

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Poinsettia Sneak Peek

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Consumer uncertainty might put a damper on the upcoming holiday season, but that hasn't stopped the folks at Casa Verde Growers from growing a gorgeous, uniform crop of poinsettias for Petitti Garden Centers' nine locations around Northeast Ohio, as well as for wholesale orders.

I stopped by the nearly 40-acre growing facility in mid-October to see the crop, which was just starting to show some red, with Petitti President AJ Petitti, to chat with Grower Jenny DeVere, who's been there 10 years

perfecting the art of poinsettia growing.

All told, they grow about 35,000 poinsettias in 4-in., 6-in, 7.5-in., 8.5-in. and 10-in. sizes with a mix of 80% red, and 20% white and specialty. AJ said the 6-in. are the biggest sellers, followed by 8.5-in. and 10-in. They used to grow their own mother plants and take cuttings from those for their stock (a year-round process), but now they buy in pre-finished liners in June and July and grow them out.

I asked AJ about his thoughts for the holiday season and he said they're predicting to be flat due to hesitancy they're noticing in customer spending.

"We're seeing more pull-back on the higher-ticket products," he said, attributing it to a general uneasiness. "For Christmas, I think we'll be in great shape, though." **GT**

Petitti Garden Center President AJ Petitti (left) checks out the poinsettia crop at Casa Verde Growers in Columbia Station, Ohio, with Grower Jenny DeVere.