




Young Growers Opine; Last Weekend; FlowerTrials



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Young Grower, Retailer webinars

How was June 18-19?

Observations about FlowerTrials:

- It's big!
 - A different audience
 - Amazing displays
 - A different pace
- Finally ...

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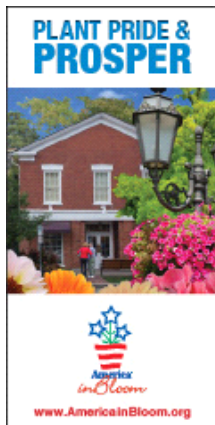
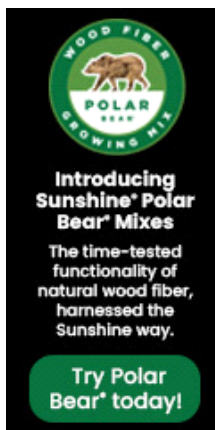
SUNTORY
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Webinars: The next generation on 2022 and beyond

Coming next week is a pair of can't-miss live Zoom webinars that feature the six young (under 35) finalists for our Young Grower and Young Retailer Awards. Here are the details:

Young Grower Finalists on Facing 2022's Challenges

On Tuesday, June 28, at 1:00 p.m. Eastern/Noon Central, you'll get to meet and hear from the three finalists for this year's *GrowerTalks*/Ball Horticultural Company Young Grower Award in a live Zoom interview:



- **Quinten Henning**, Henning's Farm & Greenhouse, DeMotte, Indiana
- **Mike Krueger**, Midwest Groundcovers, St. Charles, Illinois
- **Erika Ramos**, J. Berry Nursery, Grande Saline, Texas



You'll hear how these exceptional young talents handled the challenges of Spring 2022 and their opinions about where our industry is headed from here. Topics I'll cover include:

- Their strategies for overcoming supply chain issues
- How they've handled the labor shortage pre- and during the pandemic
- A recap of Spring 2022 in their area
- And much more ... including your questions!

Young Retailer Nominees on Facing 2022's Challenges

The very next day, Wednesday, June 29, at 1:00 p.m. Eastern/Noon Central, you can meet this year's three finalists for our *Green Profit*/The Garden Center Group Young Retailer Award. They are:

- **Casey McCollum**, Plant Perfect Garden Center, Bismarck, North Dakota
- **Ashleigh Munro**, Kiwi Nurseries, Acheson, Alberta, Canada
- **Will O'Hara**, Van Wilgen's Garden Center, North Branford, Connecticut



This year has posed some unique challenges for independent retailers trying to meet continued consumer demand. In our live Zoom webinar, you'll hear how they overcame those challenges. Webinar host and *Green Profit* Managing Editor Jen Polanz will check in with them on the following topics:

- Their strategies for overcoming supply chain issues
- Pricing strategies due to increasing costs from inflation
- How they tackled potential labor shortages
- What kind of consumer demand they saw this spring
- If and how they're using e-commerce
- And questions asked by YOU, our webinar audience

Sign up at www.growertalks.com/webinars.

A special thanks to sponsors Ball Horticultural Company, The Garden Center Group and AmericanHort.

See you there!

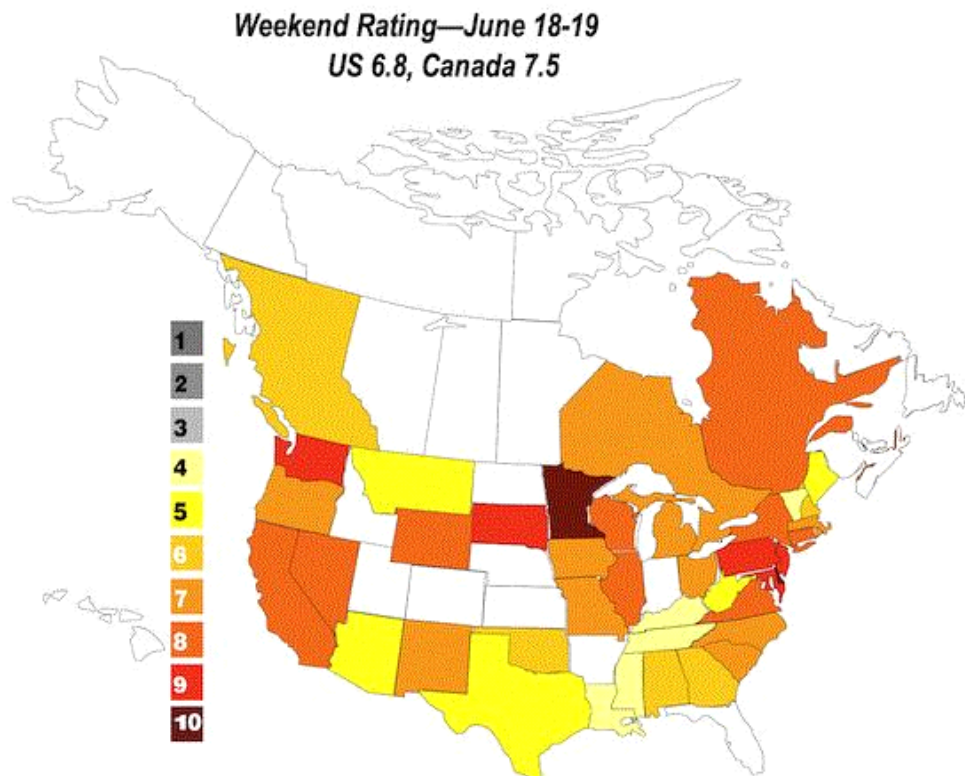


How was June 18-19?

What can I say? It's summer, at least according to the thermometer. Heat down south, which we expect in June, put a halt to sales for some of you. Midwest heat in the middle of the week broke just in time for the weekend, leading to some excellent sales and scores of 9 and 10. And in some spots, it was still like early spring. Northern New England was "cold and clammy." Montana had rain, hail in the valley and snow up high.

The resulting score? **6.8 in the U.S.** and **7.0 in Canada.** That's similar to last year's 7.1 in the U.S. and 6.9 in Canada, nowhere near 2020's phenomenal 8.0/9.3, and almost equivalent in the U.S., but well below Canada in 2019, which was 7.0/8.3.

Here's the map:



That's based on just 68 scores from 39 states and four provinces (it's well-deserved vacation

time!).

Looking at the map, you'll note a slight gradient of better scores to the north and lower scores to the south. You sent in just six 10s (9% of responses), and all of those came from Northern or Midwestern regions—Delaware, Illinois (two), Minnesota, Washington and Quebec.

But you reminded me that a good weekend in June doesn't equal a good weekend in May. Jeff Jones of Great Gardens in Wyoming rates his weekend a 9, but tempered that by saying, "In perspective, the entire weekend equals two hours on a May Saturday, so I can't really give it a 10."

And Derek Lynde of Lynde Greenhouse in Minnesota, who also rated his weekend a 9, wrote, "Sure, the weekend was great compared to the same weekend last year, but we sell more during the lunch hour on a sunny Saturday in May than we did Friday through Sunday this past weekend."

We've got just one more weekend to go in Spring 2022 before I tally and reveal the whole-season score, plus ask you for your "gut" whole-season score. Watch for that email next Monday.



Four observations about FlowerTrials

FlowerTrials is the European equivalent of the California Spring Trials. This year, held June 14-17, was the 17th edition of the event, but it was my first time to attend for the exact reason that it's the European version of CAST, so it's hard to justify the trip to see many of the same varieties. And those varieties that ARE unique to FlowerTrials may not be available in North America, so why tease you with them?

However, since I was going to be in the Netherlands to emcee the International Grower of the Year Awards at GreenTech, I hopped in my rental car and managed to visit 12 of the 29 stops, just to see what the event looks, smells and tastes like. Here are four observations from a newbie:

1. It's big!

I thought everything in America was bigger, but not Trials. FlowerTrials is a BIG event—in number of participating companies (61), in stops (29, in two areas of Holland and one of western Germany) and in attendance (about 5,000 to 5,500 from a reported 89 countries). CAST is about half that size, with maybe one-fifth the attendance (and I'm sure a much smaller country count).

The trial sites and displays are also BIG. Breeders devote a lot of space to their exhibits. Take Selecta One, for example. At CAST, they share one greenhouse with a half dozen other Ball companies. At FlowerTrials, they had an entire greenhouse all to themselves—and a big one, too.



Another example: Benary, Volmary and PAC shared this giant shipping greenhouse at amaryllis producer Kubol. I didn't get the dimensions, but it felt like you could have put half of CAST in this one space. Benary's Matthias Redlefsen explained that you need the room in order to accommodate all those visitors and have plenty of space to spread out for tours and conversations.



2. A different audience

CAST has long been primarily geared toward broker company sales reps—the busloads of Ball and Express sales people. Europe uses a different distribution model than the U.S., with young plant producers doing much of the distribution, so the audience for FlowerTrials is primarily growers. FlowerTrials also has the advantage of being within a short drive of a big chunk of the European grower market AND being held in June when the season is about over. With CAST, it's a long way to California and April is not a good time for growers to get away—hence the big difference in attendance figures.



At Anthura, where this display is always available to customers. It's the only trial I've ever visited that required white coats. But it's attached to their production facility and they're serious about sanitation.



3. Amazing displays

I hate to say it, but FlowerTrials beats CAST for quality and quantity of variety vignettes. Back in the day, CAST exhibitors went all-out on pretty and inspirational displays; but today, with a few exceptions, CAST displays are fairly humble—nice, but not mind-blowing.

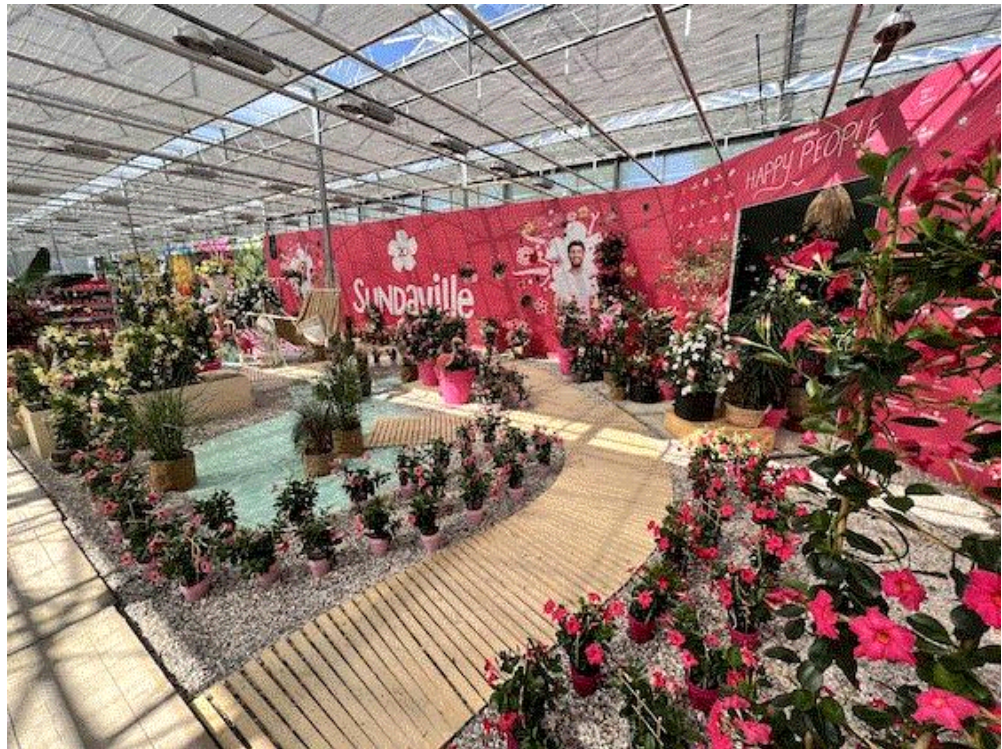
At FlowerTrials, I saw vignette after vignette, and big ones, extensive, well done, for numerous introductions. I don't know how much time and money it took, but they put in plenty of both. I guess when you expect 5,000 visitors instead of 1,000 or less, you can justify the expense. Also, the plant quality throughout was exquisite, with nary a bad leaf or limp flower to be found. The Dutch (and Germans) can grow plants!



At Selecta One.



Belle Vardia bouvardia by Royal Van Zanten.



Sundaville by Suntory.



4. A different pace

If you've never been to Europe to visit a greenhouse, here's how it goes: You enter (or buzz the front door buzzer) and get invited in, and your host asks if you'd like a coffee. Your answer is always, "I'd love a coffee," and you join him or her in the breakroom for a very good coffee and a little chat before heading out into the greenhouse—no matter how many coffees you've already had that day.

The same goes for FlowerTrials—every stop had generous catering setups for coffee, beverages, snacks, lunches and dinners (I enjoyed an excellent barbecue dinner at Beekenkamp). Not that CAST doesn't offer those things (the coffee and pastry bar at Syngenta is second-to-none, not to mention the cocktails at Benary), but in the States we're more about "I've got one hour—show me the highlights" than we are about lingering and relaxing.



Lingering at the Selecta/Evanthia trial.



Getting the lowdown on the buddleia offerings from Vitroflora by company founder Karol Pawlak.

Not that folks linger all that much at FlowerTrials, because even though many of the stops are in close proximity (walking distance, in some cases), it's still a lot of work to see every one. You have to pick and choose—in my case, I opted for companies that don't exhibit at CAST, like Anthura (anthuriums and orchids), KP Holland (curcuma, mums, spaths and more) and Vitroflora (perennials).



All that toolbelt needs is some Felcos and I'd be ready for a day in the garden!

Intrigued by the event? FlowerTrials has some videos on their [WEBSITE](#) and will be posting more, they say. And if you're really intrigued, mark your calendars for Week 24 of 2023, June 13-16. I think GreenTech is that same week, so you'll have plenty to do!

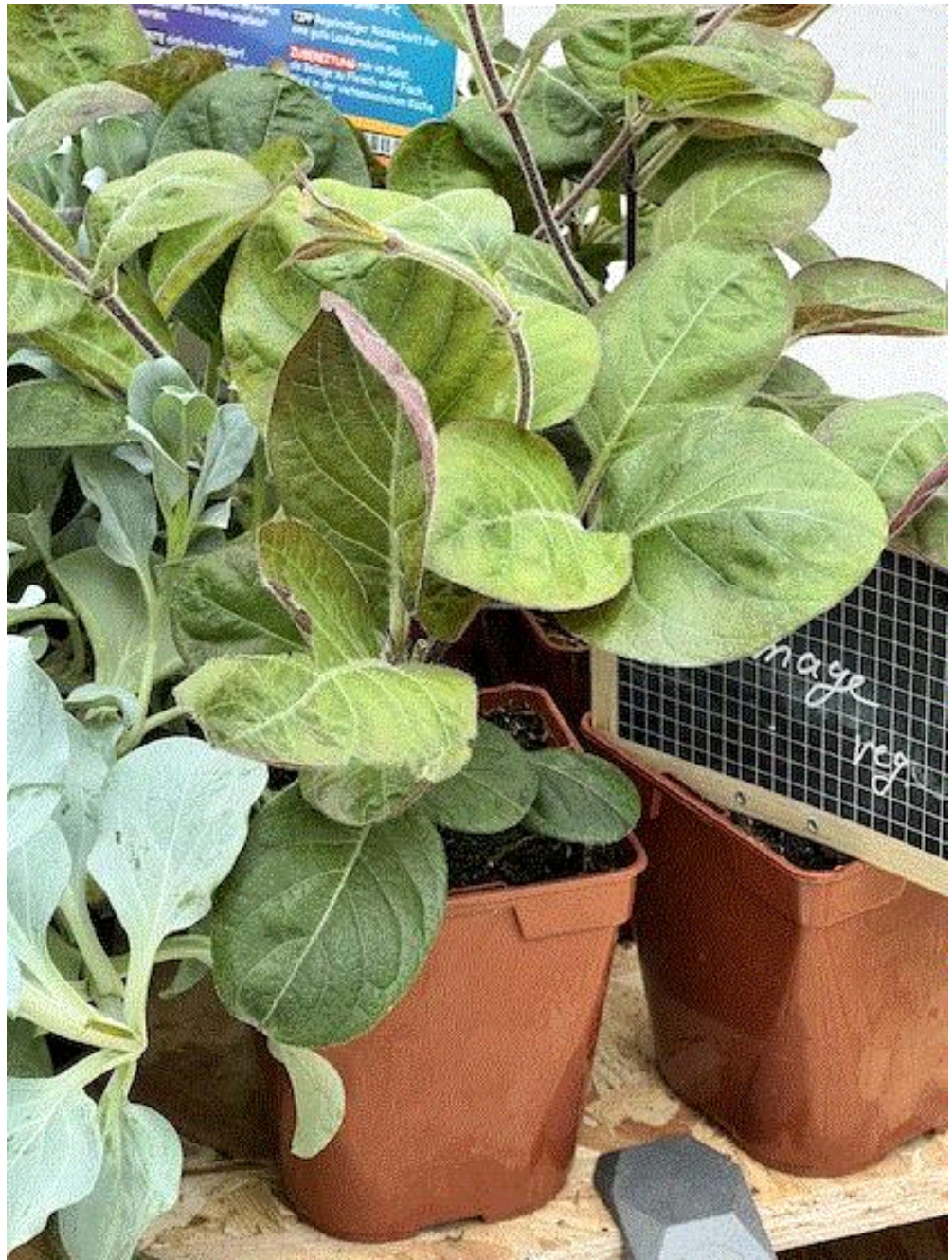


Finally ...

I wasn't at FlowerTrials looking for new products, but at Florensis I sure did find a weird one:

"Cheese Plant," aka *Paederia lanuginosa*.





I tasted it, and this leafy vine does have the distinct flavor and scent of cheese (camembert, I was told). Culinarily speaking, it's great sprinkled on salads or most anything else that you want to add a hint of cheese to.

I must say, Cheese Plant is much nicer than sewer vine or skunk vine, a couple of other common names I've found for *Paederia*.



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See you next time!

Chi

Chris Beytes
Editor
GrowerTalks and *Green Profit*

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