

# GROWERTALKS

## GT in Brief

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### PlantCon Orlando Draws Masses of Plant Fans

*Chris Beytes*

More than 3,000 houseplant enthusiasts descended upon the Doubletree Hilton Orlando in late February for the inaugural PlantCon Orlando plant show. PlantCon is the brainchild of Kenny Nguyen, a 30-year-old architect-turned-plant geek who created PlantCon in Houston in 2023 after seeing the need for a community of like-minded plant sellers and buyers. He added PlantCon Dallas in 2024 and PlantCon Orlando this year; in 2026, he hopes to have 10 PlantCons across America.



PlantCon was like no plant sale, trade show or convention we've ever attended. It was younger, cooler, wilder in style, dress, appearance ... dyed hair, tattoos, piercings, gauges (those rings in the ears) ... attendee appearance-wise, it was more like a barista convention than a plant market. There were even two booths offering tattoos!

But a plant market it was, with about 70 vendors showing up for this sell-out first edition of PlantCon Orlando, offering thousands of interesting houseplants, many of which costing hundreds or even thousands of dollars. While a few of the vendors were typical nurseries from Central Florida, many are online sellers that got their start during the pandemic, with names like Eclectic Jungle, Groovy Growing, Plant Zaddy Therapy and Sprout N' Proud (whose slogan is: "Celebrating the diversity of plants and the people who collect them").

The name "PlantCon" says more about the event: a "con" is short for fan convention or fan meeting, says Wikipedia—think Comic-Con (for comic book fans) or WorldCon (science fiction). PlantCon's website describes the event as "an immersive weekend experience that allows plant lovers from all over to meet and get to know one another while enjoying workshops, presentations and parties!"

And a party it was! Preregistration was 3,000, we were told, with many more signing up on site. And it seemed half the crowd was pulling fold-up wagons in which to haul children and their plant finds ... one clever vlogger had mounted her phone camera to her wagon so she could walk, shop and talk all at the same time. **GT**