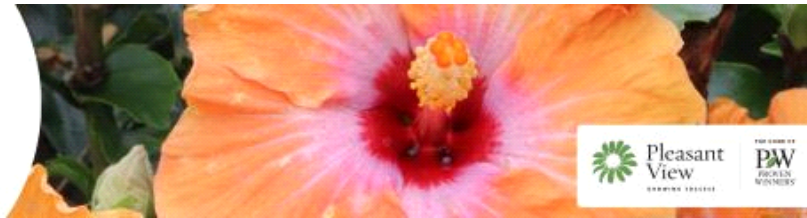


The Garden Center Show's goods, plus the optimism spectrum

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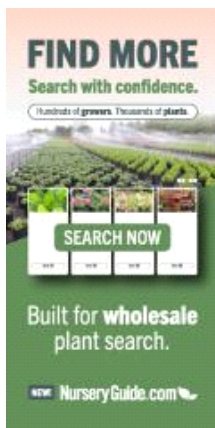
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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- At The Garden Center Show
- How Was the Show?
- New Stuff They Found
- Three More
- Another Product for You
- And An Offer!
- Reader Comments
- Congrats, Students!
- Head West—Twice!



At The Garden Center Show

Bossman Beytes and the incomparable Jen Zurko, along with the esteemed Marvin Miller headed north to Milwaukee last week for The Garden Center Show. Lucky me, they saw lots and wrote about it.

That's the new garden center show just launched last week (August 9-11) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The first edition should have been last year, but the lingering effects of the pandemic caused them to delay until 2022. Jen Zurko and I, with Hortistician Dr. Marvin Miller, made the 1:45 drive up there last Wednesday to check it out.

This new event is produced by [Smart Work Media](#), a publishing company out of Montclair, New Jersey. Smart Work isn't in the garden center industry in any way other than this new show; their print publications cover the fields of digital printing, jewelry retailers, optical retailers, pet retailers, screen printing, retail design and sign-making professionals. I guess with retail and pets, there's a connection to L&G ...



Marvin Miller and Jen Zurko scoot ahead of Bossman Beytes toward The Garden Center Show floor.

Note that this event is NOT a remake of the former IGC Show founded in 2007 by Jeff and Cheryl Morey. That show closed after a successful run at Chicago's Navy Pier, then one year at McCormick Place, and then the pandemic hit. There has been no explanation as to why it wasn't brought back, but two years is a long time to survive without holding an event.

The Garden Center Show website does acknowledge the IGC Show, with CEO Matthijs Braakman saying, "The permanent closure of the IGC Show created a void in the garden center industry. So we reached out to previous IGC Show Director Rob Bailey to see if Smart Work Media could step in and fill that void, and the result is a brand new—under completely different ownership—show for independent garden centers."

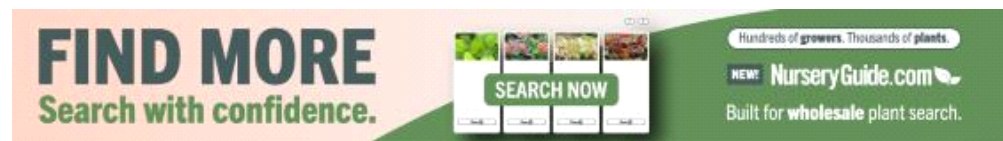


How Was the Show?

The Wisconsin Center is a beautiful venue, but the show didn't require much of its 188,695 sq. ft. There were 7 1/2 aisles, generously spread out, accommodating about 100 booths total. In IGC Show terms, it was about like walking maybe three or four aisles of that giant show. We visited on Wednesday, the second day of the show, and saw perhaps 50 other attendees on the floor. We were told that Tuesday had been a bit busier. That makes sense, as the garden center bus tour was Monday, so anyone who came for it would have visited the show on Tuesday, and at this humble size, there was no reason to stay for a second day. It took us just 2 1/2 hours to see everyone we wanted to, and that was taking our time.

Still, don't be fooled by the small size! The mix of exhibitors was a nice surprise, and also much like the old IGC show: POS systems, garden décor of every stripe, home décor, garden and indoor plants, prepared foods, pet toys, garden tools and supplies, pest control products, decorative containers, statuary and more. We found at least a dozen new things to write about—a good haul for such a small show. In fact, being small, we were able to linger and learn more about companies than we normally would, and that sometimes led to uncovering a new product they didn't have front-and-center.

Attendance may have been meager by IGC Show standards (which drew more than 6,000 to Chicago at its peak), but exhibitors didn't seem to mind. Many expressed pleasure at the people they were seeing and the business they were writing, and they seemed inclined to want to return next year and support the growth of this new event that is exclusively for garden center retailers.



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New Stuff They Found

Integrated Store Systems

This point-of-sale company has been servicing restaurants and grocery stores for more than 30 years; they say they were the first to develop touch POS software back in the 1980s. What they were highlighting at the show is their new mobile printer, which can hook onto a belt, allowing you to print a receipt from anywhere. We've been noticing more IGCs utilizing mobile POS systems during peak times, especially if they don't have a lot of room around their regular cash-wrap area. They also sell hand-held scanners and tablets that feature hot-swappable batteries—never worry about losing scan data during busy times! integratedstoresystems.com



Roeda

Carol Roeda started creating metal art as a hobby 25 years ago, and for the last 15 years she's been selling metal magnets as indoor and outdoor décor full time with the help of her daughter, Amy, who was staffing their booth. Products range from small refrigerator magnets to large door wreaths and garden stakes, so there's a wide price range. A key feature is that decorative pieces can be switched out for different seasons or holidays—buy one stake or wreath and use it year-round by changing the magnetic pieces decorating it. roedastudio.com



Belvedere Marketing

As more states and municipalities enact plastic bag bans, reusable totes are in high demand. Belvedere can customize your bags with your company logo, photos, etc. They come in a variety of sizes and the minimum order is 5,000. belvedereexclusive.com



Three More

Steeldog USA

Do you have that dog that destroys every stuffy toy to get to the squeaker inside? Steeldog LLC, also known as Steel Dog, designs its toys with a surprise inside for further fun and enrichment for every canine toy assassin. It could be more than one squeaker, a ball or another, smaller stuffy. Our favorite was the Thanksgiving turkey, which has a slice of pumpkin pie and a dog-safe ball inside, plus rope pull-toy drumsticks. You can find Steel Dog on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).



Dion Longtin and the Steel Dog lineup of fun dog toys with another toy inside.



The Thanksgiving turkey toy is stuffed with a slice of pumpkin pie, a dog-safe ball and a rope pull-toy.

Burgon & Ball

A new category for this company that typically offers gardening accessories is a line of pots and containers from Dutch company Capi, which asked B&B if they would like to be their North American distributor. Made from completely recycled plastic and CO2-neutral, the planters come in four different styles of simple, sleek and textured designs. There are also two different sizes of

watering cans. burgonandball.com



Mossify

The Mossify boys, originator of the Mossify mistr USB rechargeable plant mister and the Bendable Moss Pole and Coir Pole, have continued their development of unusual plant supports with a line of powder-coated metal trellises. The quirky, hip shapes are called "Tetris," "Plant Stairs," "Check Mark," "M" and "Oval." Also shown are new wooden trellises called "Tropical Squares." That's Mossify's Aidan Endre staffing their booth. Oh, and as a reminder, for every order, Mossify plants a tree with One Tree Planted. mossify.ca



That was A LOT for one Buzz! Chris and Jen Z saw lots more items that sparked their interest, but I'll save them for next week.

Another Product for You

You know what I don't mention enough here? Hobby hydroponics. It's growing in popularity, and not just because of the increasing legal allowance of grow-your-own cannabis. Folks want to be more in charge of their own food supply, and even a small hydroponic system is doable for most people. You likely have hydroponic hobbyists as part of your customer base.



OASIS Grower Solutions has made growing hydroponically easier for hobbyists by putting its Hydroponic Fertilizer Solution in a new one-bag package. “We’re not only excited about how effective our hydroponic fertilizer is, we’re also thrilled to introduce the new packaging that streamlines the product information and more accurately aligns with our brand aesthetic,” said Bill Riffey, Global Director of OASIS Grower Solutions, in a press release about the new packaging. This fertilizer is specifically formulated for commercial and hobby hydroponic production of lettuce, herbs, greens and most vegetables. The one bag replaces the traditional two-part approach with a nutrient system designed to deliver essential elements in optimal proportions. And, this approach also simplifies the process and eliminates the chances of snafus happening in the mixing process.

If you have some hydroponic customers, or are growing hydroponically yourself, contact [Mary Bruns](#) for more info.

And An Offer!

I told you about the macrame company Soul of the Party, a Cultivate'22 exhibitor, a week or two ago. The owner, Kevin (gah! I still haven't gotten his last name!), was so delighted that I included his product that he gave me an offer exclusively for *Buzz* and *Tropical Topics* readers.



Use this [SPECIAL LINK](#) to received \$100 off and one year of free shipping. That's a great deal—take Kevin up on this generous offer. And try to find out his last name if you can.

Reader Comments

Last week, after mentioning that the [Small Business Optimism Index](#) rose four-tenths of a point last month, I asked if you were feeling optimistic, and if you were not feeling so rosy, what are your business concerns? Well, two of you wrote in with opposite responses.

First to chime in was Kathy Nass of Donahue's Clematis in Faribault, Minnesota. She stated quite simply that her greatest concerns are inflation, gas prices/heating expenses (she's in Minnesota, after all), tax increases and labor shortages/expenses. We hear you, Kathy! At least a few of her concerns are perennial—not perennial as in a plant, but as in always on that list of concerns. Gas prices have tumbled a bit, thankfully, and inflation is ... well, not even professional economists can figure out what's going on with that. Yes, there's plenty to turn us toward our worry beads.

However, nothing can bring down the optimism level of Rebecca Rowley of Ingadi Flower Farm in Chelsea, Alabama.

"A resounding yes! for me. As a micro flower farm (growing on 1/8 acre, up to 1/2 acre at times) and local/small business now going into our third season on our own property, we have seen an increase in business, especially with our roadside flower stand, DIY buckets and a la carte events. I may be wrong, but I have a hunch people are looking for cost alternatives to full-service florists."

Ah, that looking to lower costs might be a nod to inflation. I asked about these *a la carte* events,

and Rebecca explained that it's their twist on what most flower farmers do as a *la carte* weddings. "Basically, it's a cost-effective alternative to ordering flowers for an event. I can provide small, medium or large arrangements, bouquets, boutonnieres, corsages and accessories but don't do large installments. They can pick up on the farm or I can deliver depending on the circumstances." I also love the quote she has on her email signature: "Grown, not flown." Catchy!

Her situation validates my feeling that money can be made from people looking to save money. What are you doing to make money from folks looking to save money? Drop me a note about it [HERE](#).

Congrats, Students!

Thirteen lucky students have recently been awarded \$26,000 in scholarships from the Sidney B. Meadows Scholarship Fund. Wait, I shouldn't call them lucky! They worked and studied doggedly hard and had to go through a competitive application process. Their newfound funds were well-deserved and will be put to good use, helping them get through the rest of their academic studies.

Who are these fund-receiving students?

- **Ramsey Arram**, North Carolina State University
- **Forrest Brown**, Virginia Tech, *The Art & Millie Lancaster Scholarship*
- **Samuel de Bordes**, Louisiana State University, *The Dr. James & Faye Foret Scholarship*
- **Ashley Rene' Edwards**, Louisiana State University
- **Landon Erbrick**, Auburn University, *The Sally Smith Scholarship*
- **Leandria Noelle Garrett**, University of Georgia, *The Robert L. Vanlandingham Scholarship*
- **Julian Ginori**, University of Florida, *The Richard J. Hackney Scholarship*
- **Johnathan Alexander Hampton**, Auburn University, *The Arthur A. "Buck" Jones Scholarship*
- **Carolyn Grace Krauss**, University of Tennessee, *The Dr. Bryson L. James Scholarship*
- **Thomas Maxwell McKeown**, Louisiana State University, *The Lee C. Howell Scholarship*
- **Luke Owen**, North Carolina State University
- **Kaitlin Swiantek**, University of Georgia
- **Jacob Logan Winkles**, University of Georgia

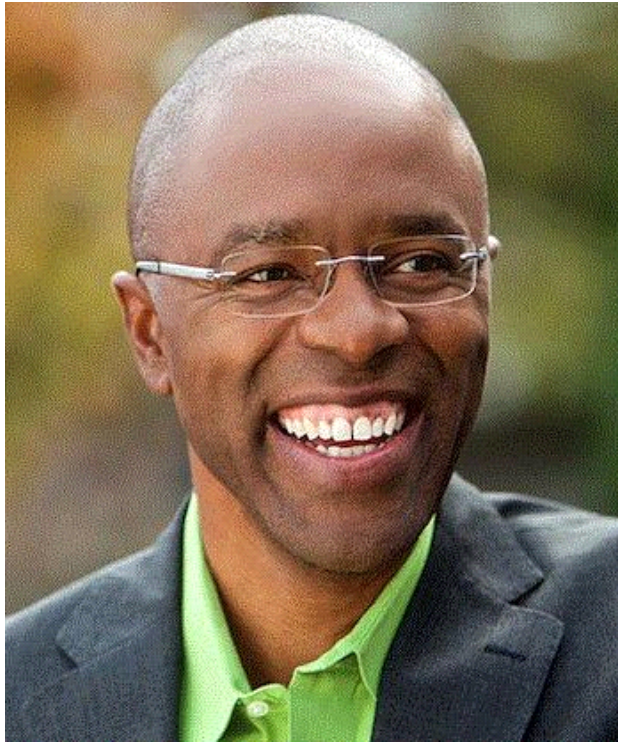
Three of the above are undergraduates and 10 are graduate students, and all of them are residents of one of the 16 southeastern states, which is a requirement of the scholarship. They may be in school now, but we eagerly await their entry into the wide world of professional horticulture. They are destined to make a difference.

Applications for the 2023 scholarships will be available online by January 1. Oh hey, and if you've received one of these awards already, you're eligible to apply for a second! See all of the details [HERE](#).

Head West—Twice!

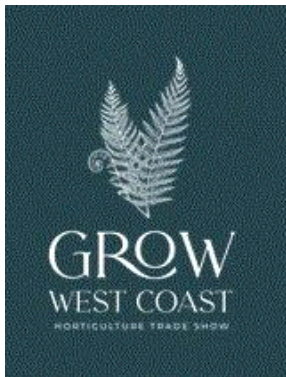
You have two horticultural chances to head west within the next month or so. First, as you probably know, would be the [Farwest Show](#). It's happening next week, August 24-26, in Portland, Oregon. As always, they'll have a ton of great seminars, a bunch of mini-sessions happening on the trade show floor, a keynote speaker that I hear is superb (that would be Greg Bell), and

plenty of folks to network with and learn from. Plus, hey, Portland is a fabulous city.



Keynote speaker Greg Bell

If next week doesn't work for you, consider the [Grow West Coast Horticulture Trade Show](#). Never heard of it? It's the new name for the former CanWest Hort Expo. Put on by the BC Landscape & Nursery Association, the event will be an outdoor market-style trade show with educational seminars, too. It's open to anyone in the horticulture industry, from landscapers to architects and growers to garden centres.



It takes place September 13-15 at the Surrey Civic Hall Plaza in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada, just a bit southeast of Vancouver. So, yes, I'm pretty sure the aforementioned "outdoor market-style" event will actually take place outdoors. How fun!

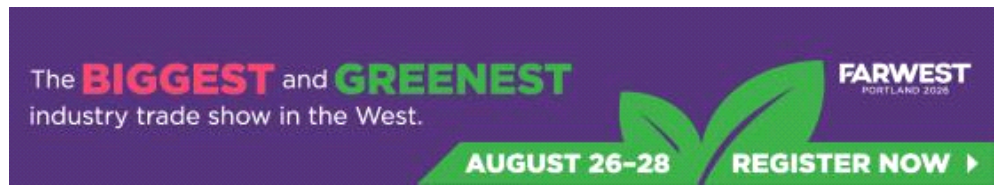
Questions, comments, suggestions? Drop me a line if you'd like at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



Ellen Wells
Senior Editor
Green Profit

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