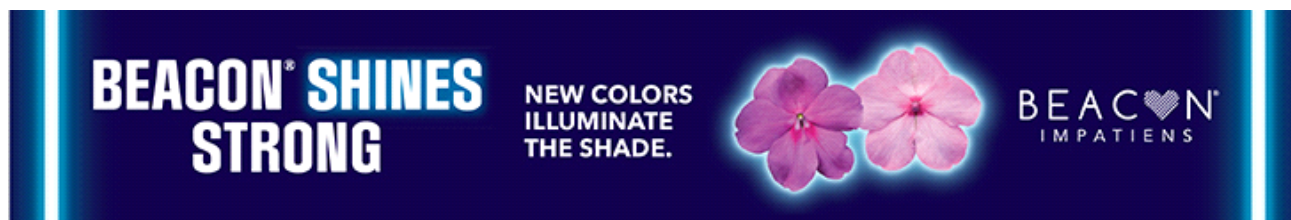


## Last Weekend Was Super! Plus Sales by Day; Ping's Roses



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#### COMING UP THIS WEEK:

How was May 5-6?  
- Breaking records  
- Not a good start to Saturday  
- John's weekend score formula  
- 3 big weekends coming up!  
Sales by day of week  
Ping Lim on his two rose brands



**How was May 5-6?**



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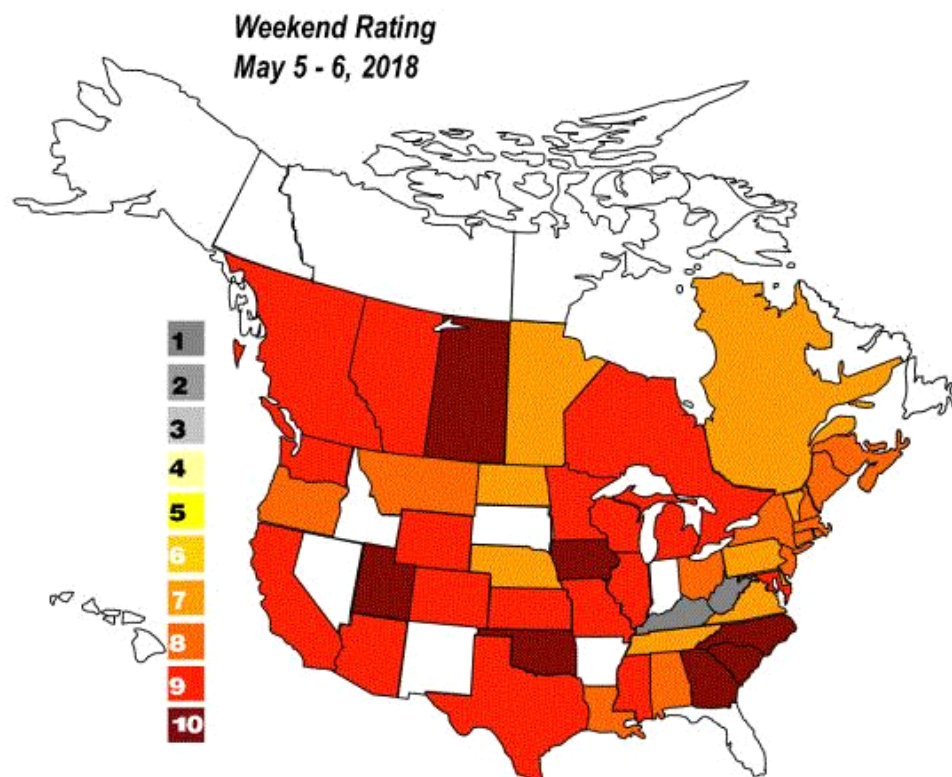
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Fabulous! Just the way the first weekend in May should be ... for the vast majority of you, anyway. Unfortunately, there are some folks in the Ohio Valley region (parts of Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee) who got soaked much of the weekend, resulting in some low scores. But they were in the minority. From corner (Maine—8) to corner (Washington—9) to corner (Alabama—8), favorable weather led to strong sales.

The result? An average of 8.2 in the U.S. and 8.4 in Canada, with 36% of you rating the weekend a perfect Bo Derek (10). Compare that to last year's depressing 6.3/4.7 for the same weekend (more like Bo Diddley).

Here's the national map for last weekend:



That's based on 121 scores from 41 states and 7 provinces.

Now, 8.3 is good, but it's not the best non-Mother's Day first-weekend-in-May that we've seen. In 2015, you scored May 2-3 an astounding 9.1 (7.4 in Canada). That included 79 10s (52%)! I remember that weekend ... I think I recorded 17 or 18 10s in a row before finally getting one lower.

Still, May 5-6 was rock solid. Just look at the regional scores:

South	7.8
West	9.0
Midwest	8.9
New England	7.8
East	7.5
Mountain	9.0
Plains	8.4
Northwest	8.5

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In 2016, the first weekend of May was Mother's Day, and it scored 8.3/8.4—just 0.1 higher in the U.S. and the same in Canada. So who knows what might happen next weekend, what with all the pent-up demand. Let's just hope the weather holds.

*Sun Parasol*  
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## Breaking records

You sent in some great notes about your weekend. Many of you set sales records. Here's a sampling of the comments (score is in parentheses):

**Michigan:** "Beautiful weather and record sales for the first Saturday of May! We have caught up to last year's YTD sales."—Jerome Vite, Vite Greenhouses (10)

**Illinois:** "Best single day ever on Saturday and best week we've ever had! Beautiful weather made for a near perfect week. Soli Deo Gloria."— Trevor Woldhuis, Woldhuis Farms (15)

**Iowa:** "Are you sure it wasn't Mother's Day?"—Kate Terrell, Wallace's Garden Center (10—"Really a 12")

**Oklahoma:** "Awesome, recovering from April nicely."— Joe Ward, Southwood Nursery (10)

**Michigan:** "More than doubled my previous opening-day record. Had steaks Sunday night!"—Karen Brohl, Brohl's Flower Garden (10)

(That's my idea of a celebration, Karen!)

**Oklahoma:** "I think our business has at least doubled from last year!!!!"— Tami Adams, Calvert's Plant Interiors (10)

**North Carolina:** "Best Friday/Saturday since before the Depression."—Samuel T. Franklin, Jr., Franklin Brothers Nursery (10+)

(Not sure if you mean the Great Recession [2008] or the Great Depression [1929], Samuel, but either way, that's a good weekend!)

**Kansas:** "Excellent weekend, finally making up some of the lost sales of April. Hoping for another strong week. So far it looks like another record week."— Kathy Miller, Sedan Floral, Inc. (10+)

**Arizona:** "Still strong! Usually we expect to start slowing down this time of year. A late, unseasonably cool week led into 100F-plus temperatures this week. That is what we expect, and the staunch Arizonans are still in the garden!"—Cathy Bishop, Mesquite Valley Growers (10)

**Missouri:** "Customers went right past the pansies and osteospermum left from the prior five horrid weekends and went right to the lantana, mandevilla and ixoras."— Tanner Jones, Helmi's Gardens (9.5)





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How'd you like to start a big May weekend this way?





Peter Rofner of Richmond Nursery in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, wrote the following tale and sent me a link to his Facebook page, where I found the above photos:

"Came in the morning to a bit of a disaster after a wind storm moved through Friday. It didn't seem to deter customers much, and we had a great sales weekend to help make up for it. Sunday better than Saturday. Still rather cold and frost warnings, so not everything is out for sale, but I see progress. I'm sure we could have sold more if all our bodies weren't righting all the fallen plants and then some!"

Despite all that fun, Peter gave the weekend an 8. A prime example of the innate optimism of people in the plant business.



## A mathematical formula for scoring the weekend

From algorithms to gut instinct, you each have your own way of assigning a 1-10 score to your weekend. John Derrick of Elk Lake Garden Centre in Victoria, BC (who gave his weekend a 10+) tells me he uses the following formula for his ratings:

- A 20% increase in sales over previous year rates a score of 10
- A 10% increase is worth 9
- Sales the same as last year, an 8

Sounds like a good formula, John!

Got your own system to your scoring? Share it with me [HERE](#).

## Coming up: Three big weekends

This is it, folks, Mother's Day, Victoria Day in Canada and Memorial Day, and then we hit June. This is what you've all been working toward! (I would say "we," but I just type and travel, YOU are doing all the real work to make Spring happen).

No telling what the forecast is going to be like across North America for the next three weekends, but for fun, I looked up the Mother's Day weekend rain forecast for places with



"Mother" in the name.

Fri/Sat/Sun

Motherwell, Ontario	80%/60%/20%
Mother Lake, Minnesota	100/20/10
Mother Neff State Park, Texas	20/10/10
Mother Goose Lake, Alaska	50/60/20
Hungry Mother State Park, Virginia	40/20/20



## Sales by day

Last time, I mentioned that I was curious about which days of the week are busiest or quietest for garden centers. Several of you shared your findings. I won't name names, but here are a few:

### U.S. IGC in the Northeast, daily sales for 2017:

Monday – 9.1%  
Tuesday – 10.4%  
Wednesday – 11.3%  
Thursday – 13%  
Friday – 15.1%  
Saturday – 21.6%  
Sunday – 20%

### Canadian IGC, for five weeks of May 2017:

Monday – 11.3%  
Tuesday – 15%  
Wednesday – 13%  
Thursday – 10%  
Friday – 18.7%  
Saturday – 31.6%  
Sunday – Closed

### East Coast DIY supplier, multi-year data:

Monday – 10%  
Tuesday – 9%  
Wednesday – 8%  
Thursday – 10%  
Friday – 14%  
Saturday – 30%  
Sunday – 19%

I had originally asked the question because I wondered if Saturday and Sunday are equal in sales. Based on just these three answers ... I still don't know.

But if you are sending in separate scores for Saturday and Sunday, you can do your own weighting based on your results. If the two days are equal, and Saturday was an 8 and Sunday was a 4, then go ahead and average them out to 6. But if Saturday tends to accounts for more of your business than Sunday, then maybe your 8 and 4 average out to be 7.



## Ping Lim on his two rose brands

One of the interesting and memorable offerings from the 2018 California Spring Trials was a new line of garden roses from Altman Plants, exhibited by their Plug Connection division. Roses from Altman? I thought they were a succulent specialist! But apparently the company sells jillions of roses, and Ken Altman wanted his own line, so to that end he hired renowned rose breeder Ping Lim, who has developed the “True Bloom” brand of roses for Altman. Their claim to fame is the ease and durability of a shrub rose with the upscale look of a hybrid T, all on an own-root (non-grafted) plant. We met Ping at Spring Trials. An engaging fellow!



Ping came to Altman in 2012 from Bailey Nursery, where he also bred their roses, the “Easy Elegance” line, which we saw at the Bailey display up at Pacific Plug & Liner, at which time we were reminded they have similar characteristics to True Bloom. So what’s the difference between the two lines? I emailed Ping to find out.

Ping told me that he did, indeed, breed both roses—“and proud of it!” he added. Both breeding programs were focused on producing a healthy bush with better flowers—more like hybrid tea roses. But while Easy Elegance is tagged as “a shrub rose with the look of a hybrid tea,” True Bloom emphasizes a higher petal count and a great flower/foilage ratio, which gives better heat tolerance. In fact, he said they resist calling True Bloom a “hybrid tea shrub.”

The biggest difference is heat tolerance, he says. True Bloom was bred and selected in Southern California to thrive in the warmer Zones of the country (where Altman does much of its business). Easy Elegance emphasizes cold tolerance all the way north to Zone 4.



Bottom line? Two good rose lines selected for regional excellence by one respected breeder. Of course, Easy Elegance has been on the market since 2004 and offers two dozen colors, while True Bloom is brand new to the market and has yet to prove itself to consumers.



## Finally ...

Curious about how online plant sales are doing? Here's an interesting blog titled "[I Bought a Fiddle-leaf Fig from the New Amazon Plants Store.](#)"

What I note is how the piece is definitely pro-houseplant, and how Amazon (or more correctly, the grower that filled the order for Amazon) did a great job getting a nice plant to the author, resulting in a satisfied customer who now wants more plants.

I also note the big-name nurseries associated with supplying Amazon's plants.

Now, is this bad news for brick & mortar retailers? Of course not! Getting people hooked on plants is the goal here, and Amazon (and Walmart and Home Depot) are good at exposing non-plant people to our products. Once they're hooked and are looking for more, and maybe stopping in at your business, that's when you need to do a good job selling them.



If they walk out empty handed, or use your place to “showroom” (browse products in the flesh and then buy them online), then you need to evaluate your product offerings and sales tactics.

As for whether or not the rubber plant is the next fiddle-leaf fig, I’m dubious. I think the fiddle-leaf is still hot.

Got an opinion? Weigh in [HERE](#).



See you next time!

Chi

Chris Beytes

Editor

GrowerTalks and Green Profit

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