

News from Hawaii, plus Coral Creations and Color Spot



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TROPICAL TOPICS

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

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All That Above?
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Coral Creations Delayed
Color Spot Bankruptcy



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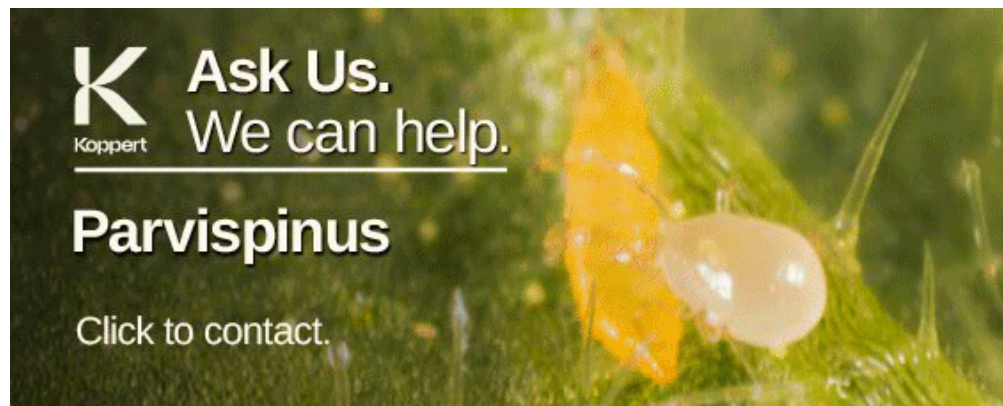
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News from Hawaii

When I think tropical, I think Hawaii. Unless you've been living under a lava rock, you probably know that the Kilauea volcano has been erupting on the Aloha State's Big Island. I've been checking in with my tropical-loving compadre Hawaii resident Richard Criley to first see about his safety and second, to get a local's view of what's happening and how it might be impacting horticultural industry in the area.

Richard is fine—he lives on another island 400 miles away. As for growers in the volcano area, Richard says there aren't too many—maybe none—near where the fissures have opened up. "Lava is now flowing into the ocean and creating 'laze,' which is an air pollutant of hydrochloric acid as the lava hits the ocean," Richard wrote a week or so ago. "Our trade winds are presently blowing that mostly to the southwest which does impact the Kau district, but mostly it is blowing out to sea, for now. The fissures vented a lot of sulfur dioxide which, mixed with rain and fog, becomes sulfuric acid. Any of that blowing to the west or northwest can impact the few flower growers upslope on the volcano."

He also sent me a [LINK](#) to an article about some area orchid nurseries that are being impacted by the "laze" (lava haze) and "vog" (volcanic fog) ...



All That Above?

I wrote the above news yesterday before finding out that Bossman Chris Beytes had just spoken with couple Mike Hughes and Yachi Li, owners of Hawaiian Tropicals Direct, a 10-acre orchid nursery on the Big Island. Mike and Yachi are 21 miles from the volcano so they didn't think they'd be impacted ... until a major fissure opened up nearby. A 60 ft.-tall wall of lava, running a mile wide, destroyed three greenhouse locations, resulting in a loss of \$10 million in inventory. They also lost their home, employee living quarters and a beach house.



In this photo you can see the large white rectangular roof on one of their greenhouses being engulfed by the lava flow.

"Mike says much of the Hawaiian orchid industry is ... was ... located in the Puna district, and possibly 80% of orchid production was wiped out by this one flow," Chris reports. Mike and Yachi were the biggest producers. Chris continues, "Also impacted are papaya, citrus, noni and other ag. Mike told me, 'If the lava didn't get 'em, the sulfuric gas got them, or the acid rain—the vog—all of the gases coming off of that [lava flow] have literally torched huge areas of land.'"

All this makes the worries about rainy weekends seem a bit mundane, doesn't it?

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Tropical Style is Trending

Because it's the season of all things colorful—and in this industry that usually means annuals—I haven't had many tropical plant-related topics come across my desk. Well, I did get one last week that, upon further inspection, could be a heck of a lot more tropical plant-related than its headline proclaims to be.

I'm referring to a Houzz e-newsletter article entitled "[My Houzz: Tropical-Chic Style in a 1950s New England Home](#)." Oh, it's indeed very tropical chic! Just take a look at the introductory photo:



I count five or six tropical plants in that living room—not counting the tropical-themed throw pillows. Tropical themes are a big trend, especially inside the home and even here in stuffy Olde New England. But nowhere in that article does it mention what tropical plants are used and how to choose the right ones for an indoor space.

You know what that means, of course: opportunity. Folks love that tropical look—and we can supply it in actual plant form. For every article out there on design sites there should be a corresponding "And This Is What You Can Grow" piece about the look, along with sources for plants and so on. Pushing plants on a design site? Yes, please! And why not include some snazzy ads alongside the articles, too? You want a tropical look? It's not complete without the tropical plants.

And speaking of tropical looks, my boss Chris Beytes of *Acres Online/GrowerTalks* fame built his very own tropical plant-themed room last year.



Not too shabby, huh? Maybe he's the one who should be pushing tropicals on design sites, no?

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Coral Creations Delayed

I was notified that the new line of succulents from Proven Winners—Coral Creations—will be delayed.



The Bobbleheads got a look at Coral Creations at Spring Trials this year and we thought it was wonderful. But “after running the numbers” of growers and retailers saying they wanted to grow/sell it, PW decided to put a delay on offering the line. They’ll use that time to build up a pile of clean stock to meet demand. So, if you were looking forward to Coral Creations, you’ll still get it—you’ll just have to look a little further down the road is all.

Color Spot Bankruptcy

As reported by Bossman Chris Beytes last week, Color Spot Holdings filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on May 29. While they focused on annuals and woodies, they did have some tropical patio items, too. They were a big player, especially in the western market, and the fall of any company of that size will have an impact on the industry as a whole. Maybe Color Spot’s circumstances will present an opportunity of some sort for your own patio tropicals business. We’ll see.

Anyway, for Chris’ breaking news item on Color Spot, click [HERE](#). And for an excellent journalistic exploration of Color Spot’s journey to bankruptcy, you can find Chris’ coverage [HERE](#).

Have comments, questions, news to share? If so, just drop me a line at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ellen".

Ellen Wells
Editor-at-Large
Green Profit

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