Amazon patents new "garden service" plus top 10 trends from the chefs

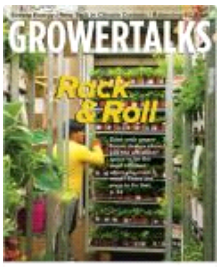


A sustainable e-newsletter from GrowerTalks and Green Profit

GROWERTALKS MAGAZINE greenPROFIT MAGAZINE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2017





Fresh From Our Advertisers

See what's new from the suppliers shaping the industry—request advertiser product details now.

GROWERTALKS greenPROFIT



Get to the Root of It
We know greenhouses!

NGMA
National Greenhouse Manufacturers Association



greenTalks
sustainability e-news

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Top 10 Trends
Battlefield Farms
Amazon's Garden Patent
Hedgerows for Beneficials
It's Been a Year



Top 10 Hot Trends from the Chefs

The chefs of the American Culinary Federation have spoken. 2018 is all about healthy, sustainable and simple choices at restaurants.

According to their survey, these are the top 10 trends that emerged:

1. Hyper-local. Food grown on the premises.

2. Chef-driven fast-casual. Great meals that are fast, convenient and affordable.

3. Natural ingredients and clean menus. We're talking high-quality greens, grains and proteins.

4. Food waste reduction. Not only does it save them money but it's good for the environment.

5. Veggie-centric/vegetable-forward cuisine. They're putting vegetables on the same level as beef and fish in these dishes.

6. Environmental sustainability. Diners want to know how restaurants are protecting the environment and conserving water and energy.

7. Locally sourced meat and seafood.

8. Locally sourced produce. And guess what? They say they're willing to pay more for the freshest produce.

9. Simplicity/back to basics. They're looking at classic dishes and fewer ingredients.

10. Farm/estate-branded items. Consumers want to connect to their food, and a branded item assures them of quality.

It all looks like good news if you're a grower supplying restaurants.



Battlefield Farms Goes Beyond MPS-ABC

What do you do when your company is serious about sustainability and you want to take it to the next level? Battlefield Farms in Rapidan, Virginia, has been working with the MPS sustainability certification since 2010 and is MPS-A certified. But in November, they added a new certification: MPS-GAP.

Travis Higginbotham, director of research & development at Battlefield Farms, explains that the choice for MPS-GAP was made to stay accountable in both their efficiencies and their environmental impact. Battlefield Farms says their big box retailer customers in the northeastern U.S. have set increasing requirements for both chemical use and production, and for that reason the MPS-GAP made perfect sense.

According to MPS, the GAP certificate is the next step after getting your MPS-ABC certificate. It was designed for companies that supply flowers and plants to retailers, and it contains production requirements for safety, the environment, and traceability.

As for 2018, Battlefield says they're already looking toward further improvements. "We are very serious about succeeding in business and environmental sustainability/efficiency," says Travis.



Amazon Patents Garden Service

What will Amazon do next? According to the patent office, they're looking to match their customers' gardens with the products they might most need. Amazon recently received a patent for a "garden service" that relies on algorithms and image recognition software to make recommendations.

How will it work? It seems that you'd take a picture of the plants in your yard and the service would identify the plants, recommend recipes, related gardening items to order, and maybe some groceries. But it will also analyze the growing area—and recommend plants that will do well

under those conditions. All of which you would purchase online (obviously, from Amazon).

To quote from the patent application and their example: “The garden service may also determine from the images that a large brick pizza oven structure may shade the south-end of the backyard. As such, the garden service may recommend a wild ginger plant, also available at the electronic marketplace, as a low-shade plant that can be grown in the south-end of the backyard.”

You can access the 23-page application here.

Now, there’s no saying that this patent will turn into an actual Amazon service. They actually filed for the patent in 2014 and it was only approved in October 2017. But we do know the company is thinking hard about food (after their recent purchase of Whole Foods) and how to monetize that market. And the garden market may be part of the equation.



Hedgerows for Beneficial Insects

The National Center for Appropriate Technology (ATTRA) has a new guide out, “A Pictorial Guide to Hedgerow Plants for Beneficial Insects.”

It gives growers a guide to some of the most beneficial hedgerow species used to farmscape for native pollinators, insect predators and parasites in California.

Not a bad idea if you want a hedgerow that does double duty. (Or if you’re a grower who wants to supply those plants.) The digital version is free; download it here.

It’s Been a Year

Well, that’s a wrap for 2017. Thank you, as always, for tuning in to *GreenTalks*.
May your holidays be full of joy, and may the new year bring the best of things.

See you in 2018.

Good wishes to all,



Jennifer Duffield White
jwhite@ballpublishing.com

This email received by 24,180 loyal readers!
Want to be one of the lucky sponsors who reach those readers of *GreenTalks*? Drop Paul Black a line and he'll tell you what a bargain it is!

GreenTalks® is a registered trademark of Ball Horticultural Company in the U.S.