

Summerific, Feathered Friends and Garden Tours



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

First-Ever Cultivate Virtual
Feathered Friends Ajuga
MI Garden Plant Tour
The Gardens at Ball
Pest ID in Español
It's Summerific!

Perennial PULSE

News and commentary on the global perennial plant market



Rudbeckia 'Treasure Trove'
New to Proven Winners Perennials
for 2025-2026!

The First-Ever Cultivate Virtual

An extraordinary year deserves an extraordinary event and the first-ever Cultivate'20 Virtual didn't disappoint. I was skeptical at first, but entered the event with an open mind (not to mention I was wearing my favorite pajamas). Similar to my tendencies at the live events, I spent most of my time on the trade show floor. It was clean, friendly and easy to navigate (no crowded aisles). Here's what a typical booth looked like:



If you didn't attend, once you select a booth to enter, a virtual booth appears (much like the Growing Colors/2Plant International booth shown above). From there, you can navigate through the booth. Many companies featured new products, informative videos, catalogs and product information that can be downloaded. No heavy bags to lug around the show. During the event, the booths were staffed with company representatives to assist with any questions. I must admit, it was done really well.

I still prefer the face-to-face experience and at times found the chat conversations to be more casual ("Hey, what do you think of this virtual experience?") rather than more productive, in-depth

conversations about new products and innovations. However, under the current circumstances, I'm glad there was a virtual event rather than no event. In the future, I potentially see a place for virtual events such as this to be held simultaneously with live, in-person venues. Who knows where the future will take us?

Let me know what you thought about your Cultivate'20 Virtual experience. Feel free to send your comments to me at ppilon@ballpublishing.com.

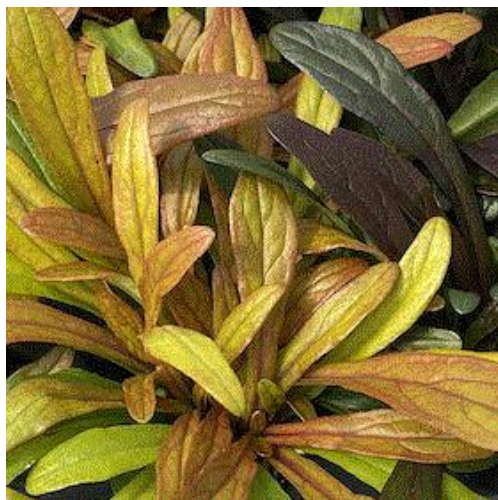
Oh, I almost forgot—if you attended Cultivate'20 Virtual and are a current AmericanHort member, you can visit the trade show and view all of the education sessions for free up until September 1, 2020. All good things must come to an end, so be sure to enjoy the virtual experience while you can.



Feathered Friends Ajuga

Chris Hansen from Garden Solutions has done it again—he's found and built a marketing program for another great product line.

Allow me to introduce you to the **Feathered Friends Ajuga**. This series offers unprecedented worldwide color breakthroughs for the popular groundcover ajuga. Feathered Friends was named for their feather-like foliage and the way they mingle nicely with other plants in combos.



Fancy Finch



Noble Nightingale

There are currently seven cultivars in the flock of feathered friends. They are: Cordial Canary, Fancy Finch, Fierce Falcon, Noble Nightingale, Parrot Paradise, Petite Parakeet and Tropical Toucan.

They each produce striking cobalt blue flowers, have good vigor with fast finishing times and are all hardy in Zones 4 to 8.

The Feathered Friends will be arriving at retail for 2021. They should be in high demand and may be hard to find, but a little birdie told me that **Mast Young Plants** has semi-exclusive distribution of this series in 2021.



Michigan Garden Plant Tour

As I mentioned above, I personally prefer face-to-face trade events. Even better is face-to-flower interactions. Nothing beats seeing great plants in person. Lucky for me, the 17th annual Michigan Garden Plant Tour is still planning to go on as planned from July 27 to August 7, 2020.

The Michigan Garden Plant tour is a great venue for commercial growers, landscapers, public garden employees and other industry professionals to view new and existing ornamental plant selections in containers and/or landscape settings. This coordinated open house consists of five locations: **Four Star Greenhouse**, **Mast Young Plants**, **Michigan State University Horticulture Gardens**, **Raker-Roberta's Young Plants** and **Walters Gardens**.



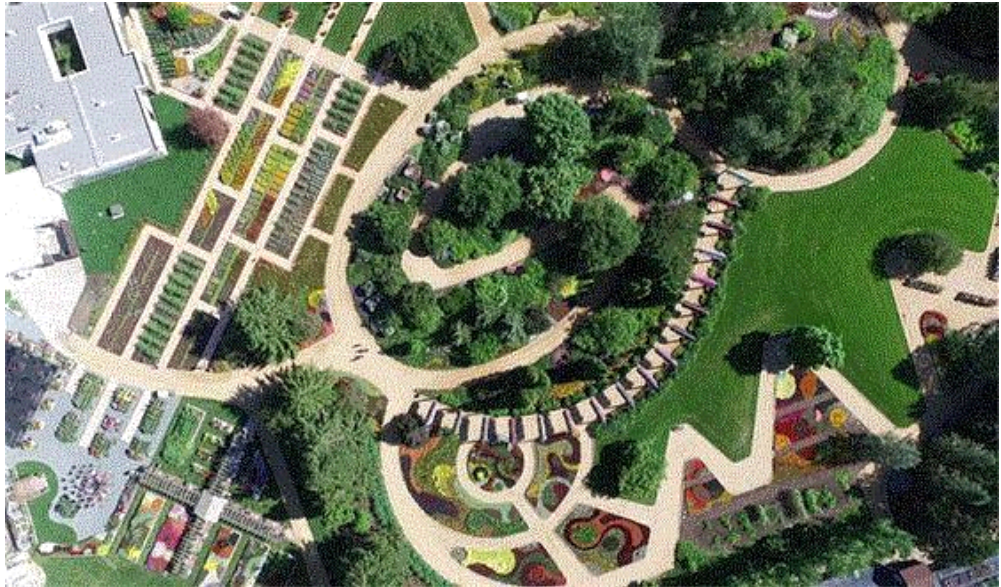
MSU Horticulture Gardens

As you can imagine with COVID-19, there will be some modifications to how the events will be held. Each location have made modifications to their programs. For example, guided and/or group tours will likely not be happening—rather, participants are encouraged to do self-guided tours at their leisure. All locations are asking all attendees to follow social distancing guidelines (precise guidelines will be posted at each of the garden tour locations).

The Michigan Garden Plant Tour is free to attend, but please check the tour website at www.canr.msu.edu/planttour for specific times, RSVP requirements and other information for each of the tour locations.

The Gardens at Ball

Are you looking for more opportunities to see great new plants in person? Or perhaps you're having withdrawal symptoms from not being able to attend Darwin Perennials Day in person last month (don't get me wrong, Darwin Digital Days was pretty awesome).



Well, here's your chance. The Gardens at Ball will be open this summer for Ball Seed Customer Days from July 28 to August 14. Similar to the tours mentioned above, this event will consist of self-guided tours and attendees must practice social distancing. Discovery codes and signage will be posted to enhance your experience at the gardens.

Although the event is being held over two weeks, you must make an appointment to attend. This is necessary to keep the crowds down to a safe size. Go to www.ballcustomerday.com for details on how you can participate in Ball Seed's Customer Days.

Pest ID in Español

Bayer Environmental Science recently released a new Spanish Pest Identification Guide. The guide is chock full of colorful images and useful information to help effectively communicate important technical information about pests to Spanish-speaking laborers in greenhouses and nurseries.



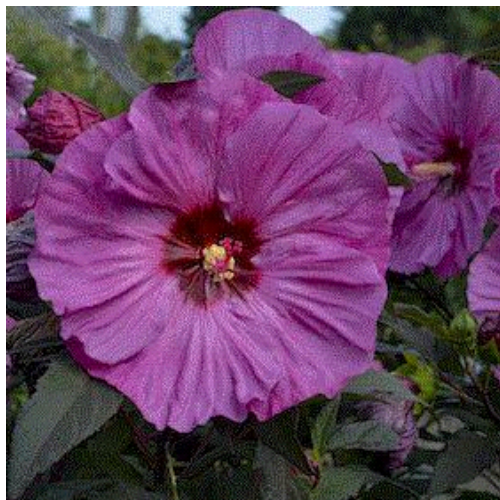
The easy-to-use guide is designed to give workers a valuable resource they can use to identify many pest issues and options for controlling them. It includes other types of useful information, including what types of personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn while making pesticide applications.

The Spanish Pest ID guide is available as convenient pocket-sized, water- and scratch-resistant flipbooks for a nominal fee. Click [here](#) to order these invaluable ID guides.

Digital copies can be downloaded for FREE by clicking [here](#). Free digital downloads of the Pest ID Guide are also available in English at the same website.

It's Summerific!

One of my favorite summer-flowering perennials is the hardy hibiscus. Many cultivars have huge 8-in. or larger flowers, bloom profusely and provide impressive eye-catching displays in the landscape. Walters Gardens has dubbed the first week of August (the 3rd to the 9th) as Summerific Week to promote and celebrate their impressive Summerific line of perennial hibiscus.



Berry Awesome



Spinderella

During Summerific Week, they're asking industry professionals, garden writers and social media influencers to post photos on social media (primarily Instagram) of hibiscus with something they love about the plant and include **#SummerificWeek** in the post. This is a great method to let consumers and customers know about these great perennials that are usually under the radar during the spring retail season. The hope is Summerific Week will help lure customers back into the garden center during the summer.

If you sell hibiscus or have an image and/or comment you'd like to share, please help improve the awareness of these great summer-flowering perennials. Join in on hibiscus mania and share your photos and comments. Be sure to include **#SummerificWeek** and tag **@waltersgardens** in your post to improve the success of this initiative. One more thing: if Walters Gardens loves your Summerific photo, you might receive a Proven Winners cooler.

Click [here](#) for more info on **Summerific Week**.

Thanks for reading this edition of *Perennial Pulse*. My email is ppilon@ballpublishing.com if you have any comments or suggestions.

Take care,

Paul Pilon
Editor-at-Large
Perennial Pulse

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