

Perennials of the Year, Social Media Tips and the 2018 Proven Winners Introductions



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Scent™ Lavender
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The advertisement features a close-up photograph of purple lavender flowers on the left. On the right, the Syngenta logo is partially visible. The text 'syngenta.flowers' is in a green sans-serif font, 'Scent™ Lavender' is in a dark blue sans-serif font, and 'Available Now >' is in white text inside a dark blue rounded rectangle with a white arrow pointing right.

News and commentary for the perennial market



The block contains a dark blue horizontal bar. On the left, the text '*News and commentary for the perennial market*' is written in a yellow italicized serif font. On the right, there are two logos: 'GROWERTALKS MAGAZINE' in a white box with red and black text, and 'greenPROFIT MAGAZINE' in a white box with green and black text.

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Perennial PULSE

News and commentary on the global perennial plant market

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- Allium Millenium
- PW 2018-19 Introductions
- Social Media Tips
- Wisteria Lane
- Spring Trials
- Another Perennial of the Year

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BASF
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Allium Millenium



Walters Gardens, Inc.

I can't think of a better way to start the first newsletter of the year than by covering the [Perennial Plant Association's](#) 2018 Perennial Plant of the Year, Allium Millenium. The formal announcement was made several months ago, but over the years I've become accustomed to covering it every January.

Millenium sure is a nice ornamental allium. Unlike many of the alliums out there, which bloom in the spring, Millenium blooms in the summer. It forms attractive 1-ft. tall and wide clumps of narrow, glossy green deer- and rabbit-resistant leaves. These appealing clumps are topped with 2-in. rosy-purple flower heads for over one month in the summer. The blooms attract loads of butterflies and honeybees and don't produce viable seeds. That's right—there's no annoying seedlings and Millenium is not invasive.

This Perennial Plant of the Year is easy to grow and tolerates a wide range of soil types, typically is pest and disease free and can be enjoyed in full sun to partial shade. Millenium was bred by Mark McDonough (aka Mr. Onion) and first introduced to the industry by [Plant Delights Nursery](#).

With its ease of production, striking landscape appearance and other great attributes, Millenium is a great perennial that could easily become a staple in the landscape and should be around for a long, long time (perhaps until the next millennium).



Proven Winners 2018-19 Introductions

Hot off the press! There are 29 new introductions to the Proven Winners perennial program this year. Here are a few of my favorites:

Heuchera Peachberry Ice



Peachberry Ice is one of six new heuchera to join the Proven Winners program. I love a good orange plant—they're hard to find aren't they? This one really catches your eye with its awesome large 4.5- to 5-in. apricot-orange leaves, which also has an attractive silver overly. The leaves have a pronounced ruffling that nicely reveals the bright pink undersides. The coloration is the most intense on the new leaves in the spring.

Peachberry Ice grows around 10 in. in height, with the clumps spreading to 30 in. or so; the flower scapes also reach about 30-in. tall. The foliage of this Zone 4 perennial does it for me, but if you're into coral bell flowers, it produces airy, cream flowers held on burgundy stems.

Kniphofia Orange Blaze



Let Orange Blaze set your landscape ablaze with its eye-popping bright orange flowers (I told you I liked orange). This is one of six new PW introductions to the Pyromania collection of kniphofia. It's one of the most compact cultivars of the collection with its flowers being proportionate to the foliage. It reaches an attractive 2-ft. tall or so when in bloom. Did I mention this Zone 5B red hot poker reblooms and provides color late in the season?

Phlox Magenta Sprite



I wish I could show you a few more (maybe another time), but my final 2018 PW selection I'd like to show you isn't orange. It's Magenta Sprite, a new spring blooming hybrid phlox cultivar. It blooms a week or so later than *Phlox subulata* cultivars, providing a great option for extending spring color in the landscape. This hybrid phlox also doesn't spread aggressively and has a nice, low-mounding habit (just 6- to 8-in. tall), which eventually can spread to about 20-in. across. This Zone 3 perennial and the other two cultivars in the Sprite series are definitely worthy of your consideration.

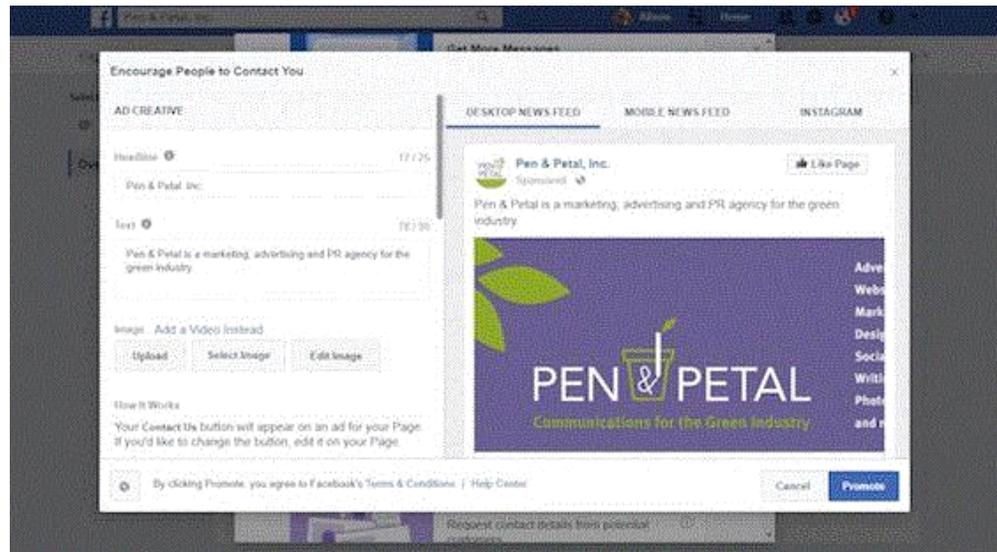
Besides the genera I've shown here, PW has added new anemone, baptisia, hibiscus, hosta, monarda, nepeta, salvia, sedum and veronica cultivars to their impressive perennial offerings.

Click [here](#) to check out all the new 2018 PW perennials.



Social Media Tips

Finding the right strategy for Facebook can be a real challenge, especially in the green industry. It's hard to find the right audience and choose the right advertisement. Not knowing what the best practices are can cost you a lot of time and money. Pen & Petal has found some unique tips for advertising through Facebook and I convinced them to share them with me and you.



Optimizing Your Facebook Advertising Strategy

1. Choose the Right Target Audience

Your ads are only as good as your defined audience. Certain options should always be selected for an ad, such as age, location, job roles and interests. As you select the different options in these categories, you'll reach the desired audience. The more specific you are in your selections, the better the opportunity for success.

2. Different Ads Types & Outcomes

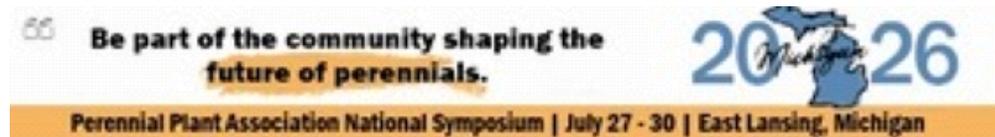
Facebook has the ability to do a variety of ads; this makes it ideal for business advertising. Some types of ads include boosting a post, setting up a promotion, getting more messages or simply promoting your business. Depending on your desired outcome for the post, Facebook delivers multiple options for follower interaction. Your ads should always aim to encourage the viewer to like, follow or comment.

This type of interaction is pivotal in social media advertising. The possibilities are endless, but your selected options are crucial to your ad success.

3. Right Priced Ads

You don't need to break the bank for Facebook advertising. Many social media platforms offer low-priced ads that range from \$5.00 to \$20.00. The price of a single ad can vary depending on duration, demographics and your desired outreach. Finding the right options for your greenhouse can help you determine what the best value is for your paid advertisements. Having more specific demographics, a longer duration and a limited area of outreach are all factors that can make the cost of your ads increase. It's also important to think about the cost of an engagement. How much are you willing to spend for a like, share or comment? The answer to this question can help you decide your business' Facebook advertisement budget.

If you're digging these tips as much as I am, check out their website (<http://penandpetal.com>) and consider subscribing to their free [newsletter](#).



Wisteria Lane

No, this isn't a reference to the once popular TV drama "Desperate Housewives"—I'm referring to a great new buddleia I saw at the Creek Hill Nursery booth this week at the MANTS Trade Show in Baltimore. Wisteria Lane is a unique weeping form of buddleia, which as the name implies, resembles wisteria vine.



From my understanding, it just blooms and blooms and (wait for it) blooms regardless of the time of the year. Having said that, it's listed as a summer bloomer. Wisteria Lane was brought to the market by [Cultivaris North America](#) and will totally rock in containers, but don't forget about the unique appearance this Zone 5 perennial can bring to the landscape.

Spring Trials



Terra Nova Nurseries' display at the 2017 Spring Trials.

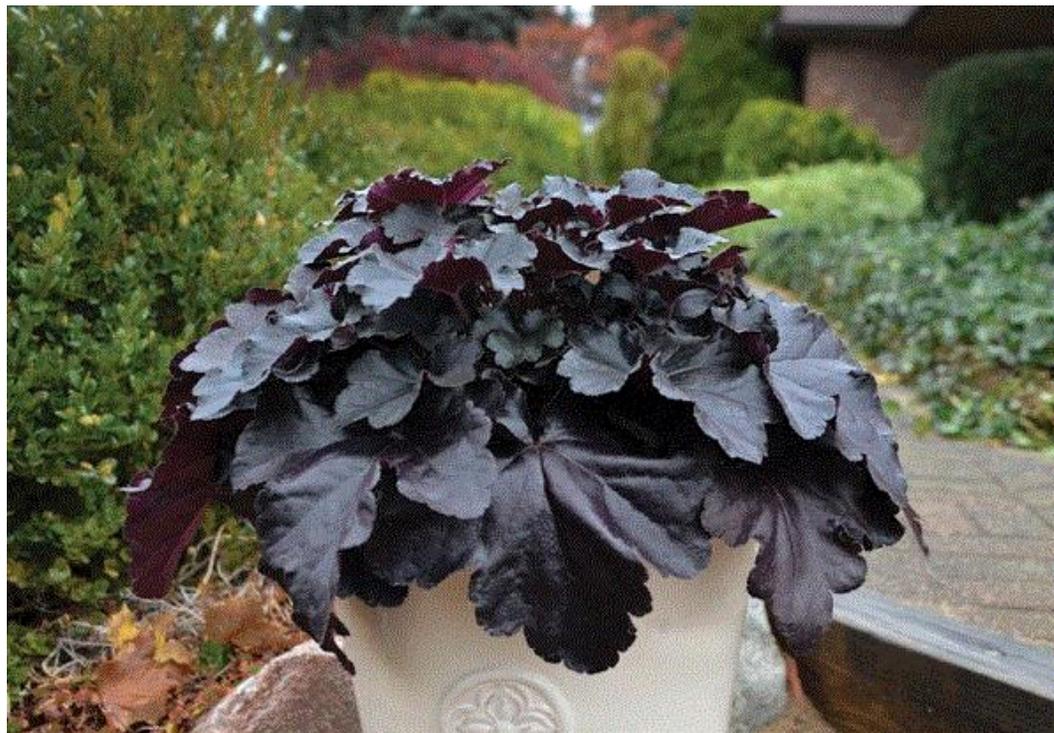
As you begin planning your spring growing season and what few other activities you can squeeze in, consider attending the 2018 California Spring Trials in April. Although the recent wildfires have caused a significant amount of damage and many homes and businesses were lost, none of the Spring Trial sites were affected, and as they say in Hollywood, the show must go on.

The trials are being held from Saturday, April 14 to Thursday, April 19, 2018. There are several trial locations spread across much of Central and Northern California. Each year, I see more and more perennials at the trial locations. Many companies—including Darwin Perennials, Dümme Orange, Green Fuse Botanicals, Kieft Seed, Pacific Plug & Liner, PlantHaven, Proven Winners, Star Roses and Plants, Syngenta Flowers and Terra Nova Nurseries, to name a few—will have some of their recent and new introductions on display. I'm hopeful my schedule will allow me to attend the trials again this spring. If so, I'll definitely share some of my findings with you in future newsletters.

You can view the complete listing of participants, obtain relevant contacts, travel tips and more by visiting *GrowerTalks'* very own Spring Trials website: www.springtrials.com.

If your company is planning to showcase new perennials at Spring Trials and you're willing to reveal some details—perhaps share a sneak peak of a new introduction—please send me an email (ppilon@ballpublishing.com). I know everyone would appreciate an early look at the next perennial superstar.

Another Perennial of the Year



Please let me apologize in advance for loading you up with so many Proven Winners perennials. However, since I covered the 2018 PPA Perennial of the Year above, I thought it would also be a good time to let you know about the Proven Winners 2018 Perennial of the Year: Heuchera Primo Black Pearl. I've featured this one in a past [newsletter](#) when it was one of the 2016-17 new PW perennials.

To recap, Black Pearl has perhaps the blackest leaves of any heuchera on the market. It's hardy to Zone 4 and, in my opinion, is worthy of being in most perennial programs. Click [here](#) to learn more about Heuchera Primo Black Pearl.

Please accept my belated and best wishes (and successes) for the New Year. I hope you enjoyed reading this edition of *Perennial Pulse*. Feel free to email me with any article ideas, questions for future newsletters or just to say hello. My email is ppilon@ballpublishing.com.

Paul Pilon
Editor-at-Large
Perennial Pulse

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