

New Garden Center Show, plus shopping via text and donating surplus



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

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New Garden Center Show

There's a new summer trade show for garden center retailers debuting in August. This one is being organized by a media/marketing company out of New Jersey called SmartWork Media, a newcomer to the IGC world, and is scheduled to take place August 10-12 at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee.

The event organizers are expecting 600 booths and "thousands of buyers" at the three-day event. Organizers also are lining up educational opportunities that they hope will address "the most essential purchasing, marketing and management questions that IGCs face today."

Oh, and that's right—this is a show for independent garden centers. You folks! The Garden Center Show for IGCs (its official name) will be partnering with Garden Centers of America for a day of touring Milwaukee-area garden centers. This will take place on August 9. GCA is also helping to design the show's conference.

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SmartWork Media's CEO Mattijs Braakman explained via press release why this show was created:

"Due to the COVID-19 pandemic there were no Midwest garden center shows in 2020, and at this time, we don't see any schedule for 2021 either. The industry needs to have an opportunity to get together to conduct business in 2021. With our many years of expertise in producing B2B magazines and shows focused on the retail industry, the new GARDEN CENTER SHOW for IGCs fits well into our model, and we look forward to sharing this expertise with the independent garden center industry."

Show organizers aren't some fly-by-nights, either. Rob Bailey, the Garden Center Show for IGCs director, was the show manager for the popular IGC Show. Said Rob of directing this new show: "Over the past five years, I have enjoyed working with thousands of independent garden center owners, building relationships and helping to grow their businesses. I am thrilled that SmartWork Media has provided an opportunity to continue that work with the new Garden Center Show. I look forward to seeing many familiar faces in August!"

Also on the show management team is Jim Reed, a trade show veteran for a range of B2B retail industries. Sounds like he will be influential in bringing some points of view from other types of retailers into the show's educational line-up—always a good thing.

More information on the Garden Center Show for IGCs at www.gardencentershow.com.



New Plant!

Maybe you'll see some new varieties at the Garden Center Show? I chose this week's new plant variety because earlier in the day I had a hankering for cake. And now that I look at my list of new varieties to feature, naturally I chose Red Velvet echeveria from Syngenta Flowers.



It's "delightfully decadent!" proclaims its description, with velvety soft leaves and bright red burgundy tips. The brighter the light conditions, the bolder those tips become. While never really a standout on echeverias, Red Velvet produces some nice little yellow-tipped red to orange flowers from early spring through summer. A highlight with this variety is that it can be used both indoors and out.

Remember, I'm including one new variety in each *buZZ* all year! And so far I've missed just one week. Help me share a new variety in each issue and send your new plant variety to ewells@ballpublishing.com.

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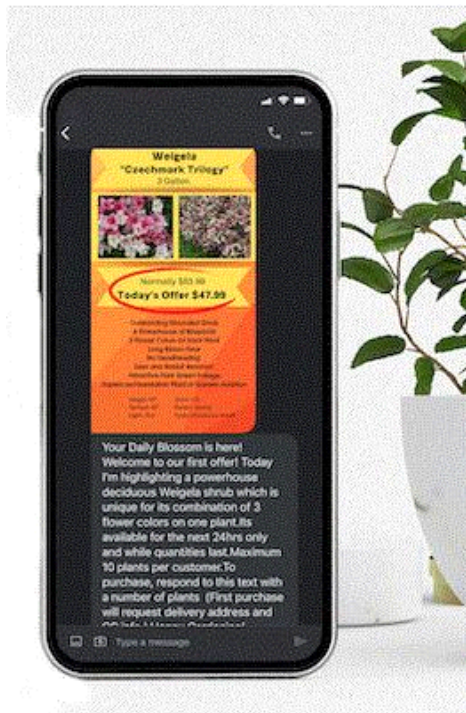
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Speaking of Retailers ...

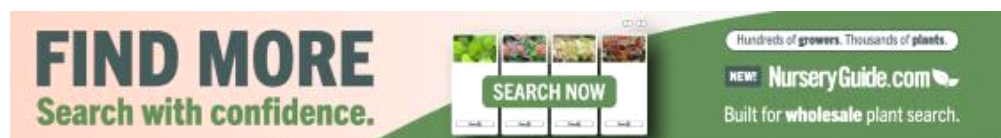
Would "shop by text" be considered online retailing? Because the latest plant shopping opportunity (shoppportunity?) from ShrubBucket.com is purchasing plants through a daily text message. The text-based platform is called The Daily Blossom and it premiered this past weekend.

Company co-founder and chief horticultural officer Rick Hedrick says ShrubBucket is looking for ways to connect people and plants. With a "go to where the people are" philosophy, The Daily Blossom does indeed go to where the people are—and they are on their phones. Shopping via text seems like the next opportunity to expose their 6,000 plant SKUs to the people.



This is how it works: The user receives a daily text message featuring a hand-selected plant. These may have limited availability, could be rare plants or a grower's choice variety. If it's something the shopper is interested in, she texts back the quantity she'd like to purchase. Because these have limited availability, this is a first-come, first-served experience.

"People are looking for expert recommendations," Rick wrote in a press release. "Our goal is to help them overcome the intimidation of selecting the best plant from the many choices available. The Daily Blossom is the perfect solution for many to be able to purchase the best plants available every single day."



My Thoughts

I think this is a pretty solid business idea. For people who are super-jazzed about plants—the rare, the limited supply, the items that are out of the ordinary—this seems like a valid way to make them aware of the offering and engage them directly. Don't wait for the person to engage with social talk.

A daily text? May seem too frequent for my liking. For instance, the general store down the street from me has the best donuts in town. They only sell them Thursday-Sunday. By Wednesday I'm jonesing for a toasted coconut or cinnamon apple-filled. I'm so hankering for a donut I'll even get a blueberry cake donut (with glaze, for sure). If I had awareness of an offering every day, I would be more apt to disregard it. Plus, the non-daily offering gives the retailer time to strategize.

What can you do with a text-portunity? Jot me a note about it at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

2021's Email Marketing Trends

Just because people are shopping via text doesn't mean you should cool it with the email promos. Not at all. A recent ADWEEK article points out that more than 4.4 billion people will be using email by 2024. That's a lot of people! And email is still a valid marketing strategy.

But the email of tomorrow (or even today) is not your grandmother's email. There are new ways to adapt it to your needs and pull from it what you can to improve future campaigns.

Here are a few trends the folks at ADWEEK pulled together. Use what you can!

Video emails. Video is an efficient way to get your message across without having too text-heavy of a message (which takes a lot longer for folks to process). Also, 91% of people said that they watched an explainer video to learn more about a service. (Uh! A video *buZZ*, perhaps?)

Responsive design. 46% of emails that are opened are opened on a mobile device. Make sure your emails are in mobile-friendly templates!

Spam is no bueno. People need to be opted in to receive your emails, and they need a way to unsubscribe. If they can't find a way to unsubscribe, your emails could be marked as spam, which could then affect your overall sender reputation.

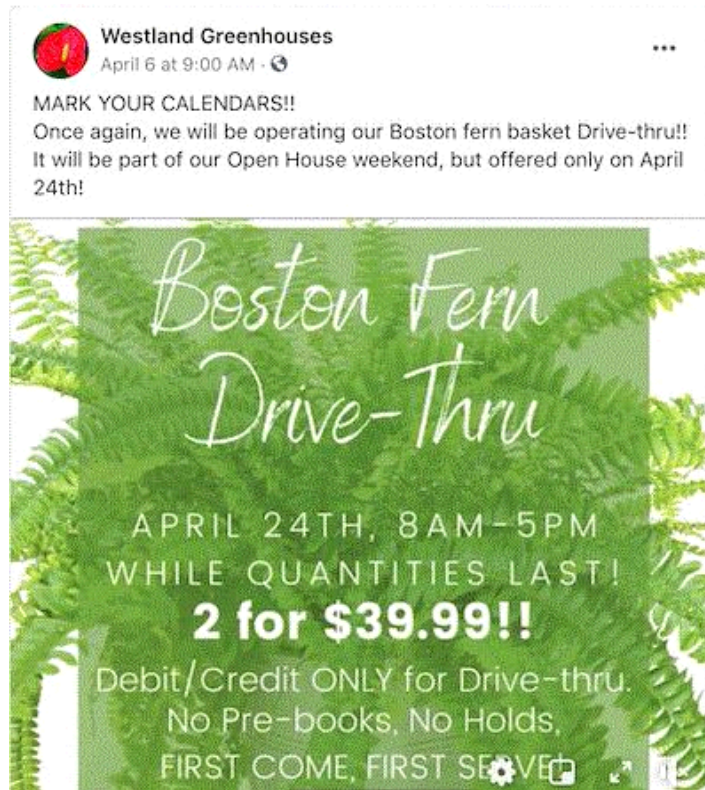
Integration. Remember I said "Go to where the people are"? They are pretty much everywhere. Which means you should make it super easy for folks to share your email's content on social channels. Put those social buttons on all of your customer communications.

Get interactive. Adding in something that engages the reader and gets them to interact with the copy can turn something boring into something interesting and memorable. Include a poll or a GIF or an interactive map. For the fancy among you, try to program in something that happens when the reader hovers over an image. (Look for a video version of *buZZ* with a hoverable map and social links that you can read with no problem on your phone. Well, maybe).

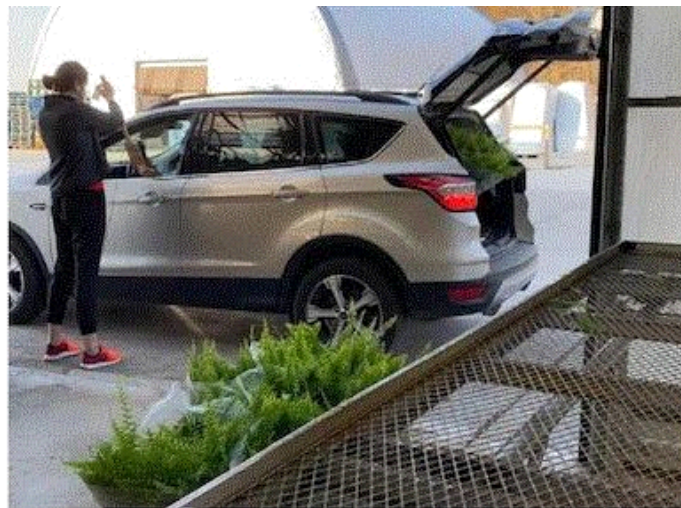
Read more about these email marketing trends [HERE](#).

What a Turnout!

The folks at Westland Greenhouses Garden Centre in Grand Bend, Ontario, must know a thing or two about marketing—email or otherwise. That could explain how they ended up selling 2,500 Boston ferns in six hours on their Open House Weekend.



According to the [CBC](#), the one-day-only Boston fern sale was a “drive-by” sale, but it seems to me it was more of a drive-thru event. The demand for the ferns was so great that cars started queuing up an hour before the sale began and some waited up to 90 minutes for their chance to snag a fern. The cars created a line 3 km (1.86 mi.) long. COVID-19 safety protocols were followed.



Happy customers pay for their Boston ferns using an Interac machine and pop the truck for contactless payment and pickup.

The article says this is Westland’s second-annual drive-thru event. Co-owners Anita and Paul VanAdrichem held the first last year when pandemic restrictions forced them to offload product quickly, selling 1,500 plants. I’m not sure if it’s the fun of the event or the quick product turnover that prompts them to do this, but they already have plans to do it next year.

Encouraging Surplus Harvest Donations

Garden centers may have seen a great boom in business and the number of new gardeners may have exploded due to the pandemic, but not everyone has experienced such blessings. According to [THIS ARTICLE](#), food insecurity has doubled due to the crisis.

To help local communities nationwide, Bonnie Plants is once again encouraging gardeners to plant a little extra to help neighbors in need. Bonnie Plants' [Grow More. Feed More.](#) initiative is partnering with [AmpleHarvest.org](#) once again encourage home gardeners to plant a little extra this season and donate their surplus to help feed their neighbors and support their communities. AmpleHarvest.org is a nonprofit that connects gardeners with more than 9,000 local food pantries that accept fresh produce.

According to Bonnie Plants President and CEO Mike Sutterer, a recent survey conducted by the company found that while 50% of gardeners harvest surplus food, only 10% know where the extra food can be donated. Bonnie and AmpleHarvest hope to fix that.



Travis Hammonds harvests vegetables in the garden on his property in Alabama. Through [AmpleHarvest.org](#), he was able to support the [Grow More. Feed More.](#) initiative by finding a local food bank where he donates his extra produce to his neighbors in need.

Bonnie Plants is also once again donating 5% of their online sales through July to the [AmpleHarvest.org](#) organization. You should get involved, too! Find where you can donate your exhibition vegetable garden produce and encourage your customers to do the same. Direct them to [AmpleHarvest.org](#) to find local food pantries accepting donations.

Sorry About That

Folks, one more thing about [the movie](#) that Russell's Garden Center in Wayland, Massachusetts, started while knee-deep in the pandemic. I gave you the wrong email address to use if you wanted to inquire about sponsorships. Yikes! The correct email is: mariew@russellsgc.com

I was missing an "l" previously. My bad. But as I tell people who write in with corrections, errors

are a good thing because you get mentioned a second time the following week. Also, they've extended the sponsorship deadline to May 22.

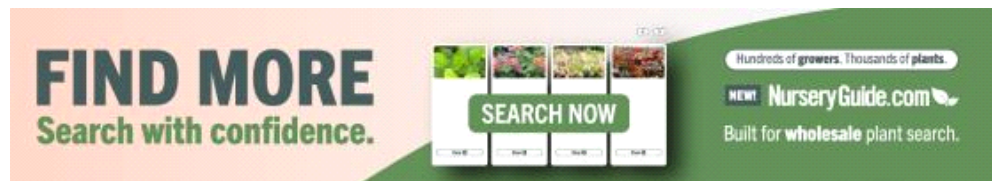
Questions, comments, suggestions? Drop me a line if you'd like at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



Ellen Wells
Editor-at-Large
Green Profit

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