GROWERTALKS

Features

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Learn from the Best at the 2024 Plug & Cutting Conference

Bill Calkins

Last month, we shared some details about opportunities to go behind the scenes to tour leading greenhouses during AmericanHort's Plug & Cutting Conference scheduled for September 23-25 in Orlando. This time, educational sessions are in the spotlight because learning new skills and building on others are important goals when attending conferences like this one. Access to leading researchers, product representatives and peers leveraging new technology and methods are probably the top reasons you'll want to make plans to attend.



Pictured: Success with perennial propagation from any form starts by choosing the best media, starting early to maximize production quality and creating and managing your greenhouse environment.

AmericanHort always delivers high-end education, especially in focused events like the Plug & Cutting Conference. This year's grower-focused education brings in expert speakers to share strategies related to best management practices, production inputs, greenhouse environment management and pest (disease and insect) control. The conference promises to take a collaborative approach to learning, with peer-led discussions, grower-led panels and new trends in greenhouse technology—all selected to help you elevate skills with real-world applications.

Three of the sessions on the docket fitting into the onsite education tracks are Best Management Practices, Pests & Diseases and Production Inputs. Each track has sessions throughout both conference days on September 24 (full day) and September 25 (half day).

Emily McKay from Walter's Gardens in Zeeland, Michigan, will present "Practical IPM Strategies." Join Emily to explore ways to enhance your integrated pest management (IPM) program by examining various components of an IPM program and explore ways to improve their effectiveness. Implementing pest management strategies—such as cultural controls, scouting practices, utilizing biological control agents and chemical controls—requires considering multiple factors and she'll help you identify some of those key factors that can lead to success. Additionally, Emily will lead a discussion about methods to improve consistency and efficiency within your program. If your young plant IPM manager is attending the conference, this session is a can't miss, for sure.

Chris Fifo from Darwin Perennials & Kieft Seed will use his decades of perennials experience as a grower and product expert to share “The Secrets to Establishing Plugs & Liners.” Often a highly technical topic, Chris is an expert in not only producing high-quality perennial young plants, but also explaining best practices in a grower-friendly way. Without giving away the “secrets,” let’s just say you can expect to learn strategies for choosing the best media, starting early to maximize production quality, creating and managing your greenhouse environment, and how to train your team to feed, trim and regulate growth.

Chris will cover seedling production and vegetative production, as well as tissue culture (TC) propagation in this dynamic session. Whether you’re starting from seed, plugs, URCs, in-house stock, rooted cuttings or TC, he knows the secrets of top-notch and efficient production. It’s your chance to learn tips and tricks from one of the best.

Rose Séguin from Sollum Technologies based in Quebec will share the latest research in “Applying Advanced Lighting Practices for Propagation.” Because your young plant propagation greenhouses turn crops rapidly, producing optimum quality impacts the productivity of growers throughout entire crop cycles. This session covers some of the most important pieces of the entire propagation puzzle. Rose will detail why lighting has a major impact on plant propagation and why dynamic lighting can be used to steer crop quality and switch easily between different food and ornamental crops. She’ll review the best lighting practices for liner and plug production, focusing on dynamic shifts in light intensity, spectrum and duration to achieve specific results. Here’s a sampling of what you can expect in Rose’s session:

■ Best lighting practices from sticking or seeding through to toning

■ Using spectral and high-intensity treatments to adjust crop morphology

■ Tailor-made lighting through light zoning

Hopefully, this teaser inspires you to register for the conference (just snap the QR code) and bring key team members to Orlando this fall. New this year: Attendees receive two On Demand tracks with sessions on risk management and back-to-basics foundational skills, as well as sessions in Spanish. When you register, you can access the videos in an online library of recorded webinars and watch them at your convenience. **GT**

Register now for the premier event for young plant producers and growers from across the country. This conference is the place to learn the newest and best strategies, technologies and techniques in the world of plugs and cuttings.