

GROWERTALKS

Features

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Cultivate From Home

Chris Beytes, Jennifer Zurko, Ellen C. Wells, Jennifer Polanz, Bill Calkins

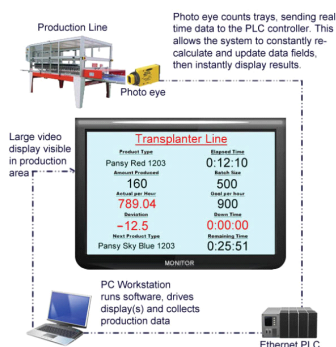
We weren't sure what to expect when AmericanHort announced they were going to attempt a virtual trade show this year. We'd poked around in other online trade shows in the past, and found them a hard and boring slog.

Then again, we've never attended an online trade show where we knew most of the vendors and many of the people "walking" the "aisles." The time we spent online "visiting" booths and looking for new products was punctuated with chats with long-time colleagues and friends about missing the North Market, Short North, Jeni's ice cream, and admitting that this is the most well-rested we've ever felt at Cultivate (the enticing Columbus restaurants and nightlife can offer the temptation of some late nights).

AmericanHort CEO Ken Fisher says that more than 9,000 people registered for the event, with thousands on each day of the four-day show. Anytime we were online there were 1,600 to 1,900 others online, too. And we were especially impressed by the crowd at the Monday morning State of the Industry presentation by Craig Regelbrugge, Dr. Charlie Hall and Ken Fisher, which showed more than 700 people in attendance—more than they can accommodate during the live event.

So we give AmericanHort a 10 out of 10 for giving the industry someplace to gather this summer—even if it was via computer and Zoom. Here's what we saw and learned while we were clicking around the booths.

Automation



AgriNomix released a Production Pace Timer they call a "Scoreboard," which allows greenhouse managers and team members to see how well a production line operates compared to the desired production rate.

CEO Rob Lando explains that the system projects a live image to a Smart TV hung over the production line showing the product type, amount produced in units and per hour vs. the goal per hour, elapsed time and down time, and then using red (behind) or green (ahead), visually shows the team their performance.

"Humans like us want to drive to a goal, not monotony," he says. "It's a great motivator."

Launched this spring, the scoreboard puts measurement, tracking and data collection front and center.



The new Folium wireless and mobile smart sensor from Autogrow gives growers the climate data they need to make production decisions in real time. Folium collects and monitors temperature, humidity, CO2, PAR, RAD and barometric pressure, and transmits this data via Bluetooth, allowing production managers to see the entire greenhouse environment.

Representative Kayla Waldorff says the growers that can benefit the most from this system are those who want to measure and optimize climates.

“You can’t improve what you don’t measure, and with six readings in one unit, growers can see the whole environment at a much deeper level,” she said. “Because there are so many types of readings that are affected by others, it’s important to understand the relationships between sensor types with this level of data density.”

WPS actually has an interesting backstory: founder Eef van Zanten was the inventor of the original patented Preforma plug in the 1980s, which Jiffy still sells today. After that, he came up with the FormFlex growing system. And in 1992, Eef developed the Walking Plant System, a conveyor system specifically for potted plant growers that allowed for a much easier way to move plants around the greenhouse.

Ten years later and using the acronym for the Walking Plant System, WPS became a standalone company. The company continues to improve on the system, called SmartFlo, with the addition of a benching system and computer software to make it as innovative as possible.

The newest addition to their SmartFlo conveyor system now includes a new extendable part that you can pull out while it’s actually on to connect and extend the belts across and around the greenhouse. Workers can even walk on them to use as “moving walkways” to get from different parts of the greenhouse.

WPS is based in the Netherlands and has experienced most of its growth in Europe, however, more growers in North America have started adopting the SmartFlo system. Edwin Dijkshoorn of WPS said that they’ve recently installed a 34-acre system at Rockwell Farms in North Carolina.

Edwin said that the SmartFlo system does save a lot of time and labor, but more importantly, it significantly decreases the type of “back-breaking labor” like manually moving and spacing pots.

You can see the SmartFlo extender in action on [WPS’ YouTube channel](#).

Pest Controls & PGRs



AzaSol from Arborjet is a new water-soluble 6% Azadirachtin powder insecticide and insect growth regulator from the Neem tree. Product representative Hayden Davis says it provides an exceptionally potent, non-oil based and environmentally friendly insect control solution. And vegetable growers will appreciate the ability to harvest the same day AzaSol is applied.

“It’s not oily and won’t clog equipment,” she adds. “It won’t burn leaves or block photosynthesis and is systemic and translaminar.”

Growers have two more plant growth regulators in their toolbox with new introductions from Fine Americas: Advocate and Crest. Advocate is a stimulant for foliar and basal cuttings for annuals, perennials and woody ornamentals to help promote rooting. Its active ingredient is 20% Indole-3-butyric Acid and it’s registered for use in the following states: AL, AZ, CO, FL, GA, IA, ID, IL, KY, LA, MI, MN, NC, NY, OH, OK, OR, SC, TX, UT, VA, WA, WI and WV. More specifically, it’s for use on woody ornamental cuttings, softwood cuttings, herbaceous and hard-to-root perennial plant cuttings, hardwood cuttings, pot roses cuttings and others.

Meanwhile, Crest is a plant biostimulant that can improve the germination of seed, plant emergence in cool conditions, root growth, seedling development and plant growth/development throughout the growing season. It’s registered for use on softwood cuttings; shrub and woody ornamentals; flowering plants and shrubs such as poinsettia, rose, azalea, rhododendron, crepe myrtle; and for other flowering and non-flowering shrubs. It’s registered in the following states: AL, AZ, CO, FL, IA, ID, IL, KY, LA, MI, MN, MS, NC, OH, OK, OR, SC, TN, TX, UT and VA.

LALSTOP K61 WP is an EPA-registered rhizosphere biological that serves as a biological defense against seed and soil-borne pathogens, including Fusarium, Phytophthora, Pythium and Rhizoctonia. It can be applied as a drench or spray, and the dried spores of the active ingredient, Streptomyces sp. strain K61, germinate and grow on and around the plant’s root system. And it thrives in the rhizosphere for several weeks. It’s OMRI-listed and also compatible with most chemical pesticides for use in an IPM program.

OHP showed off their most recently launched pesticide products, two of which are traditional and one of which is a biosolution. Pradia insecticide is a combination of two unique insecticides providing both contact and systemic activity. Pradia contains cyclaniliprole and flonicamid in a soluble concentrate formulation for use as a foliar spray. It delivers a quick knockdown (48 hours) and excellent long-term control of three to four weeks of residual activity on problem insects such as aphids, thrips and whiteflies. It’s registered everywhere but California.

Sarisa insecticide contains a novel active ingredient, cyclaniliprole, formulated as a soluble concentrate, which acts on contact and ingestion. Sarisa provides quick knockdown (48 hours) of target pests with residual control of three to four weeks on thrips, caterpillars and beetles (including flea and Japanese beetles), along with other sucking and chewing insects. It’s also registered in all states but California.

OHP's new biosolution is Grotto, a bactericide/fungicide. Grotto is an effective broad-spectrum agent for prevention and control of diseases in a variety of plants and crops. It's OMRI-listed and approved for organic production. Grotto is labeled for use on greenhouse and shadehouse vegetables and herbs, ornamentals, and turf. Diseases controlled include Anthracnose, bacterial blights (*Pseudomonas*, *Erwinia*), Botrytis, Cercospora leaf spot, downy mildew, powdery mildew, Phomopsis, volutella leaf blight and more.

CytoFlor is a new plant growth regulator by Mycorrhizal Application's parent company, Valent BioSciences. It's a 6-BA product long used in agriculture that's now labeled for ornamental plants. The active ingredient, 6-benzyladenine, is an essential plant hormone that promotes cell division and differentiation in plant roots and shoots. By promoting cell division, application of CytoFlor during vegetative growth can increase lateral or basal branching to create more compact and marketable plants. Application of the product can also increase flower bud formation when applied during the reproductive stage. The formulation provides rapid absorption into the leaf, which in turn aims to reduce runoff and assure a faster delivery, along with thorough and efficient plant utilization of the active ingredient. CytoFlor is not yet labeled for California.

Growing Media/Inputs/Greenhouse Tools



Bringing European expertise to North America, BVB Substrates offers peat media to professional greenhouses. Sales manager Arjan Haasnoot explains that European peat offers the following benefits over other sources: higher porosity, strong and stable structure, low dust content, and improved drainage and overall hydrodynamics.

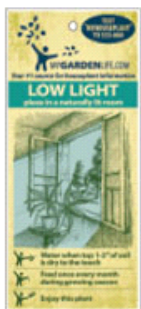
"I think, for most growers, the most critical benefit is higher air-filled porosity without having to add perlite," he says.

RediRoot's Essential line of air root pruning propagation trays stops circling roots before they start. By starting plants and trees in air root pruning propagation trays, their root structures will develop to be dense, fibrous and in their natural direction of growth. The line currently includes two tray designs (18- and 32-cell), both in a 10x20 configuration to fit standard greenhouse trays and benches, and featuring automation holes for common equipment sizes. The Essential line expands on RediRoot's Classic line by being suitable for automated/machine labor.

According to the folks at T.O. Plastics, the new SVD-450 square pot with a tag slot and corresponding 10-count, low-profile carry tray is the first and only thermoformed tag slot pot and tray system that's able to utilize the press-fill system for tray filling. It's a true quart that has tag slots on all sides to assist with tray filling and tag insertion. The 10-count corresponding carry tray is a low-profile design, leaving a large marketing space available on the pot for adhesive labeling or hanging tags.

Koen Pack's paper pulp pots are made of 100% recycled fibers, composed of paper pulp from recycled brown cartons. The pulp is printable and compostable, and colored with water-based ink. Available in 4- and 6-in. sizes, in

natural, pink, green, lilac, yellow, orange and red.



A new company to us, MAD—which offers benches, grow lights, ebb-and-flow trays and other greenhouse equipment—also offers eco-friendly, plant-based solvents to clean dirt, grime and algae from greenhouse walls, floors and equipment. Surfaces safely cleaned with their biodegradable, plant-based greenhouse cleaning product formulas include acrylic, aluminum, concrete, glass, granite, grates, greenhouse walls, plexiglass, polystyrene, stainless steel, tile, wood, brick, stone, pavers, composite decking and asphalt. They've got an ebb-and-flow table/tray cleaner, a greenhouse floor and wall wash, and “clean the green,” a concentrated cleaner safe to use around plants. Each product comes in 32-oz., 1-gal. and 5-gal. sizes.

MasterTag is excited about their new Houseplant Tags. And why shouldn't they be, seeing how the trend is still white-hot, but houseplant tags look like they're left over from the last houseplant trend of the 1970s. MasterTag's Gerry Giorgio says the goal of the new tags is to provide the consumer with as much information as possible.

“Light is their primary concern and need of direction when selecting a plant, so we provide detailed, yet visual direction here, along with other important information,” such as a text code.

Says Gerry, “Unlike QR codes, most people text. And when they do, they are taken to a landing page on our consumer website, MyGardenLife.com, where they will have an abundance of good care information and inspiration.”

Panacea Products, a planter and pot cover company, is hot on the farmhouse trends with their new Modern Farmhouse Grower Collection—wire baskets in trendy shapes with coco or fabric liners (in a Bistro print). There are also black metal Washtub planters with copper handles. Freestanding, wall and hanging basket planters round out the collection.

New Varieties



Tradewinds Hibiscus Canyon Combos from Aris Horticulture are tropicals gaining a lot of attention this year. Marketing director Christine Kelleher calls them “a plant-lover's dream.”

“What's unique about the collection is that all of the varieties are in the same family,” she says. “This means they have identical growth habits and foliage, allowing growers to create uniform pots and hanging baskets.”

The family includes Pink, Light Blush, Light Orange and Red.



Lemon Glow Barberry.



Junior Giant Arborvitae.



Starfield Hydrangea.



Kimono Hydrangea.

A few years ago, a handful of nurseries around the country joined together to create an independent co-op to breed and produce new trees and shrubs for the industry. Called SynRG, the group includes Willoway Nurseries in Ohio, Saunders Brothers in Virginia, Prides Corner in Connecticut and Overdevest Nurseries in New Jersey.

One of their new introductions is Lemon Glow, part of a series of non-invasive Japanese barberries bred and tested by the University of Connecticut. Like the other barberry in the WorryFree collection, Lemon Glow won't produce seedlings or spread to unwanted areas. Approved for sale in New York State by the Department of Environmental Conservation, Lemon Glow has bright yellow foliage and is excellent as an accent or foundation plant, in addition to low hedge and border uses. Plus, it's deer-resistant. Height is 1.5 to 2.5 ft. and it spreads to 2 to 4 ft. Hardy to Zones 4 to 9.

Arborvitae are known to serve as ideal backyard evergreen privacy screens because of their fast-growing habit and dark green, fragrant, feathery foliage. One of the most popular arborvitae is Green Giant, which is aptly named because it's 30- to 40-ft. tall. For those who want something similar, but on the smaller side, the new Junior Giant matures at 18 to 24 ft., making it a much better fit for sites where space is limited. Just as long-lived as its predecessor, Junior Giant lasts up to 40 years in the landscape. Hardy to Zones 5 to 8.

Van Belle Nursery had four new introductions for their popular Bloomin' Easy brand. Two big-leaf-type of Hydrangea macrophyllas that bloom all season now include Starfield and Kimono. Starfield has butterfly-shaped, "Japanese-style" flowers in pink or blue. And Kimono has two-toned red flowers. Both grow 2- to 3-ft. tall and wide, and are hardy to Zone 5.

Cherry on Top is a dwarf sorbaria that starts with white, plume-type flowers that turn into red seed pods to extend attraction into the fall and winter. It grows 4- to 5-ft. tall and wide, and is VERY hardy to Zone 2.

Beekeeper caryopteris is named as such because its beautiful blue flowers are pollinator magnets during the summer and fall. It grows 2- to 3-ft. tall and wide, and is hardy to Zone 5.



Lilac Cascade Buddleia.



Rain Dance
Clematis.



Plum Rosy
Baptisia.



Jurassic Gold
Dryopteris.



Pretty Parasols
Echinacea.

We usually see new varieties from Walters Gardens during Spring Trials through the Proven Winners brand. But at Cultivate, Walters was focusing on their new non-branded introductions.

Lilac Cascade is a buddleia with large panicles (12 to 18 in.) and an arching habit. It blooms a tad later than others on the market and the folks at Walters believe that it's sterile (they're trialing for that now). Lilac Cascade grows 5- to 6-ft. tall and is hardy to Zone 5.

Rain Dance is a bush-type herbaceous clematis that doesn't vine like others on the market, so you have to train it to climb. The indigo-blue flowers grow outward, which is unique for herbaceous clematis, we're told. After the flowers are done blooming, there's a nice seedhead left over for extended interest. Very hardy to Zone 3.

Walters has some nice hibiscus in their lineup and Blackberry Merlot is a great addition to that. The blooms start off as dark—almost black—buds that open to a HUGE dark red flower (8 in. across). Hardy to Zone 4.

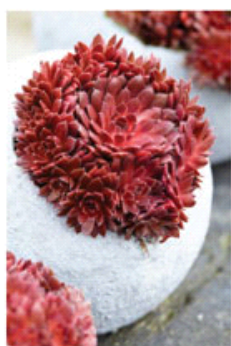
Baptisia is a staple of a lot of public perennial gardens and Plum Rosy features a unique flower color ... actually, two colors. It starts off dark purple and then turns to a lighter rose-purple as it ages. It's more compact than others on the market—3.5 to 4 ft. in height and width.

There were two newbies that caught our eye in the 2021 Fresh Picks from Emerald Coast Growers. The upright orange-gold fronds of Jurassic Gold Dryopteris wallichiana stand atop more mature golden and green fronds to create a bright spot in shady plantings. It's hardy to Zones 5 to 9 and is deer resistant, as many ferns generally are. It tops out around 24-in. tall.

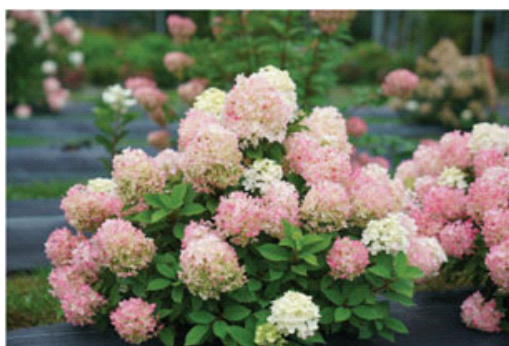
The other new intro we thought worth mentioning is Pretty Parasols echinacea, with its reflexed, creamy-white petals tipped with pink at their connection point with the cone. Multiple blooms emerge from a single stem and the stems are sturdy, helping it stand up to winds and rain. It flowers from midsummer deep into autumn and reaches heights of up to 36 in. Hardy in Zones 4b to 9.



Patio Peonies



Sempervivum Colorockz
Coral Red



Fire Light Tidbit Hydrangea.

Consumers continue to look for plants that fit their patios and porches, and Ednie Flower Bulbs—a division of Fred C. Gloeckner & Co.—

has answered that demand with its new Patio Peonies line. There are eight plants in the lineup, all named after famous cities worldwide like Dublin, London, Rome, etc.

Growers can pot bareroots up in the fall for spring and summer sales, or they can be held for two seasons to command a higher price with a larger plant and more flowers.

Jeffrey den Breejen, flower bulb division manager, said, “While it has been in the works for a few years, it has flown under the radar in the testing phases and, as to my knowledge, this is the first U.S. show that it’s being introduced at.

“They are new genetics, the plants are naturally more compact than the traditional garden peonies. Also, they don’t need the stakes to hold them up like some of the regular garden peonies.”

You want new succulents, but where to find them? Look no further than Quality Cuttings Team (QCT). They have a new *Echeveria gibbiflora* series called Coral Reef, which includes Aqua, Chocolate, Pink and Red, as well as E. shaviana Truffles, Jade Point, Secunda and Sempervivum calcareum Rubin.

Most exciting is definitely the Sempervivum Colorockz Coral Red. It was such a bright red color, with great branching and a strong root system. And it’s an award winner, bringing home the Silver Medal at the HTA National Plant Show in the U.K.



Petite Knock Out Rose.



Black Diamond Radiant Red



Micro-Doser Kit

Need more varieties of *Hydrangea paniculata*? Spring Meadow has three new ones!

Limelight Prime. Earlier blooms, more compact habit, stronger stems and better flower color make this an upgrade over Limelight.

Quick Fire Fab. This new hydrangea from Proven Winners ColorChoice Shrubs extends the hydrangea season weeks earlier, providing three months or more of color.

Fire Light Tidbit. At just 2- to 3-ft. tall, this *H. paniculata* fits nicely at the front of the border while also giving you tons of blooms of creamy green to bright pink.

All three are hardy to USDA Zone 3.

There’s a new Knock Out in town and don’t let its size fool you—it’s a winner. Petite Knock Out rose has exceptional flowering and easy maintenance as all Knock Outs do, but now in a much smaller package. Petite gets just 18-in. tall and it’s black spot resistant, too.

Other new varieties from Star Roses and Plants include Sitting Pretty rose (a pink-bloomed grandiflora from Will Radler with a medium scent); Enchanted Peace rose (a compact, disease resistant, bi-colored hybrid tea rose with great fragrance); and Akadama hydrangea, a heavy deep-pink bloomer that's sized for small spaces and containers.

J. Berry Nursery has added a new color into their Black Diamond Crapemyrtle Collection. Black Diamond Radiant Red features ruby-red blossoms and black foliage with a compact habit. Foliage doesn't fade, and these crapemyrtles can take the heat and drought. Ideal for flowering hedges, focal points in a landscape and container gardens. It's also resistant to leaf soot and flowers until frost.

Nutrition

The new Micro-Doser Kit from Dosatron allows growers to direct inject acid at micro rates and finetune dosing systems to make adjustments to get it just right. Representative Pam Temko explains that this kit includes a water meter and pressure relief valve, and can accurately inject super-concentrated products. The kit can work in combination with Dosatron's Water-Powered NDS or as a standalone solution for fixing pH issues.

Especially for Garden Centers

As you would expect, there's been a huge focus on safety tools for growers and retailers to use during the pandemic, so for companies like Wellmaster Carts, their racks, wagons and carts have been in hot demand—especially for retailers doing curbside pickup.



Hands-free Sanitizer Pump



Wreath Rack Rental Program



GardenStraw

With COVID-19 providing some additional inspiration, the team at Wellmaster came up with a hands-free sanitizer pump that you can put in your greenhouse or store. Activated by a pedal on the base, sanitizer sitting on the adjustable tray dispenses without any contact. The holes in the base and in the stand make it easy to anchor to the floor or wall. And the protective hood over the sanitizer pump prevents overspray.

Lots of garden centers and growers are familiar with E-Z Shipper's rental carts and racks. Now the company is offering a holiday version with its new Wreath Rack Rental Program. The program offers retailers pre-merchandised racks with customizable POP that are ready to place on the sales floor.

"Since all we do is racks and logistics we're always looking at avenues to expand," explains Jim Rice of E-Z Shipper.

"Anywhere reusable packaging can supplant disposable packaging we investigate it. We collaborated with a couple wreath suppliers on the prototypes and program details last year."

The racks can hold 108 20-in. wreaths or 75 24-in. wreaths. Racks are delivered to growers in September/October and to retailers in November. E-Z Shipper recovers the racks from retailers in January.

Retailers have a new option for consumers looking for straw for their gardens. GardenStraw is a division of HealthiStraw, a company that harvests wheat straw from Canadian prairies for a variety of agriculture uses, including farming and equine. Their newest product is a 3 cu. ft. bag of compressed straw for retail.

"We were getting requests," says Deana Braun, communications coordinator for HealthiStraw. "We were aware of the need for gardeners to have a clean, easy-to-use mulch. A product that could be used with vegetables and flowers."

She says the retail bag can cover approximately 100 sq. ft. of garden space at about 2- to 3-in. thick. It can be used for mulching, lawn seeding and aiding drainage for a compost pile, as well as for pet bedding or decorative purposes.

Digital Tools/New Technology

LandscapeHub, a digital marketplace for the landscaping, nursery and retail garden center industry, and Epicor Software Corporation have announced their plans to integrate LandscapeHub's sourcing, estimating and purchasing solution with Epicor's Retail Cloud and Eagle Products. Beginning this fall, the integration will allow retailers that are using Epicor's retail product to streamline their plant purchasing and selling. Interested? Educational sessions will take place via shared webinars. Information is available on the companies' respective websites: landscapehub.com and epicor.com.

Congrats to the winners!

Even though Cultivate wasn't held in person, we were still able to announce the winners of our Young Grower and Young Retailer Awards at the Plugged In Unplugged virtual event. Turn to page 36 to read about the 2020 *GrowerTalks/Nexus* Young Grower Winner, Stephanie Berkhout of Qualitree Propagators. And then flip over to page 22 to meet Lindsay Squires of Tagawa Gardens, this year's *Green Profit/RBI* Young Retailer Winner.



Stephanie Berkhout (left) and Lindsay Squires (above) when they found out they won.