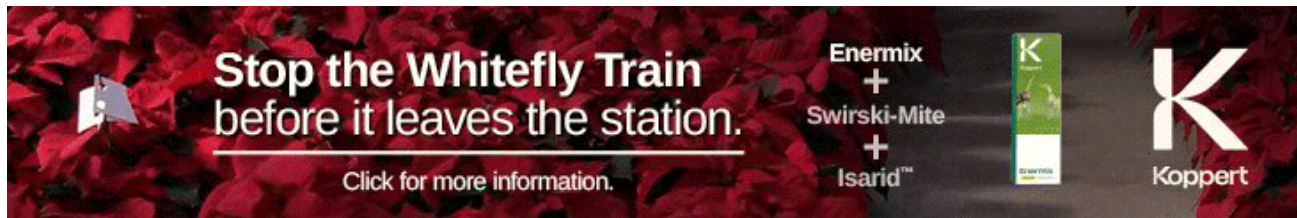


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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- What's new and trendy?
- Fruithof's fruit packaging
 - Ammerlaan goes vertical
 - Mayer PotJet 2
 - Lettuce to go
 - Advice to retailers: lighten up!
 - Sky Star poinsettia
 - Selling bulbs with bugs
 - Sweaters for your bulbs
 - Anthura wins big



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What's new and trendy in Europe?



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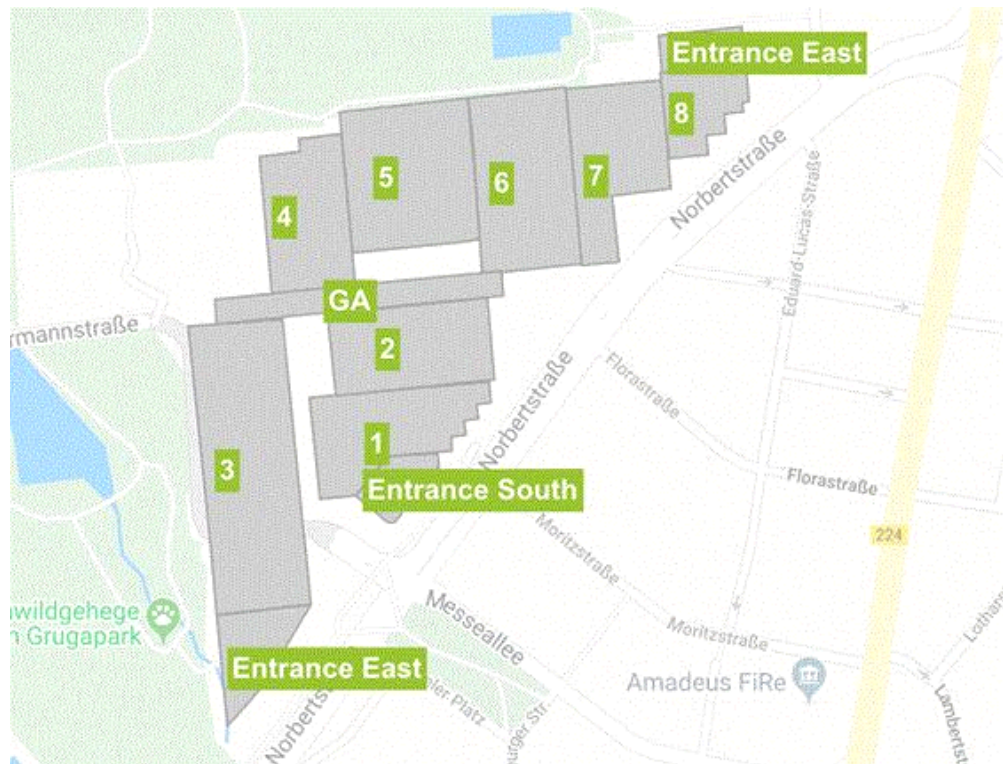


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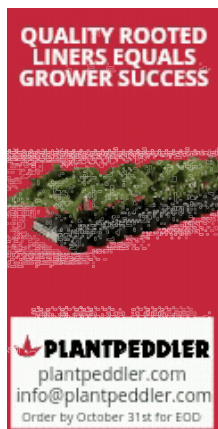
Last week it was Florida and tropicals, this week it's Germany and, well, everything else horticultural you can think of—AND some tropicals, too. That's the tradeshow called IPM Essen, where there's just about nothing for the greenhouse or nursery you can't find.

How big is this event? It's the biggest horticultural show on earth, with 1,500 exhibitors from 50 countries filling about a million square feet of exhibit hall (which, looking at the map, resembles the Stealth Bomber).



I just finished two solid days of aisle-walking and product-and-trend-searching, and am prepared to offer you a few of each. Overall, the show was super upbeat, with the only discouraging words being about the imminent Brexit and how much fun it is to deal with the new European Plant Passports that must be affixed to every plant sold in the EU. But I'm sure that will get worked out.

Trend-wise, the colors remain neutral and matte, the textures remain course and tactile. Metals are buff, not shiny. Gray, beige tones and white dominate the color schemes, with accents of green, pink, purple and a few others popped in for interest.



The search for environmentally friendly packaging continues, as growers look for ways to reduce their use of plastic packaging at the same time as pot manufacturers seek ways to make plastic pots that will go through community recycling streams.



Italian succulent grower Paganopiante is using various ways to reduce plastic, including in-house-made cardboard carriers (left) and even this thin plywood carrier (laser-cut and printed in-house), holding a terracotta-



potted succulent. That's Stefania Pagano showing off her firm's work.



Fruithof's fruit packaging

I loved this patio-ready packaging by Fruithof. Their "City Gardening" line is just as it sounds—perfect for balconies.



Plants last a couple of seasons before needing repotting or transplanting or replacement. They're great for gifts, too. Cost is about 4 euros higher than plain plastic, I'm told.

Ammerlaan's vertical growing experience

I'm trying to be more open-minded about the whole vertical farming thing, which is why I talked to greenhouse maker Ammerlaan, which has been researching vertical growing systems for five years. LEDs and vertical racks in a warehouse are NOT as good as a greenhouse, but there are places where land or climate isn't right for greenhouses—like Tokyo, Iceland and Mars—and that's why Ammerlaan wants to be experts in the field. Says Lisan Verbong (who has a degree in applied biology but also does sales) "For Europe, don't do it—buy a greenhouse."



Mayer's PotJet 2

My good friend Filip Meeuws is now with German equipment manufacturer Mayer, which might be the only reason I spotted their interesting new auto-adjust pot destacker. Instead of having to manually change the pot magazine and adjust the dispenser each time you change pot sizes, the PotJet 2 has a digital control panel. Just tell it your pot size (which you've preprogrammed, of course), and it automatically adjusts for the new container.

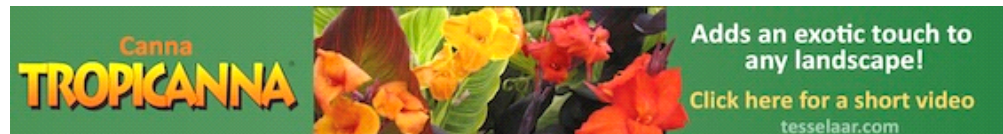


It handles 10 cm. to 40 cm. (4 in. to 16 in.), round or square, hanging baskets ... pretty much anything. Counter-rotating screws handle the dispensing duties. Speed is up to 4,300 pots/hr. Cost is \$18,00. Bellpark distributes Mayer products in North America.

Lettuce to go



I was prepared for this to be the dumbest idea at IPM: a vending machine that grows and sells lettuce (actually, it would be selling rotting mush.) But it turns out that inventor Jochen Haubner (on the left) is actually a hydroponic lettuce grower, and he designed SalaJoe to sell his finished lettuce as close to the end consumer as possible—even at the end of your street. The paint is still wet on the concept (he and a friend had just finished the machine a few days before the show), but it was generating a lot of interest. Hey, you can buy a sandwich from a machine, why not just the parts of a sandwich? Check it out at www.salajoe-to-go.de.



Retail advice from a “store builder”

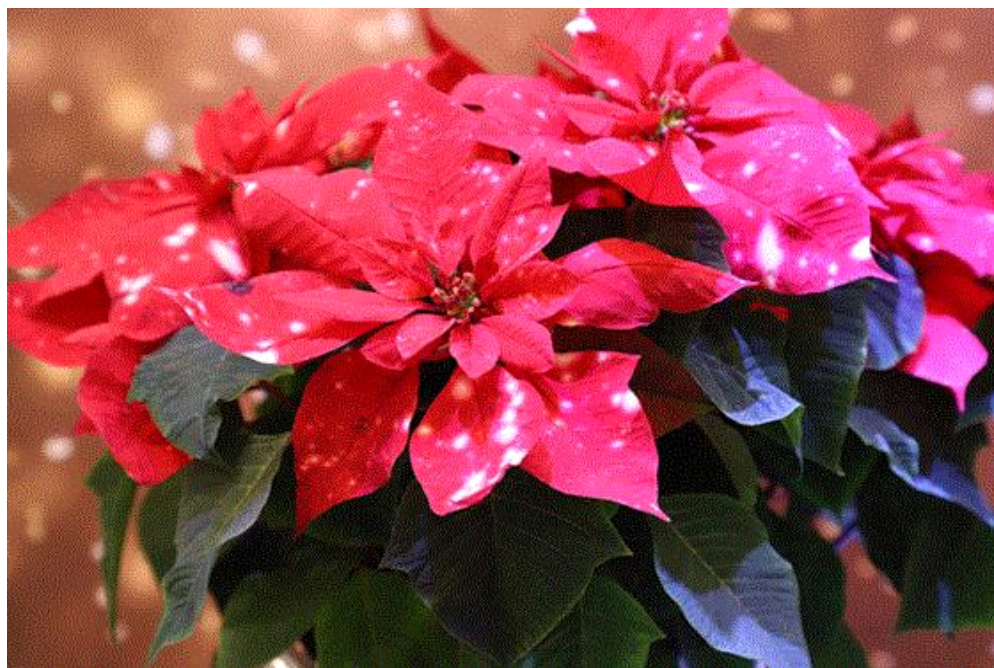
I admire the sleek, polished, high-end garden center fixtures on display at IPM, but I think they’re a bit too high-brow for the typical garden center, which look much nicer equipped with warm, natural materials. Still, these folks know their business, and so I asked Monica Gawlitza at Schneider Ladenbau (“which means “store builder”) to offer some advice to a garden center owner who wanted to freshen up their store without spending a quarter of a million dollars to make it look like IKEA.



She thought for a moment and then answered, "Light it up!" Meaning, she explained, both with electrical lighting, and also lightening up your color scheme. "It lets the plants be the stars," she says.

Selecta One's Sky Star poinsettia

Here's a poinsettia novelty you haven't seen before. It's called Sky Star, and it offers the same celestial patterning as their NightSky petunia. (I asked, and there's no relationship between how they got spots on the petunia and how they got spots on the euphorbia—just lucky, I guess!)



What they know about the variety is that it needs cool temperatures (about 62F or lower) during coloring for the sky pattern to develop. Sorry, southern growers—that pretty much lets you out of the fun.

Sky Star is a 9-week variety with excellent shelf life. Expect a soft launch this year.



Controlling pests with bulbs



I can't imagine putting the name of a devastating insect on a plant label, but that's what JUB Holland did with their latest bagged bulb offering. The words "Oak Processionary Moth" are the most prominent on the label, with the smaller "These bulbs fight the" just above. What's the deal?

Well, the blend of bulb flowers in the bag have been proven to attract predatory insects that attack the insect. The product won a Royal FloraHolland prize last fall.

Keep your amaryllis warm and cozy

Clever Kebol, which has been dipping amaryllis bulbs in colored wax for several years now, has added sweaters to the line. I mean, seeing how they're a wintertime product, it only makes sense—we can't have our amaryllis catching cold at the holidays!



Apparently, Kebol's competitors also have twisted minds (or binoculars), as I saw a similar product in the Breugdenhil stand on their Waxz line. They went even further with the goofiness, offering four collections: Nordic Winter, Animal Print, Valentine and Xmas Fun (ugly Christmas sweaters, naturally).



The Only Magazine
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Anthura is International Grower of the Year

Congratulations to orchid and anthurium breeder and young plant producer Anthura for being

named the 2020 International Grower of the Year by AIPH. Once again, I was the lucky chap who got to pull the card from the envelope, say “drum roll, please” and announce the name in unison with my lovely co-host Holly Mitchell and Royal FloraHolland CEO Steven van Schilfgaarde during AIPH’s gala evening, held Tuesday night during IPM.



Anthura was actually a three-time winner: They also took home Gold in the Young Plant category, and Gold in the Sustainability category. The business is one of the best in the world, so it's no surprise. ([HERE](#) is a brief video I did there year's ago.)

Here are all the prize winners from the event:

Cut Flowers & Bulbs

Gold: Hasfarm Holdings, Hong Kong, China
Silver: BellaRosa, Ecuador
Bronze: Oserian Development Company, Kenya

Young Plants

Gold: Anthura, the Netherlands
Silver: Kernock Park Plants, UK
Bronze: Danziger, Guatemala

Finished Plants & Trees

Gold: Hangzhou Huazhiyun Agricultural Investment Co., China
Silver: Miao Fu Holdings Co., China
Bronze: LVG Plants, South Africa

Sustainability

Gold: Anthura, the Netherlands
Silver: Citrina, the Netherlands
Bronze: LVG Plants, South Africa

Finally I ...

I don't know what a "Super Sukki" is, but I want one! Actually, it's a fun, eye-catching collection of succulents dreamed up by marketing and tag firm [Renner Print Media](#).



The main sign reads "Indestructible and easy to care for" and "Good for any climate." And the cartoon balloons read "I am not fat. I am only saving water" and "The choice of plants is also a question of intelligence." I couldn't get word if it was designed for a client, or if it's just a concept. Either way, it's awesome.

Finally II ...



What does it mean when one of our trendier new foliage plants, the black ZZ (zamioculcas), has been reproduced in plastic?

See you next time,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chi".

Chris Beytes

Editor

GrowerTalks and Green Profit

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