

# GROWERTALKS

## Features

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## Good 'n Plenty to See

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**Cultivate'24**

Another Cultivate is in the books and there's every indication it was a good one. AmericanHort doesn't typically publish any attendance figures, but they did confirm that it was a very well-attended event, which reflects optimism leading up to the show.

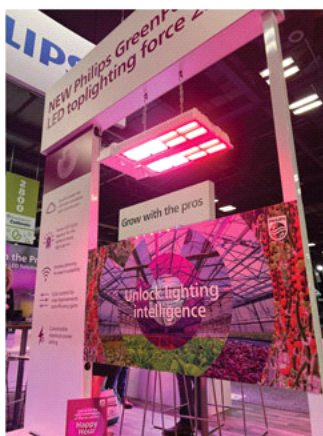
Ask exhibitors what they thought and you get mixed answers. Some had a great show, others thought attendance was soft compared to last year. But based on our observations, anybody who is anybody—plus everybody else—seemed to be walking the aisles. Regardless, there was always a lot to see—too much for one person to tackle! So, thankfully, we have four enthusiastic and experienced editors who can split up to gather the highlights.

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You can see these and many more products and plants [in the video Chris shot with Video Producer Osvaldo Cuevas on the show floor](#).

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## Automation/technology



### Burro Grande

Burro Grande is an autonomous plant mover designed to haul trains of racks or wagons around your nursery or greenhouse with no operator needed. Instead, it's guided by GPS when outside and Lidar when inside. All you have to do is program the route and stopping points you want it to navigate, and its travel speeds. On gravel, it can pull 3,500 lbs. for about 12.5 miles on a battery charge; on concrete, the capacity and distance increase to 5,000 lbs. and 15 miles. At \$38,000 Burro Grande is less expensive than a tractor and needs no driver. That's Nathan Heath, senior manager of sales and channel growth for the new (2020) company.

### PD-X3 pot dispenser (AdeptAg)

AdeptAg (formerly AgriNomix) has launched a new high-capacity pot dispenser that fills three shuttle trays at a time for an output of up to 1,000 trays per hour. Pots get loaded from the back, not the top, for easier, safer loading. And it

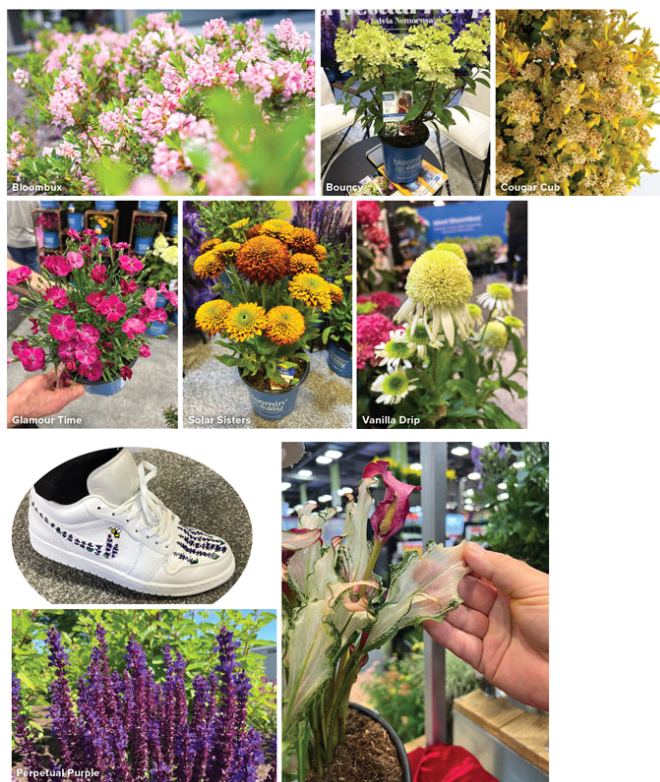
uses the latest servo- and stepper-motors, for speed and accuracy.

## Toplight Force 2.0 (Philips)

Philips, maker of top-notch LED lighting for the greenhouse, has a new Toplight called the Force 2.0, which is a new form/shape for Philips. Their former Toplights were long, like a single-bulb fluorescent fixture; this one is rectangular and features a “Quadro Beam lens that distributes the light in four directions.” This lets you use fewer fixtures. Also, you can control the spectrum to match the crop, and dim the lights wirelessly.

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## Live goods



### New Introductions from Van Belle Nursery

The Canadian-based shrub supplier has been working on expanding their perennial program and now has eight exclusives that you can only get at Van Belle. Bloombux is a low-growing, mounding rhododendron hybrid that Van Belle’s Kevin Cramer is “less fussy” than traditional rhodies. It’s a great boxwood alternative that flowers in May. Zone 5.

A hardy *Hydrangea paniculata* called Bouncy has strong stems and true white flowers that turn pink in late summer and then red in the fall. Zone 4.

Physocarpus Cougar Cub has strong winter hardiness, so it blooms earlier in the spring. It has yellow foliage with light pink flowers. Zone 3.

Dianthus Glamour Time has large flowers and lots of them that last all season. The plant grows upright, so there’s never a “hole” in the middle. Zone 5.

The color combination of Rudbeckia Solar Sisters is really striking, opening yellow and maturing to a burnt orange. And it continues flushing, so you’re always getting different colors. Zone 7.

Echinacea Vanilla Drip has fully double flowers on every stem. Zone 4.

If you’ve ever seen Van Belle’s annual holiday videos, you know they’re a fun and creative company. So it was no surprise when we saw all of the Van Belle folks sporting the same shoes. Kevin said all of them were custom painted with their new *Salvia nemerosa* Perpetual Purple, which was the main theme of their booth. The calyx is fully purple, so when the petals fall off, the plant is perpetually purple. Zone 5.

## Frozen Queen Calla (GardenWorld/2Plant)

If you’re looking for a unique offering, look no further than Frozen Queen Calla Lily. It’s seemingly a first-of-its-kind variegated and translucent-leaved calla—you read that right, translucent. The flowers are there, but the showstopper is really the foliage. It’s been trialed in full-sun locations like San Diego with nary a burn to be seen, too. And more flower colors are on their way.

## New Grasses from Emerald Coast Growers

Jen Zurko visited Emerald Coast Growers' production facility in Pensacola earlier this year, so we know it's the place to find the latest in ornamental grasses. This year, they were showcasing five new ones.

There are three new panicums in the Dream Catcher collection. Huggy Purple is a pretty tall grass at 5 ft. It starts off bright purple and darkens as it matures.

Smoky Rose is a bit shorter at 3 1/2 ft. with dark green

foliage and rosy flower plumes. And Tumbleweed is the smallest of the three at 3-ft. tall with a more rounded shape. They say it looks like "a puffy silvery-black beachball" that stands up to high winds and rain. All are hardy to Zone 4.

From the Free Spirit collection of schizachyrium is Exclamation Point—named so because of its rigid, stiff stems that stick straight out. Zone 3.

ECG has been focusing on introducing infertile miscanthus and the newest one is Morning Sun. It features variegated foliage with gold bands on an arching habit. Tan flowers are held high above the plant, which grows 6- to 8-ft. tall. Zone 5.



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## Greenhouses/structures

### Roll-Air Greenhouse (Rovero)

It's the newest open-roof greenhouse in North America. It's also the first of the freshly redesigned Rovero Roll-Air rolling-roof retractables in North America. It was built for Mark Foertmeyer, owner of Foertmeyer & Sons Greenhouse of Delaware, Ohio. Roll-Air has been around for decades, but the new owner of the company, Jacco van Delden (left, with Mark), completely re-engineered the system to ensure that it's dependable, repeatable and waterproof. Mark says he likes the design because when open it's just like growing outdoors, which he prefers whenever possible.

They showed off the greenhouse at a trade show booth, but we stopped in at an open house Mark and his vendors were holding to show off his new 3 1/2-acre range, which also has a headhouse by DeCloet and one bay of Rovero's also-new Horti-House, a widespan design with a special feature: you can latch the poly from the inside, making for safer covering changes. Other suppliers on hand included flood irrigation by Erfgoed and heat by Biotherm.

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## Growing media, irrigation & other inputs

### Floxcor fungicide (Corteva)

Fluoxastrobin is the active ingredient in Corteva's new Floxcor fungicide and working through xylem and translaminar movement, the rapid uptake allows the active to travel further than other strobilurins. This helps Floxcor control more than 20 ornamental diseases, including Botrytis, powdery mildew and Cercospora leaf spot. At Cultivate, *GrowerTalks* caught up with Broch Martindale from Corteva who told us all about Floxcor in a Trending [Now video you can watch on our YouTube channel](#).



## StriCore herbicide (SePRO)

New for nurseries, StriCore from SePRO is a pre-emergent herbicide for controlling tough weeds like goosegrass, crabgrass and *Poa annua*. What makes this new herbicide especially innovative is that it includes a new active ingredient—Pethoxamid—and new actives in this category don't come to market very often. It's the first new pre-emergent active in more than a decade! Learn more about StriCore and other innovations from SePRO in [Tech On Demand podcast episode 137—Critical Chemistries with JC Chong](#).



## Fence post sprinkler holder, twin shutoff (Dramm)

Two new products from Dramm, the masters of watering: The Post-Mount Sprinkler Holder features a blue-anodized aluminum bracket that attaches to nearly any sort of post, plus an impact sprinkler and short hose connection. Suggested retail is less than \$40. To get water to it, consider a new twin shutoff featuring Dramm's one-

touch high-flow valves.

## RhizoPlug Tray (Oasis Grower Solutions)

This is a new foam propagation plug from the folks who bring you the popular Oasis Wedges, designed to accommodate most any sort of URC and deliver it via trays through your standard greenhouse automation—cutting stickers, transplanters, and the like. The foam material is said to be 50% lighter and less dense than their other foam, for easy sticking and fast rooting. It's treated with a surfactant for easy wetting and moisture management. And of course it's clean. RhizoPlugs come in three standard plug tray sizes: 72, 105 and 128.

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## Bio-based products

### Entomatic BCA applicator (Beneficial Insectary)

A new system for evenly distributing beneficials was introduced from Beneficial Insectary called Entomatic. This automatic dispenser ensures uniform distribution, labor savings (covers larger surfaces at one time) and is adaptable to most growing systems. Entomatic can be mounted to carts, tractors and other equipment you already use.

### Predafix (BioLine)

Predatory mites often need supplemental nutrition to enhance fertility and increase populations when included in a greenhouse IPM program. Predafix Plus from Bioline is a sprayable food source, containing pure, sterilized eggs of an astigmatic mite, that can feed on the majority of predatory mites used in biological insect control. Predafix Plus can be applied mechanically and targeted to the specific parts of a plant where predatory mites should be concentrated.

### Bacilirid (Koppert)

One of the products generating a lot of interest in the Koppert booth was Bacilirid, a biological fungicide used to prevent or control soil and foliar diseases on greenhouse ornamental and vegetable crops. Trial data showed excellent results on powdery mildew and Botrytis, among others. Bacilirid is *Bacillus amyloliquefaciens* strain MBI 600 and can be tank mixed with many other products (especially Koppert's Isarid) and integrated into IPM programs for greenhouses of all sizes targeting soft-bodied insects and most foliar diseases.

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# Pots & containers



## Bio-based pots by Creo

Creo is the new name for Summit Plastics and they have two new pot lines made with two forms of bio-plastic: AgaveGrow and Asili. AgaveGrow is a waste product from the tequila industry. The agave pellets are blended with regular plastic pellets, replacing anywhere from 10% to 40% of the plastic, resulting in injection-molded nursery pots that look and feel just like 100% plastic. Now, these are NOT biodegradable or compostable, but they ARE recyclable.

Asili, meanwhile, is also a bio-based pot that looks and feels just like plastic (and goes through automation just like plastic), but is biodegradable over time (about three

to five years). They're working on a home-compostable version that would break down much faster.

## qubi pots (CTi Living)

If you've been to Cultivate the last couple of years, you've probably noticed that CTi Living has the really cool "wave" of pots suspended above their booth. They normally have a new round of decorative containers for retail to show off, but this year they had a new product for greenhouse growers. The qubi pot was developed to provide an alternative to standard round pots and trays. Made from recyclable plastic, qubi pots are rectangular instead of round so they're easier to handle. And the tray keeps the pots close so that when it goes through a pot filler soil doesn't spill in between. They come in black, but they also have white and gray (CTi Living's Camilo Buitrago Anzola said they're noticing that more growers are moving away from black pots). qubi pots are similar to thermoform types in that you can print branded labels directly on the pot or use stickers. And all of them have tag slots. Comes in five different sizes.

## Crescent's sustainable pots

Sustainability continued to be a trend at this year's show and Crescent Gardens met the moment with its Circular Positive planters that use UBQ material. What's that? According to the folks at Crescent, it's from a different company who takes waste out of landfills and turns it into a bio-based thermoplastic. Crescent then combines that with other materials to make their planters, which are 100% recyclable. They've switched over their bestselling Emma line in Terracotta, Charcoal, Cappuccino and Juniper to Circular Positive style, and they're beginning to use it in their TruDrop Flex line of self-watering planters.

## Square nursery pots from FeuZdin

FeuZdin ... the name looks funny, but it's pronounced "fused-in"—which describes the way the colorful labeling is done. But the real key? They're square, not round, allowing you to fit about 50% more on a rack shelf. They showed 2.6-qt., 1-gal., 2-gal. and 3-gal. sizes. **GT**