

Danziger + Syngenta = Perennials? River Ridge; Roses vs Annuals



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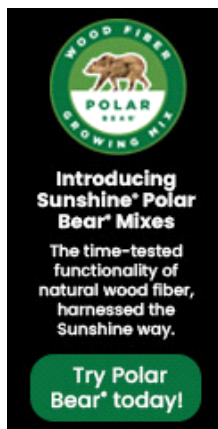
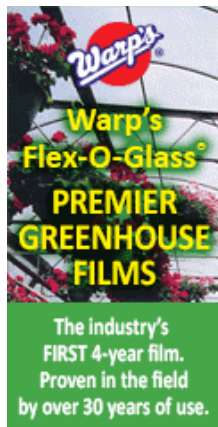
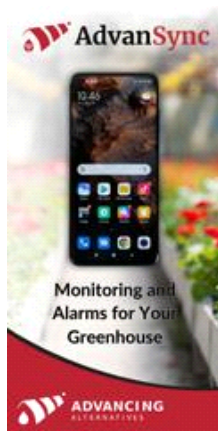
Danziger, Syngenta perennials
River Ridge down
Roses, hydrangeas vs annuals
New Blooms a success
BrightFarms makes *Forbes* list
IGOTY deadline extended
Water baskets by weight
Two AAS-winning melons
ColorLink's flat-rate shipping
Finally ...

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Danziger, Syngenta join to market perennials



Don't call it a merger, call it a partnership to sell more stuff. That's at least what I gather from the announcement that breeders Danziger and Syngenta Flowers are going to join forces to market their respective perennial varieties to growers in the U.S. and Canada under one new brand name: ThinkPlants.

And according to the press release, it seems as though others are invited to join the program:

"This new marketing initiative not only supports the respective efforts of Danziger and Syngenta, but also opens the door for additional breeders and suppliers to market their varieties under the ThinkPlants family of products, enabling brokers and growers to more efficiently create and book their perennial program."

It won't be just perennial liners, either, because joining the two in the brand will be Dutch calla breeder Kapiteyn and bare-root perennial and bulb supplier Unex USA. Danziger Guatemala will provide the Danziger and Syngenta young plant supply chain genetics for the program for 2019-2020. (An interesting sidebar: Express Seed Company is an owner of the ThinkPlants trademark, along with Syngenta and Danziger.)

Scott Valentine, Head of Syngenta Flowers North America, says, "Syngenta is committed to providing our grower and broker partners with the best-of-the-best innovative breeding and top-quality supply of seeds and cuttings. This new initiative in the bulb and bare-root classes continues to deliver on this commitment."

Adds Ori Danziger, Deputy CEO of Danziger, "We witness an increased demand for high-quality perennials in many markets, as well as North America. By creative collaborations, with strong partners, we believe we have created the best value proposition for this market."

ThinkPlants will be on display at Cultivate'18 in Columbus, Ohio, at booth #1525. To learn more, visit www.ThinkPlants.com.

Sun Parasol
FiredUp Coral



River Ridge down! A bunch!

I blame the crappy (pardon my French) weather for the big decline in gardening in River Ridge, my middleclass Chicagoland subdivision. How else can I explain the fact that only 52.5% of my neighbors gardened this spring, compared with 58% last year and 60% the year before. Certainly, they can't be losing interest in gardening in general?

That was the main takeaway from this year's River Ridge Report, which you can read in its entirety [HERE](#).

I blame weather because Illinois had one of the poorest springs in years—cold, wet, then hot, sub-par weekend conditions ... the state tied for second-worst in my Spring Weekend Survey, with just 5.7 points out of 10 (Kansas had 5.6). I'm thinking that was bad enough to keep 20 homeowners (the actual number that didn't garden this spring compared to last) from getting around to buying a pot, basket or pack.

One reader asked me why I don't survey back yards, his thinking being that that's where people put their effort even if they skip the front. I've always asserted that if people garden out back, they garden out front, too—at least a little bit, and my occasional peeks around corners confirms that.

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But the main reason I don't do it is because it would take forever. Plus, they arrest Peeping Toms.

And before you suggest I use Snoopy the drone to peek into back yards, they'll arrest you for that, too.



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Could roses and hydrangeas be replacing annuals?

This question came to me during this year's River Ridge Report. As Laurie and I were making our early morning drive through the neighborhood to count baskets, pots and plants in the ground, I noted how many of my neighbors have modern shrub and groundcover roses, as well as modern reblooming hydrangeas, in their front flower beds. Knowing that annual sales are pretty much flat if not down at retail (especially packs and flats), it made me wonder if the growth of Knockout, Flower Carpet, Endless Summer and their ilk are partially to blame. Might some folks be choosing easy-care roses and reblooming hydrangeas instead of packs of annuals for their garden color? Certainly, I can't walk into a garden center anywhere—chain or independent—without encountering a mass display of these shrubs right by the entrance.

As examples, here are some roses in a front bed at one neighbor who had no signs of

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purchasing annuals this spring. And even more interesting, a house with three baskets of plastic flowers hanging above some big, showy hydrangeas.



What's your view? Could I be on to something? Or am I just on something? Weigh in with your opinions [HERE](#).

Rudbeckia 'Treasure Trove'
New to Proven Winners
Perennials for 2025-2026!



Deb's Greenhouse hosts first New Blooms trial

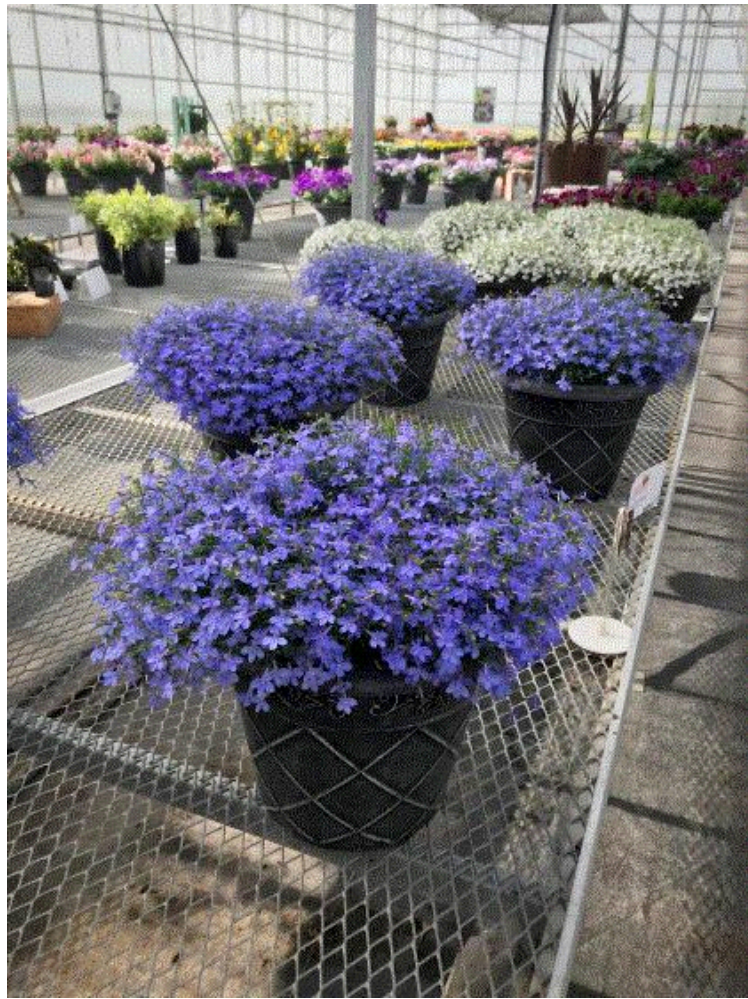
I wrote about this a couple of months ago—New Blooms is sort of a Spring Trials for Western

Canada's industry. Deb's Greenhouse in Alberta hosted the day-long event, and Deb Foisy reports it was a success, with 96 growers, retailers and plant brokers attending.



What did they see and learn? There was a plant trial grown out by High Q Greenhouses of Alberta, as well as presentations from breeding and plant introduction companies Elsner PAC, Florist Holland, PlantHaven International, Vegetalis and Westhoff, and Mexican unrooted cutting producer Vivero Internacional.

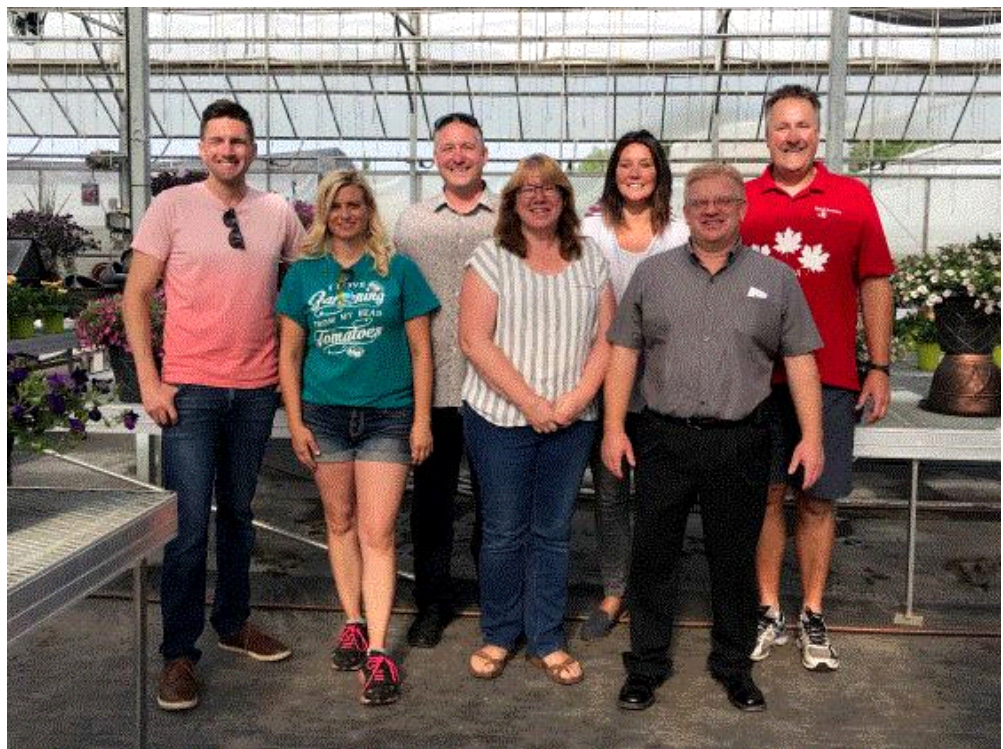
The plant trials included hundreds of containers grown as a true row trial of varieties showcasing natural plant habits and flower power. Attendees were asked to rate each variety; a few of the favorites were Lobelia Hot Waterblue (Westhoff), Calibrachoa Chameleon Sunshine Berry (Westhoff), Petunia Crazytunia Cosmic Purple (Westhoff), Cucumber Petipikel (Vegetalis) and Dianthus Georgia Peach Pie (PlantHaven).



Lobelia Hot Waterblue



Dianthus Georgia Peach Pie



New Blooms hosts include (L to R) Chris Berg (Westhoff & PAC), Debbie Foisy (Deb's Greenhouse), Robert Bett

(PlantHaven International), Judy Born (Florist Holland), Amy Gardner (Floranova & Vegetalis), Dominik Neisser (Vivero Internacional) and Michiel Verheul (High Q Greenhouses).



Deadline extended for International Grower of the Year Awards

It's the biggest horticultural honor on the planet and it could be yours! If you act by August 13, that is. The deadline for submitting your horticultural business for the AIPH International Grower of the Year Award 2019 has been extended to that date.

Sponsored by Royal FloraHolland (the big Dutch auction), the IGOTY Awards are like the Oscars for the plant world and recognize the best practices in horticultural production by the top ornamental nurseries from around the world. Past winners include Costa Farms, Ter Laak Orchids and Flores El Capiro.

You can enter five different categories, with one of the finalists being named the best of the best, THE International Grower of the Year. The categories are:

- Finished plants and trees (plants and trees ready for final sale)
- Young plants (cuttings, plugs, liners, seedlings, etc., sold for growing on)
- Cut flowers and bulbs (flowers and foliage cut for indoor decorative use, and bulbs)
- Sustainability Award (best practice and innovation in improving sustainability)
- Inspiring Business Award (small businesses [fewer than ten employees] that demonstrate unique qualities and innovation)

2018 saw nine finalists from five countries make it through to the awards gala dinner, representing Canada, China, Columbia, Ethiopia, Israel and the Netherlands. The 2019 awards dinner will be Tuesday, January 22, in Essen, Germany, during IPM Essen.

For an entry form, visit www.aiph.org/groweroftheyear.



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Dekker brothers marketing basket watering control

Jen Zurko and I met the Dekker brothers in 2015. Then 30 years old, the identical twins impressed us with their enthusiasm and business savvy—well, let's just say that they were expanding like mad in western Michigan while more seasoned growers were struggling. You can read their story [HERE](#).

I bring this up because Jared and Jordan are adding "technology suppliers" to their list of projects. They've developed and launched (in partnership with controls engineer and master electrician Len Logsdon), an irrigation controller for overhead basket conveyors that waters based on the weight of each pot rather than simply hitting every basket with an equally timed blast. They call the product OASIS, and their company for supplying them Control Dekk.



The OASIS module attaches to any existing or new hanging basket conveyer, such as ECHO or Boomerang, converting it to a weight-based watering system. The grower establishes the ideal weight of a watered basket, programs it into the system, and the computer does the rest. It also stores your irrigation data for future analysis. You can control plant growth without PGRs, water heavier when you are about to ship, and manage your basket watering from a phone or tablet.

Control Dekk will be at Cultivate'18 in booth 1209, so you check it out there. Or go to their website, www.controldekk.com.



Melon season gets even better with AAS winners

It's summer, and it's hot, and there's nothing better than a juicy melon to help you cool cool off. In fact, I had a cantaloupe quarter for breakfast this morning.

Was it as good as All-America Selections 2019 winner F1 Melon Orange SilverWave? I don't know, I'll have to grow one to find out! Orange SilverWave earned a Regional AAS award for the Northeast and Southeast.



Watermelon is another summertime favorite, and F1 Cal Sweet Bush earned a 2019 Regional award for the Great Lakes. Sounds like a good home-garden watermelon, with compact vines just 14 in. to 18 in. long, producing two or three 10-12 lb. fruits.



Go to the All-America Selections website, www.all-americaselections.org, for more.



Flat-rate or even free shipping for ColorLink “Edge” customers

It's fascinating to see how mainstream trends impact our industry. Like Amazon and its free same-day or next-day delivery. Will any plant distributor be able to offer that to growers?

ColorLink, the Ball Seed division serving smaller growers, isn't quite there yet, but they launched a program called “Edge” Predictable Freight Program that, for a fee (not yet disclosed, but I'm told it's quite reasonable) gives free or flat-rate shipping from selected suppliers, seed discounts,

advanced notification on new variety introductions and other perks. It sounds like a good way to minimize or even remove one variable from your plant pricing: shipping. And with shipping rates going crazy lately, any chance to lock them in seems like a good thing!

There are two levels of Edge: Extreme and Explore. Extreme offers free shipping from Edge suppliers. No word yet on the annual cost of each program; they tell me they're saving that for Cultivate (booth #3346).



Finally ...

I keep mentioning Cultivate'18 in Columbus, Ohio. That's because it starts Saturday, with the trade show running Sunday through Tuesday. I'll be there for the 25th time, if I've done my math right. That's a lot, but I know folks who've been more than 40 times, so I'm still a rookie to them. Stop by the *GrowerTalks/Green Profit* booth, #2403, to say hello and fill me in on what's happening in your neck of the woods!

If you don't see me there, chances are I've got my head in a transplanter or some other machine on the tradeshow floor.

Outside the exhibit hall, I'll be moderating a session on LED lighting for the folks at Signify (Philips) at 4 p.m. on Monday. And that evening I'll be co-emceeing, with fellow bobblehead Ellen Wells, the Dümme Orange/*GrowerTalks/Green Profit* Young Grower and Young Retailer Awards. That's at AmericanHort's "Unplugged" from 8 to 10 p.m. at Callahan's. That's a fun event that's open to all. Bring your ticket and get a free drink!

I almost forgot the most fun of all: Saturday night, Ohio Grower/keyboard player Chris Baker will be bringing the Chlorophyllharmonic to the Hyatt Regency bar for a hort industry open mic night. If you sing, play an instrument, or just want to add some more cowbell, bring it on! You'll find me behind the drums on some of the numbers.

If you somehow missed me in all those spots, there's one more place to try: Stroll up to the Short North to Jeni's Splendid Ice Cream where you'll find me enjoying a cone of Salty Caramel, Goat Cheese with Red Cherries or Intelligentsia Black Cat Espresso.





See you next time,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chi'.

Chris Beytes

Editor

GrowerTalks and *Green Profit*

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