

A Legend Retires, Award-Winning Roses and the Farm Workforce Modernization Act



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A Legend Retires

On October 3, 2019, Jim Nau retired after working at Ball Horticultural Company for 37 years. During his tenure, Jim has had many roles in the company and has worked extensively over the years with the "field trials," which have transitioned into the beautiful Gardens at Ball. Jim most recently was the Cultural Advisor and Horticultural Historian at Ball.



He has authored several books, including the *Ball Culture Guide*, the *Ball Perennial Manual* and edited the 18th and 19th editions of the *Ball RedBook*. Over the course of his career, he's received numerous awards and accolades for his work, including the Perennial Plant Association's Garden Media Award.

Jim's love for the industry is contagious and he's inspired many people, including yours truly, with his warm spirit, kindness and fantastic knowledge of plants. Like dozens of other college students, I had the pleasure of working with Jim during a summer internship before I graduated from college (Jim would prefer me not to remind him of how many years ago it actually was). Not only was the internship an incredible experience, but the friendship I developed with Jim was one of that summer's highlights.

Jim, I can't say enough about how much I truly respect you and what you've not only done for Ball, but what you've done for our industry and the countless lives you've influenced. I congratulate you on your achievements and wish you the best of luck in the next chapters of your life.



Zombie Palm

In the pre-Halloween newsletter, I mentioned a fun feature in the October issue of *Ranger Rick Magazine for Kids*, titled "Welcome to the Creepy Greenhouse." It spotlights interesting facts of several real-life, scary-looking plants and fungi like the cobra lily, devil's tooth fungus and the corpse flower. Click [here](#) to read the feature.

After I posted the article, Richard Criley, Emeritus Professor of Horticulture at the University of Hawaii, informed me there was another wicked cool and potentially creepy plant that nicely fits the Halloween theme. Check out the zombie palm (*Zombia antillarum*).



Photographed at the Foster Botanical Garden, Honolulu.

The trunk of the zombie palm appears to be wrapped in burlap with rings of eerie needles protruding around it. In the right frame of mind, perhaps the truck looks somewhat creepy, but I'd say it's far from zombie-like. So why is the genus and common name for this palm named the Zombie palm? I haven't been able to find a clear-cut answer to this question, but I did stumble across some interesting possibilities when looking into this.

- One theory is *Zombia antillarum* is native to Haiti, which is known as the home of "zombie" culture.
- There are some references in literature that, according to Haitian culture, the yellowish-brown oil from the seeds acts as a "sense activator" used to stimulate all five senses. This oil can be used to "awaken" a zombie back to life.
- The other possibility for its name is the leaves are used as thatch material along rooftops of houses to keep zombies from spying on people.

Although the origin of its name remains unclear, this looks like a pretty cool plant. Like all palms, it also makes a great landscape or container plant. Hardy to Zone 10.

Thanks for sharing this with us, Richard!



Farm Workforce Modernization Act

Ball Publishing's Managing Editor Jennifer Zurko, who's our eyes and ears on Washington, asked me to pass along an update on the Farm Workforce Modernization Act.



On October 30, House lawmakers introduced a bipartisan, comprehensive and highly anticipated agricultural labor reform bill called the Farm Workforce Modernization Act. The bill's intention is to address labor challenges head-on, with solutions that stabilize the current agricultural and horticultural workforce, improve the legal channels for future seasonal and permanent workers in the farming sector, and advance integrity in the hiring process.

The core group of negotiators, led by Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship chairwoman Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), also included Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) and Republicans Dan Newhouse (WA), Mike Simpson (ID), Mario Diaz-Balart (FL) and Doug LaMalfa (CA).

The bill features three titles:

- Title I focuses on stabilizing the current, but unauthorized, farm workforce—it provides three different options for workers to transition to legal status
- Title II modifies the current H-2A agricultural worker visa program
- Title III phases in a requirement for agricultural employers to use the electronic employment eligibility system known as E-Verify for new hires

“AmericanHort congratulates our House champions on today’s introduction,” Craig Regelbrugge, Senior VP of Government Relations & Research for AmericanHort, said in a statement. “This bipartisan compromise advances an important debate and provides a platform for serious consideration of urgently needed reforms addressing the agricultural sector and farm employees.”

As is typically the case in a complex bipartisan legislative negotiation, both sides have had to make significant concessions. Most of the agricultural organizations involved in negotiations and in the Agricultural Workforce Coalition, including AmericanHort, are supporting the legislation in order to advance the legislative process in the House, which Democrats control. Craig and his team will seek targeted improvements, especially in Title II, as the legislative process moves forward. If the Republican-controlled Senate can be persuaded to take up legislation, Craig believes that bill provisions that fall short of our industry’s goals can be improved further.

On September 24, AmericanHort filed official comments on the Administration’s “notice of proposed rulemaking” (NPRM) that seeks to streamline and modernize the H-2A agricultural worker visa program. The comments described in detail where the organization believes the proposed changes would improve the current program and where the Administration misses the mark or

could go further.

“What happens on the farm doesn’t stay on the farm; the work contributions of each farm worker create and sustain two to three job opportunities in the surrounding economy,” said Craig. “Rural areas across the country benefit from the jobs and economic opportunity that farm workers create, so long as we are growing and producing labor-intensive crops and commodities here in America. We urge both the House and Senate to move swiftly to advance and improve upon this important legislative foundation.”

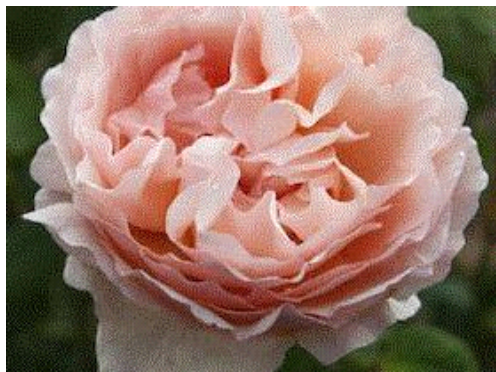


Award-Winning Roses

Star Roses and Plants recently earned four well-deserved awards from the 2020 **American Garden Rose Selections (AGRS)** Testing Program. The roses are tested for two years in six different geographic areas.

AGRS recognizes roses that are easy to care for, disease-resistant and suitable for different regions of the country. Additional attributes evaluated include: vigor, foliage proportion, plant habit, flowering effect, rebloom habit, bloom form, aging quality of blooms, fragrance, and hardiness. Awards are only given to the entrants with the highest points (at least 80 out of 100) in at least three regions.

The winners are:



Princesse Charlene de Monaco
Fragrance Award Winner



Canyon Road
Regional Choice Award Winner in the Northeast,
Northwest and South Central regions



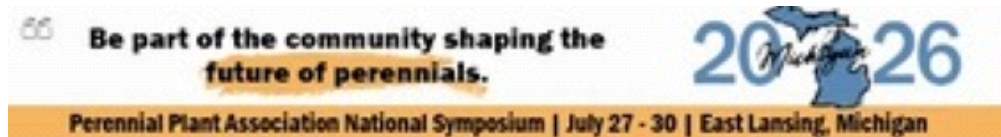
Wedding Bells

Regional Choice Award winner in the Northwest, Southeast and South Central regions



Lemon Fizz

Regional Choice Award Winner in the Northwest, South Central and Southwest regions



Upcoming Events

Here are a few trade events if you're looking for some good educational and networking opportunities (or perhaps you could use a year-end tax write-off). Click on the name of the event for further information.

November 15, 2019

[Proven Winners Landscape Road Show](#)

Pinehurst, North Carolina

November 20-22, 2019

[HortEast Conference & Trade Show](#)

Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada

November 20-22, 2019

[Expo-FIHIOQ](#) (Quebec's Trade Show for Horticulture and Landscaping Professionals)

Drummondville, Québec, Canada

November 27-30, 2019

[Growtech—International Greenhouse, Agricultural Technology and Livestock Fair](#)

Antalya, Turkey

December 3, 2019
[Plant Health on the Go!](#)
Apopka, Florida

December 3-4, 2019
[Breeders and Young Plant Producers Conference](#)
Rotterdam, Netherlands

December 4, 2019
[Missouri Green Industry Conference](#)
St. Charles, Missouri

December 10, 2019
[Great Lakes Expo & Michigan Greenhouse Growers Expo](#)
Grand Rapids, Michigan

December 11-12, 2019
[MGIX Member Summit](#)
Columbus, Ohio

Thanks for reading this edition of *Perennial Pulse*. Please let me know if you have any questions or article ideas for future newsletters.

My email is ppilon@ballpublishing.com.

Take care,

Paul Pilon
Editor-at-Large
Perennial Pulse

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