

From the Inspired Home Show; Bob Ross and Toasters



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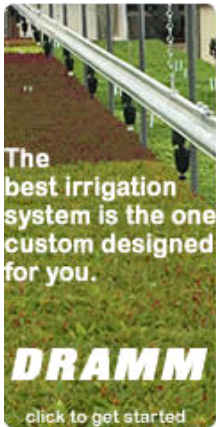
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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- Housewares & Hort
- Where home & garden meet
- A pot company makes pots?
- Kitchen composter
- More spring outlook
- Grant for Detroit park
- Star's new rose catalog
- Finally ...

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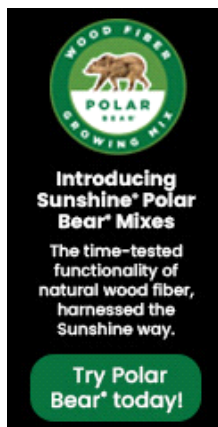


Verbena Fuerte

beekenkamp

PLANTS

Housewares and horticulture



As I mentioned at the bottom of last week's *Acres Online*, I've been out and about all this week, so much of what I've got to tell this time and next will come from those travels—including the connection between toasters and Chia Pets! Hey, I do it so you don't have to—and because this time of year you don't have time even if you wanted to. I mean, it's Week 10, and you're either shipping plugs to customers or receiving plugs for planting or making plans at your garden center or something else important!

But first up ...

Sun Parasol
FiredUp Coral



... The Inspired Home Show

On Monday, I drove to the big city of Chicago (about an hour from River Ridge) to visit the Inspired Home Show (former International Home + Housewares Show). It features all the big kitchen and table and bath and home storage and cleaning and small appliance companies we've all known for generations—pots and pans and plates and carving knives and tea towels and wine glasses ... and hydration! (Goodness, that's an enormous category, all those insulated, reusable drinking vessels—there must be billions to be made in hydration.)

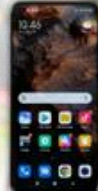
The biggest trend I could sniff out is “smart appliances.” Everything seems to be computerized

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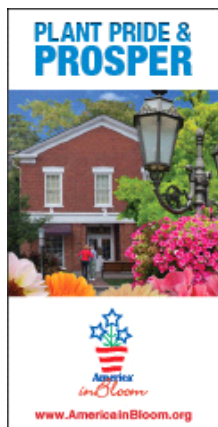
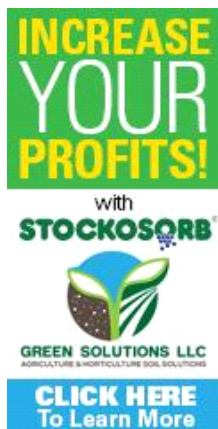
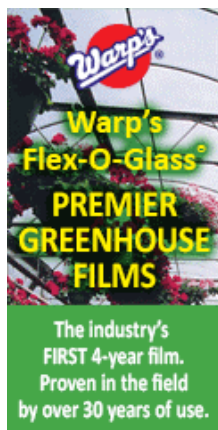
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and app-connected now. Kitchen cooking devices with a computer screen that offers up recipes. You dump in your ingredients, press a button and it cooks your meal to perfection ... or so they say. Artificial Intelligence Instant-Pots, you might say.

I also found out my microwave is way behind the times. I saw one that not only microwaves, it also steams and air-fries. I feel so stuck in the 1970s.





Another trend? Quirky shapes and licensed branding. Want a Hello Kitty or Bob Ross toaster (that cooks the outline of the iconic cat or Bob's afro into your toast). How about a Batman or poop emoji waffle maker or Winnie the Pooh crock pot or Yellowstone cast iron frying pan from Lodge? No problem.



Where home and garden meet

My objective at this show is to see how the housewares industry makes use of *OUR* products—flowers and vegetables and herbs and houseplants, etc. Which they do a lot. Think about all the floral patterns available on everything for the home. That's not new. But trending a few years ago were monstera leaves. I saw them on everything!

This year? Gnomes. I kept spotting gnomes. Like at Mukitchen, whose newest patterns include

this gnomes apron, oven mitt, pot holder, sponge cloth and tea towel.



"What's a sponge cloth?" I asked, and promptly got a free sample of a reusable, but disposable, part-cotton-part-cellulose dish washing and wiping implement. I think they said they originated in Sweden. Unfortunately, my sample didn't have the gnome pattern. But still, a handsome parting gift!

By the way, one fellow selling garden edging and bemoaning the decline of the L&G section of the International Hardware Show in Vegas said this show should attract the garden industry by changing its name to the Inspired Home + Garden Show. I agree! (But don't know what it would take to make that happen.)

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



Garden in the home

Botanical patterns are still hot. In the Dine & Décor hall, the Andreas company had some handy rubber jar openers in a million patters. Their newest? Herbs, topiaries, "Farmers Market" ... and a gnome. The patterns are also available on their silicone trivets and cool wavy coasters (which, as demonstrated, can double as unique plant saucers).





Gibson Home is a big player in the housewares category—at least based on their massive display, which spanned across both sides of an aisle. Here, I saw these handsome leaf serving bowls, dishes and platters. These look like the fancy ceramic ones some of us admire and even collect. But these are unbreakable melamine, so go ahead and use them at your next picnic.



I met one of the next-generation Gibson owners, young Daniel Gabbay (below), a designer whose pet project is called "bloomhouse." No, it's not a trendy new urban plant store; it's a line of cookware, dishes and other kitchenware that's been designed to the slogan, "Nourish is our nature." Daniel explained he wanted a product line that reflected "eco-consciousness, health and wellness, and artisan beauty." He got Oprah's blessing when she named it one of her favorite things for 2022.



The colors, textures and mixed materials did have an artisan feel. It had hints of “bloom” in it, too—like these striking hibiscus serving pieces. And as a bonus, they’ve partnered with One Tree Planted to plant a tree for every set of cookware sold (two trees per set during April, Earth Month.)



Part of my job requires that I taste-test the products coming out of the Ooni pizza ovens.

NEW FOR 2026



A pot company that makes ... pots?

Everybody knows Le Creuset for their colorful enameled cast-iron cookware. Did you know they offer flower pots to match? Yup. They're designed for herbs in the kitchen windowsill. They've got vases, too. And I was also unaware that you can get your Le Creuset with lids with olive branches or flowers embossed in them. See? Our industry having an effect on others.





The Clean & Contain hall is the least interesting to me (rubbish cans and brooms and storage bins and such), and yet it was there that I discovered a flower pot company from Mexico that makes "Terragave" pots made in part from agave fibers recycled from the tequila industry. Now there's a spirited marketing opportunity!



I was unable to learn anything about the company or product because the rep was busy on the phone (a trade show no-no), but I can at least share the [web address](#) in case you want to learn more.



A garden appliance I'd actually buy

For a couple of decades (and maybe longer), inventors have been trying to invent ways to grow fresh herbs and veggies right in your kitchen using light bars and automated irrigation, and even apps and probably artificial intelligence. Do they work? I'll be honest, they all look sketchy to me. But I've never tried one, so I can't say for sure. All I know is I'll take my chances growing in pots on the back patio, out in the sun, and in the winter, I'll suffer with store-bought or dried.

At the Inspired Home Show, two inventors showed the latest iteration of kitchen herb-growing appliances. The Aspara growgreen offers three sizes and levels of computerized sophistication, with LED lights. Like many of these units, you buy their seed pods (like coffee K-cups). Or they offer DIY pods for your own seed.

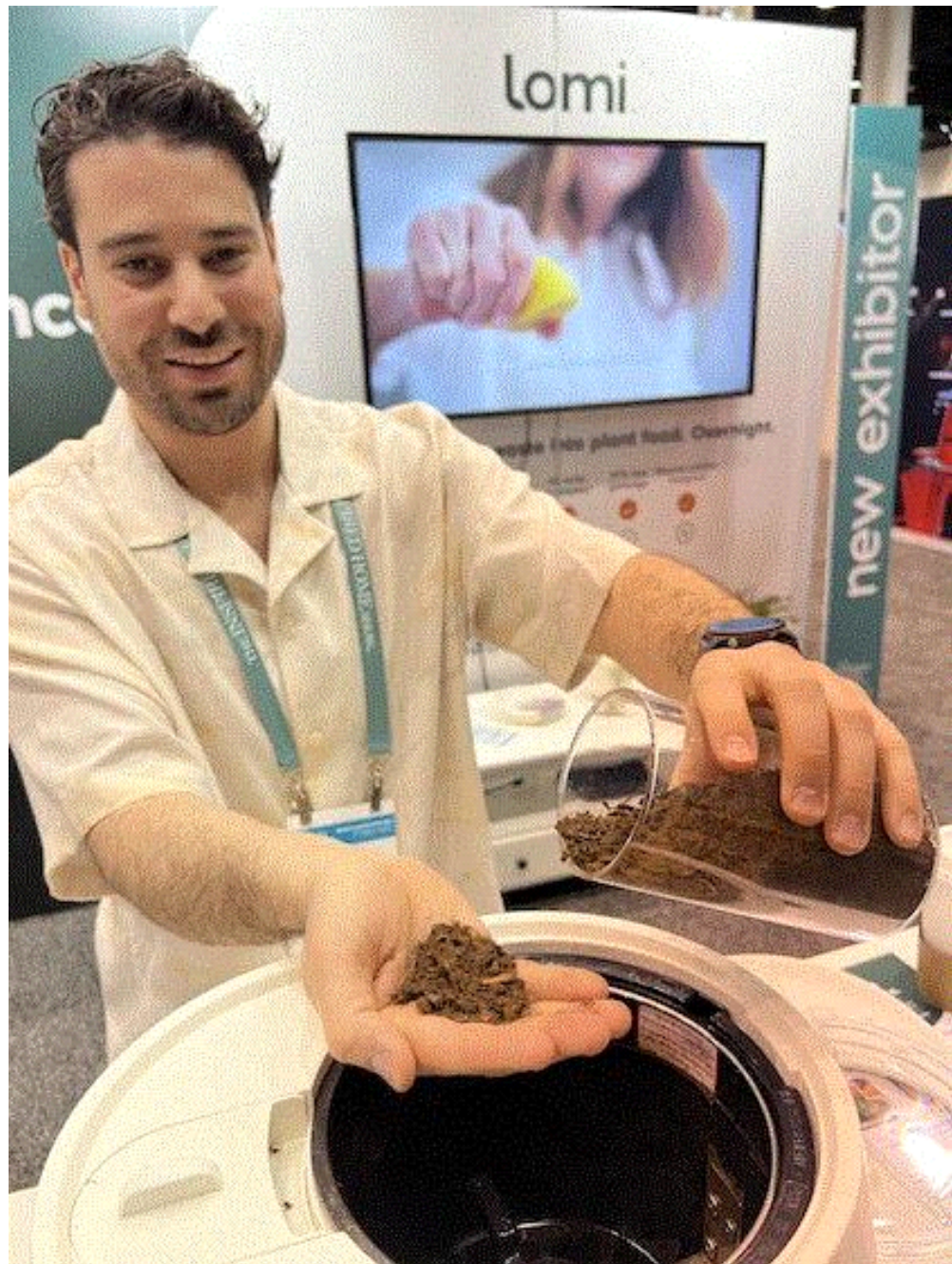
Another company, Rise Gardens, offers much the same system, only with wood frames in more sizes.



My beef with these systems—assuming they work—is that you've got enough space for a couple snips of lettuce or basil before you have to spend another 30 days growing your next crop. Of course, you could transplant into a windowsill pot and extend your season that way ...

The one I say might actually work is Pela Earth's Lomi. It's a countertop compost-maker. You dump your family's daily food waste into it (even meat scraps and bone, they claim!), and twist on the sealed lid. Every few days you press the "run" button and the device uses a combination of grinding, heat drying and cooling to process the scraps into compost. And it does it in just hours, not months. Seriously—16 hours, they say, and you get the rich loam like you see in the picture.





I don't know what sort of trickery or alchemy is at play here, but if it actually does what they claim, I'd stick one in my kitchen in a heartbeat. The fellow I talked with, Nic Menezes, told me he processes his family's kitchen scraps about once a week for a month and it just fills up the Lomi.

Now, I neglected to ask the price (I was too smitten with the device to ask such sordid questions), but Amazon has them for \$499. Maybe the fact that they're on Amazon precludes any of you from wanting to stock them—I don't know. But I think it's a great alternative to a traditional compost pile.

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A bit about the spring outlook

With my weekly Spring Weekend Sales Summary due to start April 1, I've been asking for sneak peeks at spring from my warm-climate readers. A couple of you responded last week with hints of what might be in store and so far it looks like, if the weather is in our favor, customers will be there.

From Kathy Miller of Sedan Floral, Sedan, Kansas:

"This spring is already shaping up to be a good one. We had geared our production back a little after last spring thinking that things were going to be back to pre-COVID days. Currently, we are concerned that we have misjudged things and that we shouldn't have cut back our production. Customer bookings are coming in really strongly; the season is starting to break early and stronger than usual. Weather is good. We also started accepting new customers again this spring after not accepting new customers for a couple of years and we are seeing lots of requests. We need spring to break early for everything to work properly. Nothing better than to be able to plant planned production on time and not get backed up for lack of space."

From Stuart Burnley, Hermitage Farms Nursery, Franktown, Virginia:

"Weather is running about three weeks ahead of last year. Cool-down occurring this week to help hold things back."

Got early spring experiences you'd like to share? Email me at beytes@growertalks.com.



Project EverGreen receives grant for Detroit park renovation

Detroit hit hard times when the domestic auto industry tanked, so it's good to hear positive news from the Motor City. Such as the news that Project EverGreen has received a **\$50,000 matching grant** from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to help the national non-profit add vital elements to finish the renovation of Detroit's Gmeiner Park and plant the seeds for future green space restoration projects in the city. The grant will also provide resources to the community that will help them care for the parks for years to come.

The 30-day crowdfunding campaign encouraged Detroit residents, businesses and parks enthusiasts to raise \$50,000 to receive the \$50,000 matching grant. The 10-acre park, located in Northwest Detroit, received a new 6-ft. wide, half-mile walking path to draw people into the park to play and exercise, the installation of mature trees in and around the perimeter of the park, and new tables and benches. Work will continue this year in conjunction with Detroit's Parks & Recreation Department when a new inclusive playground will be installed among other improvements.

This is the fourth GreenCare for Communities renovation project the national non-profit has

completed in Detroit since 2017.

Project EverGreen's partners in the Gmeiner Park project—which provides more than 5,000 Detroit residents with access to neighborhood green space within a 10-minute walk—included the Gilbert Family Foundation, City of Detroit Parks & Recreation, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds of the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, and Premier Group Associates.

Michigan-based Re-Tree helped to re-home 16 mature trees—which would have otherwise been destroyed—at Gmeiner Park, transforming the park's tree canopy substantially.

Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, Project EverGreen is a national non-profit committed to bringing people together through its GreenCare for Communities initiatives to make a difference in how yards, parks and communities create a greener, healthier, cooler Earth.



2024 Rose Catalog now available from Star Roses and Plants

Speaking of beautification, hot off the presses comes the 2024 [Star Roses and Plants](#) Rose Catalog, which features more than 250 rose varieties, including eight brand new ones.



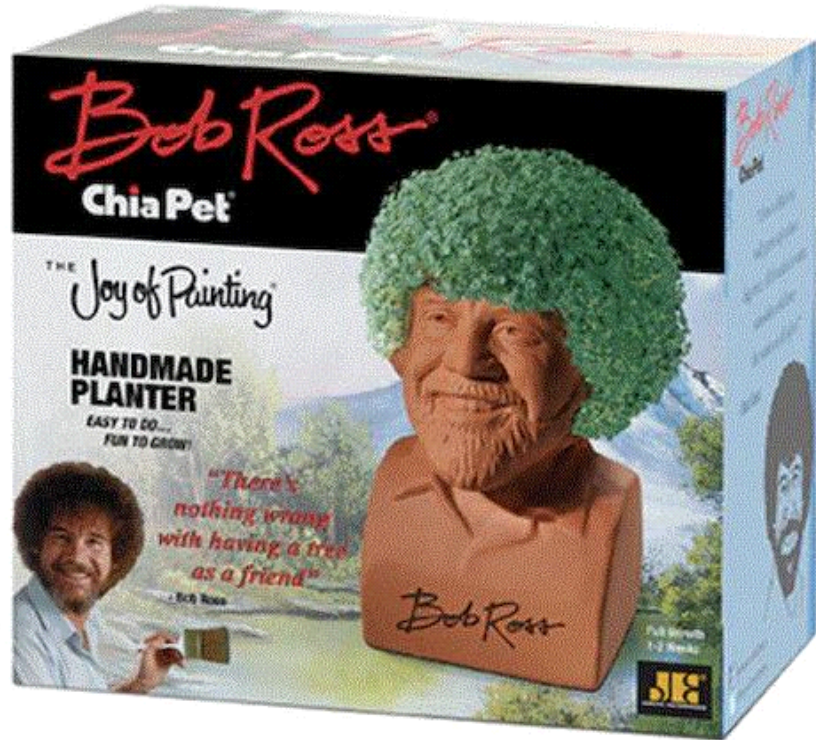
But it's more than just roses—the 145-page catalog includes seven reference guides, roses for

pollinators, a bareroot finishing schedule, support for rose retailers and more.

The 2024 catalog can be viewed online [HERE](#). Printed copies will be mailed to Star Roses and Plants customers soon.

Finally ...

The Chia Pet folks had a booth at the Inspired Home Show and that's where I learned that Bob Ross is the No. 1 Chia Pet (goes great with your Bob Ross toaster).



But even more exciting news? Two new Chia Pets are coming for Halloween! Alas, I wasn't allowed to photograph them or even mention them, as the licensing deal isn't quite finalized, but I had to at least tease you with the anticipation of this important news soon to come.





Feel free to email me at beytes@growertalks.com if you have ideas, comments or questions.

See you next time,

Chris Beytes

Editor

GrowerTalks and Green Profit

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