

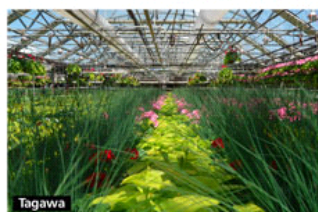
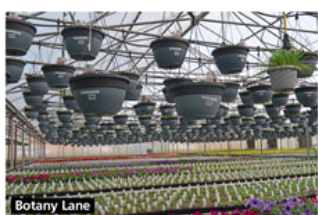
GROWERTALKS

Features

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Plug & Cutting Conference Sneak Peek

Jennifer Zurko



One of the benefits of attending AmericanHort's Plug & Cutting Conference is the chance to tour local businesses in the host city's area or participate in interactive, hands-on workshops.

During this year's conference in Denver September 19-21, the Industry Production Tour, which takes place on Monday, September 19, will take attendees to four Colorado growing operations for an up-close and personal look.

Botany Lane Greenhouse: A locally owned and operated wholesale grower with three facilities—two in

Texas and one in Colorado. With more than 100 employees, Botany Lane has a total of 835,000 sq. ft. of environmentally controlled growing across all facilities. The 300,000-sq. ft. Colorado facility is where most of the propagation work takes place, as they grow and propagate plants in liners and finished sizes, including annuals, perennials, succulents, herbs, veggies, tropicals and foliage. You'll learn how they've streamlined production for greater efficiency and see propagation of tropical flowering plants, foliage plants and stock production.

Brown's Greenhouse (Bloom Farm): A wholesale grower of annuals, perennials and vegetables, Brown's Greenhouse (which was recently renamed and will soon be known as Bloom Farm) was established more than 30 years ago and produces crops in five locations. On the tour, you'll learn more about their new line of business using the Ball WebTrack system for young plant sales under Bloom Farm's sister company Rocky Mountain Liners. They're one of the few growers who still offer 50-cell trays and the team continually seeks to find unique niche plants to create excitement in the garden. With a commitment to urban gardening, another sister company, Plum Creek Garden Market, opens seasonal pop-up retail operations around the Denver metro area, including Boulder, to reach more customers. You'll visit Bloom's latest expansion featuring a greenhouse with an automated pulley system to improve order-picking operations.

Tagawa Greenhouses: One of the largest greenhouse operations in North America, Tagawa grows more than 2 million sq. ft. of plants at any given time. They originated as a carnation greenhouse and later expanded into growing bedding plants and roses, then blooming plants, poinsettias and young plant production. Their InColor Retail-Ready plants can be found in big box garden centers, like Costco and Home Depot, and grocery chain Safeway throughout Colorado and the surrounding region. Tagawa offers multiple tray sizes of 50, 102 and 200. During the tour, you'll

visit stations focused on seeding, collation and pansy plug production.

Welby Gardens: A fourth-generation, family-owned greenhouse and garden retail operation, and the exclusive grower of Hardy Boy Plants, Welby has 10 acres of greenhouse and 2.5 acres of hoopouses, offering annuals, perennials, ornamental grasses, and organic herbs and vegetables. Their plants are sold to independent garden centers and landscapers with a focus on the high-end market. On the tour, you'll learn about their proprietary 4-pack tray program that's color-coded based on pricing, their approach to managing seasonality and product mix, the changes they've experienced in recent years to improve efficiency and their bottom line, and their 20-year expertise in growing young plants. Learn how Welby Gardens developed a hexagon pot to improve shipping efficiencies and about their cross-dock partnership program with Tagawa Greenhouse. You'll see their shipping in action and their transplanter equipment in operation.

Lunch and transportation for the tour is included in the price of \$195.

On the same day, there are also two half-day interactive workshops:

- **Everything You Need to Know About Advanced Use of Biocontrols—A Hands-On Workshop:** Managing pests in the greenhouse goes beyond just spraying and releasing beneficials. There are many sophisticated techniques that can improve your pest management program. This popular workshop, led by Suzanne Wainwright-Evans of Buglady Consulting, will focus on advanced techniques with applied lessons you can put to work in your operation immediately. Designed for growers already using biocontrols, popular crops discussed will include poinsettias, petunias, greenhouse grown hemp and more. This four-hour session will be broken into chapters, each covering information that will grow your IPM skill set and help you produce a high-quality crop more sustainably and effectively in 2022.

- **Back2Basic Workshop—Practical Skills for Growers:** This workshop, held at Tagawa Greenhouses, will cover practical skills essential to being an effective grower. Stations will be set up to help attendees learn best practices and perfect skills crucial to growing a healthy young plant crop. This is an ideal opportunity to learn from industry experts as participants and ask in-depth questions while refining your skills in these important growing functions.

Already a confident grower and looking to find tools to prepare and train your team? During this program, industry leaders also will share practical tools in training your new grower teams to ensure a smoother training program back home in your operations.

After the workshop, be sure to check out the series of Back2Basics education sessions available at the Plug & Cutting Conference. They'll bring back workshop trainers and dive even deeper into best management and growing practices for young plant production.

The two half-day workshops are \$125 each. **GT**

For more information about the Plug & Cutting Conference and to register, go to AmericanHort.org/Plug.