

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

6/30/2025

A Place for More Perennials

Jennifer Zurko



This past spring, a video project had videographer Osvaldo Cuevas and me paying a visit to Hampshire Farms, a big box perennials and foliage producer located about 40 minutes west of Ball HQ.

While we were walking around their operation, Matt Frederickson, Director of Greenhouse Operations for Hampshire Farms, opened a door leading out to an open space, telling us, “Oh, yeah, we’re also building a new greenhouse.”

When we were there on May 1, it was a mudpit because of a few days of rainy weather. When we went back in early June ... well, the mud had turned into a smooth layer of earth that’ll serve as the foundation of the new greenhouse, but not much else. The late, cool start to spring in Chicagoland had set construction back a bit. But from Jaws the Drone’s bird’s-eye view, you can see the outline of where the 2-acre Westbrook greenhouse will be placed. By the time you read this, the bones of the structure should be up.

Once the structure is completed, they’ll finish the floor with a barrier covered by gravel and add rolling benches. After all is said and done, the greenhouse will be filled with perennials by January 2026 for next year’s spring season.

The new greenhouse will add to the total of about 15 acres of undercover production (Hampshire Farms also has 5 acres of outdoor growing space, too). And that’s still not even enough to meet the demand for perennials. Matt said that Hampshire Farms produces over five million units per year, but they also have the help of contract growers to supplement the need.

Hampshire Farms’ sole customer is Home Depot, providing perennials and foliage plants to all stores in Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Northwest Indiana, Northern Michigan, the Fargo area of North Dakota, and Southeastern Missouri. That last one is a primary reason for the expansion. Matt said that not only has their sales area increased by adding the St. Louis area, but perennials sales continue to increase.

Hampshire Farms tracks its own SKU numbers to look for buying trends, but they also have access to the latest industry data, like from Axiom's annual Gardening Outlook Survey and projected sales numbers given to them by Home Depot. They also have a team of merchandisers on the ground reporting back what they're seeing during consumer interactions at the stores. And all of this points to the continued popularity of perennials.

"Perennials have consistently stayed strong. We'll definitely make our sales goals this year," said Matt. **GT**