

Women in Horticulture Week (and other news)

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# Nursery & LANDSCAPE INSIDER

News and Commentary for the landscape and nursery market

## COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Women in Horticulture Week  
USDA's Disaster Relief  
Styrax Nightfall  
Edible Crops Webinar  
Ball Seed Customer Days  
Drone School for Horticulturists  
J. Berry Nursery's Expansion  
Notes From the Edge of Sanity



## Women in Horticulture Week

Women are making great strides across many industries. On May 18, 2022, the U.S. Soccer Federation agreed to a historic agreement: equalized compensation for the first time in history.

Over the last 20 years, female entrepreneurs have grown by 114%—specifically, 13% in the professional and scientific services category, including horticulture. According to American Express, women owners employ 9.4 million workers and generate \$1.9 trillion in revenue.

"Women play a crucial role in the horticulture industry—not only as entrepreneurs, growers, researchers, marketers and employees at all levels but also as the largest consumers of home and garden products," says Katie Dubow, president of Garden Media Group. "As a second-generation women-owned business, I am proud to celebrate inspirational, hardworking, dedicated women and spotlight their contributions to the horticulture industry with Women in Horticulture Week."

While the number of women-owned firms continues to grow, the U.S. Census Bureau states that women are still earning less than men, \$38,238 in average annual payroll per female employee compared with \$54,114. That's why supporting women and women-owned businesses in the green industry is critical. From May 30-June 3, support, honor and promote these extraordinary professionals and their achievements during Women in Horticulture Week.

"When you look at the growing strength of women entrepreneurs today, and then add the huge number of highly educated women entering the workplace, it's clear that the future growth of entrepreneurship will be fueled by women," says Helen Greiner, CEO of **Tertill** and co-founder of iRobot.

"I am proud to be a part of the horticulture industry as a female leader, not only learning from my mentors but also helping to guide the next generation of women," says Kelly Funk, president and CEO of **Park Seed**. "It's great to see more and more females choose careers in horticulture. We have a great responsibility to stand as honorable leaders to guide the next generations of women in our industry and



pave the path for them to grow and have a voice to make their impact."

Here are some creative ways to celebrate Women in Horticulture Week.

1. Share exciting facts about women in business, including your own story, to inspire other women.
2. Volunteer or become a mentor. If you're a thriving female horticulture entrepreneur, consider giving back by either volunteering with organizations that support women or becoming a mentor. If you've never had a mentor, find one to connect with and learn from them. Ask peers inside and outside the industry for suggestions.
3. Network with other women in horticulture. Even if you're not attending events in person, you can invite female entrepreneurs to connect virtually via apps like Zoom. At [Cultivate '22 on July 18](#), AmericanHort will offer a powerful, inspiring networking experience for women by women.
4. The New Jersey Nursery & Landscape Association (NJNLA) and Rutgers Gardens are hosting their third "[Women in Horticulture](#)" event on June 1 at Rutgers Gardens in New Jersey.
5. Join the industry group [Women in Horticulture](#). They provide free or low-cost networking opportunities for those who identify as women in the horticulture world.
6. Improve your skills. Whether reading a motivational book written by a female entrepreneur or using a new organizational app, learning always leads to growth.
7. Change your frame on Facebook to support Women in Horticulture.
8. Use the hashtag #womeninhort to share stories, photos and inspiration from women in horticulture on your social media channels.
9. Sign up for the [AmericanHort Women in Horticulture interview series](#). Next is Sept 29 from 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Eastern with Spring Meadow Nursery's Summer Field.
10. Get involved with associations that promote horticulture careers for women.

"The role of women as business owners and leaders continues to have a significant impact on the green industry," says Mary Beth Cowardin, vice president of marketing and member engagement for AmericanHort. "We will continue to help women in our industry expand their business network so they can succeed both professionally and personally."

It took commitment and collaboration from both men and women to achieve the historic equal pay deal. And while it is important for women to capture more market voice and leadership roles within the industry, women can't do it alone.

When women rise, the entire industry benefits and profits, and we all win.



## USDA Announces Disaster Relief for Growers

Earlier this week, I got a note from AmericanHort with some important information provided by Evan Lee (Director of Policy and Government Relations at AmericanHort). If you experienced plant or tree losses due to natural disasters in 2020 or 2021, you may be eligible for a payment under the new Emergency Relief Program.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced last week the first phase of the disaster relief program Congress funded last year. Eligible crops include all crops for which federal crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was available. Qualifying disaster events in calendar year 2020 or 2021 include wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought and related conditions.

As with previous iterations of USDA's disaster relief, payment limits will apply to the new program. The standard payment limit is \$125,000 for each program year (2020 and 2021). However, specialty crop producers, including nursery and floriculture, may receive up to \$900,000 for each year, if at least 75%



of the person or entity's average Adjusted Gross Income is derived from farming. You can learn more about eligibility, payment rates and payment limits [here](#).

How do you apply? Under USDA's new streamlined application process, growers who received a crop insurance or NAP indemnity in 2020 or 2021 will receive a pre-filled application from USDA in the mail. If you do not receive the application in the mail, but did receive an indemnity, they recommend inquiring with your local Farm Service Agency office.

The USDA also announced a phase 2 of the Emergency Relief Program, with details to be announced in the coming weeks, which will extend relief to growers who did not hold crop insurance or NAP in 2020 and 2021. Stay tuned for more information on the second phase as information becomes available.



## Styrax Nightfall

In the realm of new tree introductions, J. Frank Schmidt is at the top of their game these days. A new introduction for 2022, *Styrax japonicus* Nightfall, continues the streak of great introductions. As with most *Styrax japonicus* cultivars, it's Zone 5-8 hardy and handles a wide range of soils when established. Blooms are the typical white that light up the tree in late spring.



But don't expect too many similarities with the species beyond that. The habit is a weeper, with max height around 10 ft. and spread of 6 ft. This actually enhances the four-season interest by providing structure to the winter landscape. And speaking of four-season interest, the foliage is a very clean purple (in mostly to full sun) that greens a bit when placed in more shade. When the blooms appear, the purple foliage definitely makes them pop.

This will be a great tree for smaller landscapes or when placed near a water feature, or if you need to conceal something like a HVAC it'll work wonders!



The advertisement features a dark green background. On the left is a potted Buxus plant with a tag that reads 'Buxus', 'Little Mister', and 'BLM-M-0001'. To the right of the plant, the text reads: 'star® ROSES and PLANTS', 'New for 2025!', 'Little Mister™ Buxus', 'Non-Mandatory Branding & Blight Resistant'. On the far right is a close-up image of the plant's foliage. Below this image is a 'Learn More' link.

## Edible Crops Webinar

Date: Thursday, June 2, 2022

Time: 2:00 p.m. Eastern/1:00 p.m. Central

[Register here!](#)

Consumer demand is on the rise for many greenhouse-grown, organic certified edible crops. Plant production can be a challenge for growers to select organic fertilizer programs, growing media and other inputs that comply with organic standards, and still produce quality crops.

Susan Parent, Horticulture Specialist–Northeastern U.S. and Eastern Canada for Premier Tech Growers & Consumers, will highlight some of the practices by growers, what challenges they face and how biological active ingredients in growing media are used to enhance plant growth. With the rise in consumer interest in home-based systems, this webinar should also benefit landscape contractors looking for insights.

Moderated by Chris Beytes, editor, *GrowerTalks/Green Profit* and *Acres Online*.

Sponsored by: [Premier Tech Horticulture](#)



The advertisement has a light grey background. On the left is the 'BAILEY' logo with the tagline 'GROWING WHAT'S NEXT™'. In the center is a stylized tree with roots. To the right of the tree, the text reads: 'THE BEST BAREROOT TO MOVE BUSINESS FORWARD.'. On the far right is a dark teal button with the text 'LEARN MORE'.

## Ball Seed Customer Days

North American horticultural distributor Ball Seed is pleased to welcome visitors once again to The Gardens at Ball in West Chicago, Ill., during [Ball Seed Customer Days](#), Thursday, July 28, and Friday, July 29. Registered guests will spend a full day engaging with Ball team members on ideas to optimize their production for next season, and stroll The Gardens filled with hundreds of new introductions for 2023 from across the industry representing over 77 breeding companies.

The event will also offer plenty of opportunities for continued education and inspiration. The popular Container Solutions Demonstration with Joan Mazat of Ball Ingenuity will once again show new ways to mix the latest genetics, and educational showcases will share trends, resources and best-practices. Additionally, guests can sign up for guided tours of the Ball campus, including the Ball Premier Lab, Seed Distribution, and the new Ball Helix Center for Research and Development.

"Ball Seed is ready to help you and your team optimize plans for 2023. Scheduling your summer visit to The Gardens at Ball is a great first-step to business success," says Jim Kennedy, Sales Director for Ball Seed. "From the inspirational mixed containers and in-ground comparison trials, to one-on-one demonstrations with Ball Seed WebTrack, there's plenty to explore in this year's showcase of 'All the Best.' We can't wait to see you here."

Registration is open now! Reserve your visit today and see the full schedule of activities online at [www.ballcustomerday.com](http://www.ballcustomerday.com).

## Drone School for Professional Horticulturists

If you're a professional horticulturist in need of some training on the latest technology and regulations, then the University of Maryland is providing a training that you could certainly benefit from. The goal of the program is to provide information on practical use of drones in horticulture and how drones can be applied in horticultural crop systems. In this entry level course, University of Maryland staff will cover the types of drones commonly used in agriculture, what is involved with obtaining a commercial drone pilot license, FAA requirements, insurance requirements and state pesticide certification process. Staff will show students how to map out an area for a drone application. Hands-on experience in flying small drones will be provided.

The use of drones in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) will also be a focus, with the goal of teaching participants how to progress towards greater efficiency including pest and disease control and plant stress management. We must continue seeking and studying new technology. It is economically vital for ornamental nursery operations to improve early detection of plant problems including insects, disease, nutrient deficiencies and water stress. Once a problem is identified there is advanced and practical technology that can be adapted to greatly improve methods of applying control materials including agro-chemicals and bio-pesticides.

This practical drone short course will introduce professional horticulturists how to use drone technology in their specific operations. This is a three part training to be held in Maryland on July 28, August 4 and August 11, 2022. Due to demand, it's limited to one person per company and the first 16 people to sign up. Send an email to [Sklcik@umd.edu](mailto:Sklcik@umd.edu) for sign-up information and a complete schedule.

## J. Berry Nursery Announces Expansion

In the last newsletter, I mentioned that **Bloomin' Easy** has included online direct sales to their portfolio. Well, not to be outdone, Jim Berry and his crew at **J. Berry Nursery** are on the same pathway. With the ongoing mission of "Creating Beauty That Inspires," J. Berry Nursery announces its online expansion, delivering customers' favorite brands of plants via direct online ordering. "In 2020, J. Berry Nursery became serious about online fulfillment of live plants because of changing consumers' shopping habits," says Jim Berry, co-owner and founder of J. Berry Nursery. "We were asked by our largest customers to do fulfillment for their online shoppers. Getting started required a bit of backdoor prep and education. We're still learning as that aspect of our business grows. My philosophy is that markets change, and we must, too. To stay in business, businesses must evolve."





Jim Berry, a great marketing mind ...

To support the online sales of the brands, J. Berry Nursery hired two fulfillment team members devoted to online orders. Additionally, the company is expanding into Mae Nursery in Lindale with their shipping facility. Currently, consumers can find approximately 50 J. Berry Nursery-grown plant sku's via their own website. They also provide order fulfillment for The Home Depot and Amazon online sales. Between all three platforms, J. Berry Nursery projects over 300 online offerings for 2023.

In addition to providing online sales, J. Berry Nursery has partnered with Boss Boxx, a company that develops affiliate programs to support direct-to-consumer sales. Kayla Sellers, J. Berry Nursery Online Sales and Marketing Director says, "We are working with and learning from the Boss Boxx team to get the special plants we are creating and growing in front of an online audience so they can get the attention they deserve." She went on to say, "The affiliate community being created has become a place where plant lovers, gardening experts and everyone who wants their home or garden to stand out, wants to be a part of. Becoming a J. Berry affiliate not only means we are rewarding our loyal online customers for sharing about their experience with these beautiful plants, but we are expanding the reach and recognition of the J. Berry brand as a whole."

## Our Wacky Wonderful World—Notes from the Edge of Sanity

Companies that take the time and make the effort to give back to communities deserve kudos. Furthermore, companies that understand the need to support schools and introduce youth to horticulture are filling an even greater role. That's why I wanted to give a shout out to Star Roses and Plants for providing an example on how to tackle both of these.

Two Philadelphia-area high schools will be blooming with color this spring, thanks to **Star Roses and Plants**. The company donated 100 Petite Knock Out miniature rose plants to W.B. Saul High School's flower garden and Abraham Lincoln High School's "Wellness Quadrant" to help support each schools' agricultural programs. The roses are being planted this spring and will be tended to over the years by the agriculture students and teachers from these two schools.

"One of the barriers teachers face is a lack of funding and materials to support their passion projects," says Susan Bacus Morgan, marketing manager at Star Roses and Plants. "We are committed to supporting the teachers, students, and schools that nurture this next generation of horticulture students. After all, they are the future leaders of our industry."

One program Star Roses and Plants has supported since its inception is **Seed Your Future**, an industry-wide effort to promote horticulture and inspire people to pursue careers working with plants.

"Our goal is to introduce the tools and resources Seed Your Future has to offer to students who show an early passion for plants," says Bacus Morgan. "It's our responsibility to share how meaningful and rewarding a career working in horticulture can be."

So, all you readers, I challenge you to think about participating in **Seed Your Future** and cultivating the next generation of horticulturists. Your efforts don't have to cost an arm and a leg and I guarantee your employees would love to participate in efforts that benefit their community.

If you're doing service in your community, I also ask that you send me some photos and a brief description of your efforts – I'd love to share it with your peers in a future *Nursery & Landscape Insider* newsletter.

Live authentic,



**Matthew Chappell**  
Editor-at-Large  
Nursery & Landscape Insider

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