

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Bates Daughters Close the Family Business

Chris Beytes

One of the oldest and most venerable families in the caladium world has decided to retire and close the business.

Bates Sons & Daughters had been in business since the end of World War II, when Emmett and Mildred Bates planted a 5-gallon bucket of mixed caladiums in Lake Placid. Now, 80 years later, the third generation, sisters Terri and Sheri, have decided it's time to retire, in large part because the fourth generation isn't interested in carrying on the family tradition.

Explained Terri via email, "Sheri and I have no children that were interested in taking over the business. They all live in cities across the Southeast and Lake Placid doesn't appeal to them.

"We did entertain a few offers [to buy the business], but nothing was a good fit."

Terri said their seed stock and exclusive varieties were sold to three Lake Placid growers: Heartland Caladiums, Hendry Caladiums and Lake Country Farms. And the land is leased to a caladium farmer and a vegetable farmer.

They've also sold their caladium pre-finished business, Capital Caladiums Co.

Terri continued, "We are grateful that the businesses were financially successful and we can retire with ease. This is a great industry. I have made many friends and appreciate all my loyal customers over the years. I will miss them, but retirement is looking really good. It's time." **GT**