GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

6/30/2026

Come Rain, But the Perennials Still Shine

Jennifer Zurko



A crowd of dedicated souls braved the soggy conditions during Darwin's annual Perennials Day event on June 17. For the last 15 years, the perennials division of Ball Horticultural Company has invited guests to visit the Gardens at Ball with a specific focus on that market, showcasing new and current varieties grown over a period of three years in raised beds, providing educational content, and a chance to network with suppliers.

It takes six months to plan the event from start to finish, and as we all know, even the best-laid plans can go off kilter when someone throws a wrench into the mix. In our industry, that someone is almost always Mother Nature, and on this day, she brought down 2 in. worth of rain.

But, as an industry, we're also used to this sort of thing. So when guests started arriving, the Darwin folks were prepared, handing out ponchos and umbrellas.

"We all knew what the forecast looked like, but it's easy to not be quite as worried when you know you've got a team where everybody's willing to pitch in," said Mike Annes, sales and marketing manager for Darwin. "We had to have some contingencies, of course, focusing on safety, especially. But beyond that, our goal is the same: To spend time with our customers, introduce them to awesome varieties, introduce them to our supply network and educate them. We can do all of those things in the rain."

Darwin still had a great turnout of the more than 500 people that were registered, despite the rain. And the 28 companies representing their services to the perennials market on "supplier's row," along with the educational sessions, were under tents, which provided a dry respite for attendees. Lunch was made up of warm comfort food and there were plenty of umbrellas to go around. Rainy weather wasn't going to stop this bunch from looking at and learning about perennials.

"Our mindset going in was that the day was going to be great with or without the rain," said Mike. "There are a lot of

tough people in our industry that are affected by the weather every day, and if you looked in the gardens today, there are a lot of people more than willing to go out there and get wet to see some new plants and talk to colleagues and friends.” **GT**