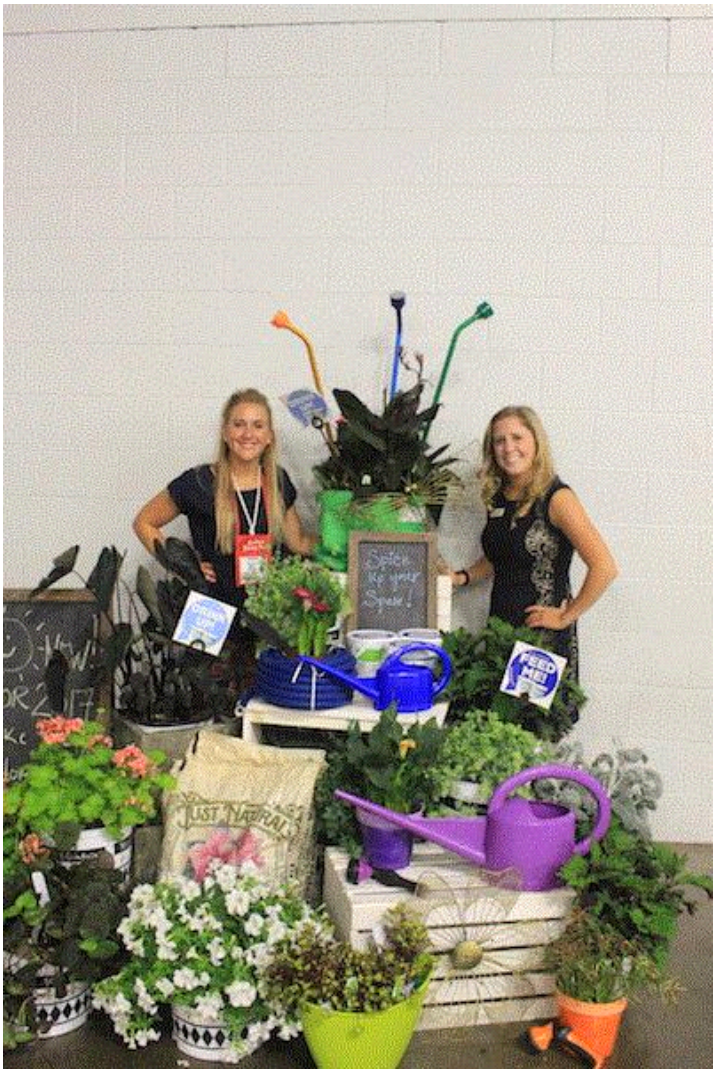
Speaking of our Young Retailer finalists, there was a fun pre-ceremony competition between the three thanks to the AmericanHort Retail Merchandising Contest on Monday afternoon. It also allowed for a friendly rivalry between three competing trade magazine editors—myself included!

The three teams of two (I was paired with Stephanie) were presented with identical hard goods and accessories and, choosing from a plethora of available plants, were given 20 minutes to create an attractive and shoppable garden center display. Hey, 20 minutes goes by fast!

Stephanie and I gave it our best …



And so did Vashti and teammate Abby Kleckler …



But taking home the Merchandising Contest win this year were Andrea and teammate Michelle Simakis. Said Michelle after the victory, “Really, I had nothing to do with it!” (just having fun, Michelle!).



What's your take on this? Share it and see what others have to say HERE.



Let’s Get on With It!

Okay, folks. I know you’re looking for what’s new, so let’s get on with some of the items we found for you. I’ll start with the Stack Trellis from Larry and Diane at Scroll Trellis.



The Stack Trellis is a four-pronged plastic trellising system for barrels, hanging baskets and anywhere else you’d like to give support for climbing or vertical plants. It’s improved over the previous design by being injection molded, having attachment sites along the trellis for both plant vines and twine, and having the ability to stack kits one on top of another for taller plants. It’s definitely a problem solver for consumers.

What's your take on this? Share it and see what others have to say HERE.

Hey, Sports Fans!

Here's a nice cross-merchandising product to go with Sporticulture's licensed, sport-themed logo pots. It's a Team Pride LED projection light. If you're going to have mums potted up in Denver Broncos-logo'd pots, might as well make a dash for a sports fan's extra cash and offer up the chance to have that horse emblazoned on his house come Sunday night.



It's about helping you promote outdoor décor. Oh, and there are giant inflatable team helmets, too!

What's your take on this? Share it and see what others have to say HERE.

Shipping Foliage Made Easier

There are issues that you, the garden retailer, know about that us trade editor types don't really know about. One of those topics is how difficult it is to ship foliage out of Florida. From what I understand, if you don't require enough volume to fill a truck, you have to arrange your own shipping, whose cost is essentially unknown until the weight, sleeving and packing options are

finalized. It's enough of a headache for garden centers north of Florida to not want to order foliage. That's not really an option now, is it?



Heart of Florida Greenhouses in Zolfo Springs, Florida, has a mind to change that. They are shipping their full assortment via FedEx Priority. The boxes are max 40 in. tall (so no plant material over that height), 40 in. wide and 48 in. deep. Salesman Austin Bryant tells me they never, *ever* ship over a weekend, either, meaning less waste coming your way. It's a great way for smaller IGCs and florists to better manage their inventory, allowing them to place smaller orders more often and adjust the assortment considering demand while keeping shipping costs low. Great idea, huh? The Garden Center Group thought so, too, and gave them a TPIE 2017 Cool Product Award.

What's your take on this? Share it and see what others have to say HERE.

Christmas in July

Another shipping news item—M&M Wintergreens debuted their Shop & Ship Collection at Cultivate. The Cleveland-based wholesale Christmas and winter greens business will now be offering an e-commerce ready solution to garden centers for the coming season.



What they have are three new products: a wreath and two versions of a porch pot. What M&M has done is create the designs, products and packages for retailers to purchase. The retailer then ships them to the consumer. Rather than have your customers' dollars heading Amazon's way, they can still purchase a beautiful wreath or porch pot from your own e-commerce site.

What's your take on this? Share it and see what others have to say HERE.

I Found a Plant

I give new plants at Cultivate a cursory glance as I have already seen a lot of them at Spring Trials. I did find a plant at Cultivate this year that piqued my interest. It's a small grape from Weeks Roses called RazzMaTazz. It's actually a muscadine grape, which are native to the southeastern and south central portions of the U.S.



These “grapelettes” are seedless as well as thin-skinned. RazzMaTazz is hardy to Zone 6a, giving folks fruit from bloom time all the way up until frost. Prune it back by a third each February for best production. Jeff Bloodworth is the breeder behind this variety.

What's your take on this? Share it and see what others have to say HERE.

Hey, what about that tour of IGCs around Columbus? I'm saving that and a few other highlights for next week! Meanwhile, got something to share? Just drop me a line at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



Ellen Wells
Editor-at-Large
Green Profit

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