

RIP Kurt Dramm; Mother's Day Was Stellar; New Biosolutions Guide!



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

In memoriam: Kurt Dramm
How was Mother's Day?
- Lots of favorable comments
- Meanwhile, up in Canada ...
- From those with lower scores
- The new normal?
Our Biosolutions Guide debuts!



In memoriam: Kurt Dramm



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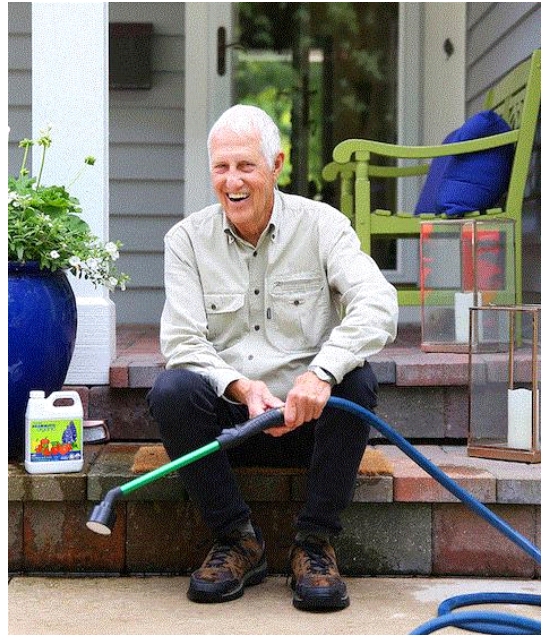
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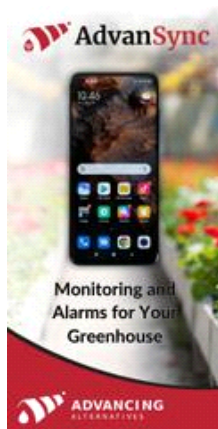
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If you've ever watered with a **Dramm** watering wand, you'll recognize the name: Kurt William Dramm, second-generation of the famous greenhouse and irrigation equipment company, passed away this week. He was 84.

Kurt's father, John "Johnny" Dramm, was a Manitowoc, Wisconsin, florist with a knack for invention. One such design was a better watering tool—the Dramm 400 Water Breaker (named for the number of holes in it, which turned high-velocity water into a gentle stream). It caught on quickly with growers, so he began manufacturing the breakers in his workshop.

Johnny died young (47), leaving his widow, Perdita, and two sons, John Peter (18) and Kurt (12) to keep the new business going, with mom using the proceeds of the business (and working as a librarian) to put the boys through college. Kurt graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a double major in business and horticulture. After graduation, Kurt worked for the Vaughan Seed Company with a sales territory covering the Southeastern United States.





In 1968 he and his brother, John Peter, formed the Dramm Company to produce garden and greenhouse watering products. John Peter unexpectedly passed away in 1978 at age 45.

Kurt was known for saying, “Nothing happens until someone sells something,” and for the next 45 years, Kurt’s entrepreneurial spirit and passion for providing quality products grew the Dramm company into the four divisions it has today—Commercial Products, Consumer Products, Water Management and Organic Fertilizer.

His son, Hans, daughter, Heidi, and Heidi’s husband, Kurt Becker, have long been active in the business, as are their cousins Andy and Fritz Dramm. They continue to grow the business; in fact, last December they held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for their state-of-the-art new offices. But even as he’d slowed down, Kurt Dramm never actually officially retired from the business, always saying, “Maybe next year.”

I enjoyed the time I spent visiting with Kurt and his family at their headquarters, and at the many trade shows at which they exhibit, both here and abroad. I even had the unique privilege of making my own Dramm 400AL water breaker on the company’s vintage Warner & Swasey lathe (see that bit of fun in my video tour of Dramm [HERE](#)).



While I still water with it now and again, I have so many other Dramm watering tools at my disposal (including an engraved gold watering wand earned by Team *GrowerTalks* for winning the inaugural Dramm 5K at the Ohio Short Course) that I generally keep my prized breaker on a shelf. But it works great, even though made by an amateur!

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How was Mother’s Day?

Hmmm ... Where should I start? With the national scoring average? That would be **9.0 in the U.S.** and **9.8 in Canada**. The only better results we’ve seen for the same weekend was in the pandemic year of 2021 (9.3 in the U.S. and a perfect 10 in Canada). And, mind you, that was the



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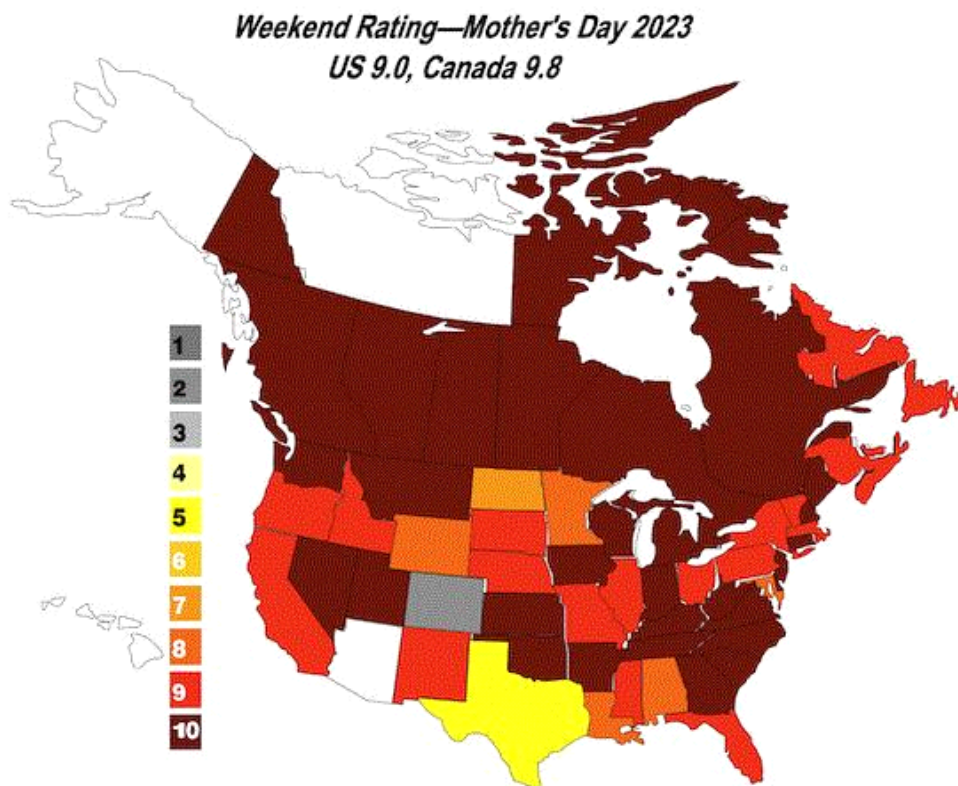
weekend AFTER Mother's Day—the Mother's Day scores for 2021 were 9.4 in the U.S. and 9.0 in Canada.

How about the number of perfect 10s you sent me? That would be **95 out of 156 scores, or 61%** (another 32 of you—20%—gave it between 9 and 9.9.). In the 13-year history of my survey, only one other weekend—2020—has equaled that; it also had 61% perfect 10s. And that was the weekend AFTER Mother's Day (Mother's Day Weekend 2020 had 49% perfect 10s).

How about the regional performance? I break the U.S. into eight regions. Six of the regions scored 9.1 or better. One (the Plains) scored a very close 8.8. Only the Mountain region (6.7) suffered. And in Canada, all nine provinces that sent scores in averaged 9.0 or better. In fact, the lowest score anyone from Canada sent me was 9.0.

Suffice it to say that Mother's Day Weekend 2023 was KILLER for nearly all of you—and for everyone in Canada.

Here's the map:



That's based on 156 scores from 47 states and nine provinces.

Alas, a few of you are NOT laughing your way to the bank. I'm not sure about all of Texas, but the Houston area saw Mother's Day Weekend completely rained out, leading to scores of 1 and 5 from businesses in that area. Adding insult to injury, Mother's Day is "the last hurrah" in the deep south unless they somehow get really lucky with the weather and temperatures stay moderate. (Houston is forecast to be 89F with isolated thunderstorms Saturday, 82F with afternoon showers Sunday.)

Colorado saw rain most of the week, including Sunday, resulting in a score of 2 from my one reporter from that state (the rest were probably too bummed to send me a score). Wrote that despondent correspondent, "It has been a brutal start of the season for us here in Colorado."

There were also a few who commented that the results, while great, weren't quite as good once you figured for inflation. For instance, a retailer from Ohio said he was very busy all day long and sales were up 1.3% year-over-year. However, expenses are up 18%.

"In my book, that's a bad year," he wrote, scoring the weekend a 6.

But, overall, the third weekend of May 2023—Mother's Day—was one for the record books!

Now my question is this: Is it too little, too late? For those of you who've had tough weather up 'til now, can you still save a stellar season? Weigh in [HERE](#) with your thoughts on how important this great Mother's Day was to your business.

This coming weekend is Canada's three-day Victoria Day bank holiday. And the weekend after is Memorial Day—three great holiday weekends to look forward to!



Lots of favorable comments (as you can imagine)

Pennsylvania (10). "It was a recording-breaking Mother's Day Weekend for our retail division (despite a half-inch of rain on Saturday). Lines at the cash register were similar to Spring 2020 and 2021, and we ran out of parking. Our wholesale division also had a fantastic week of sales leading up to the weekend."—*Aimee Rohrbach, Musselman Greenhouses*

(Aimee, a long-time foliage grower, added this bit of intelligence: "The foliage plant boom continues. We flipped three entire tractor trailers of plants in three weeks starting in late April. Supply is better than it was in 2021 and prices have stabilized.")

North Carolina (10). "Well, that was nice. Just a record weekend at all chains/stores/regions/items. I don't get shocked often by numbers, but our Mother's Day week numbers far exceeded last year same week, and far exceeded our highest actual Mother's Day comparisons in any of the last 10 years (did not keep records before then). Just outstanding consumer demand met by a winning execution. Expected to be up +35% this week to make up for last week and ended up +55%, so a BIG WIN. Only issue was losing Ohio/Pennsylvania/New York with rain on Saturday. Net, another great week and weekend of sales."—*Abe VanWingerden, Metrolina Greenhouses*

(I listed Abe as North Carolina, as that's their base, but he sends scores from 17 Southern, Eastern and Midwest states every week. He sent eight 10s, two 9s, four 8s and a 7, a 6 and a 5 (for the aforementioned Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York. BTW, his 17 scores averaged 8.7.)

Tennessee (10). "Sales were a 10 even when weather was a 6 at times. Mother's Day has become a massive event that even weather cannot stop. My guess is that social media plays a role in this, with everyone showing off what they are doing for their moms on this special day. I'm all for it!"—*Alex Van Der Hengst, South Central Growers*

(Like Abe, his cousin Alex sends scores for seven Southern and Midwest states; he gave every one of them a perfect 10.)

Ohio (10). "Each day last week was like a typical Saturday. We thought maybe all our customers wanted to beat the rush and had already come during the week. But, no, Saturday

topped all records for us despite being basically out of hanging baskets early in the day. Fortunately, we're closed on Sundays, as we wouldn't have had much product on the benches anyway."—*Kim Grant, Strait Gate Greenhouses*

(I appreciate that they scored 10 despite being closed Sunday! As somebody once told me about closing one day a week, "If you can't make money in six days, what makes you think you can make it in seven?")

Wisconsin (10). "Saturday was one of our best sales days ever. Despite the on-and-off rain on Sunday we were still very busy. We are still running a little behind last year to this point."—*Chris Williams, K&W Greenery*

Ohio (10). "Despite our slower-than-normal start to the season, the entire week was phenomenal, with Saturday being our best day ever (by nearly 20%), even though we had light rain showers throughout the morning."—*Chuck Lehotsky, Chuck's Greenhouses*

Montana (10). "Gorgeous weather, busy all weekend. Best Mother's Day ever!"—*Ed Hebbe IV, Circle H Growers*

Michigan (10). "Surpassed the previous one-day sales record on Saturday ... and then broke that one on Sunday. I need more carts! LOL!"—*Karen Brohl, Brohl's Flower Garden*

New York (11). "Best Mother's Day Weekend since COVID. We had the weather, the plants and the people."—*Jim Boxberger, Monticello Farm Home & Garden*

Illinois (10). "Record sales for Saturday and the week. Recession? Where?"—*Dave Cederoth, Mini Earth Greenhouses*

(Recession where, indeed!)

Washington (10+). "A record-breaking weekend, capping off a record-breaking week. Perfect weather all week long (our first fully sunny week since October—no joke) made for a feeding frenzy of sorts in the greenhouse, around the shrub and perennial displays outside, and anywhere there was something to buy!"—*David Vos, Vander Giessen Nursery*

Alabama (10). "As busy as it gets. Thought we were slower than previous years, but I think we are just better equipped to handle the crowds now. Finally sold some bigger-ticket items. Sold five fountains on Saturday—it usually takes us two months to sell that many. This weekend puts us slightly ahead of 2022, making this our second-best year ever behind 2021. This year sure feels 'different' ... but I'll take it!"—*JD Boone, Dothan Nurseries*

Connecticut (10). "A record-setting two days of sales! The weather couldn't be nicer, the crowds were out, and come Monday morning too many things to mention were depleted. Strong perennial sales (which is our strength) and anything in color."—*Tom Bodnar, White Flower Farm Store*



Meanwhile, up in Canada ...

Please, my dear Canadian readers, do not be offended when I keep using that “meanwhile ...” headline. In this particular instance, I’m saving the best for last!

British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon Territory, Nunavut, Washington, Oregon (10). “This past week in our region was absolutely amazing—the best we have seen it! Our store partners did so well in their sell-through! So grateful for how many moms received quality hanging baskets, planters and annuals. Lots of quality products in the stores from the U.S. and also other growers in our region! This will HELP the overall garden experience, helping grow the overall program for Spring 2024.”—*Jack Rozendaal, Devry Greenhouses*

Ontario (10). “A fantastic weekend! Best Mother’s Day ever! If I could give it a 20, I would! But be careful ... two good weekends doesn’t mean a good season yet.”—*Anita van Adrichem, Westland Greenhouses*

Québec (10). “Sun, sun, sun.”—*Sylvie Picard, Pépinière Lapointe*

British Columbia (10). “It was over 30C (85 to 90F) here. Sales were amazing and surpassed 2020’s Mother’s Day.”—*Pamela Pilling, Canadian Tire*

British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba (10). “Wow! What an amazing week across all regions. A once-in-six-year weather utopia finally hit, and it was quickly evident that the population of Western Canada were ready to get out and purchase!”—*Phil Pitzey, Rainbow Greenhouses*

(Phil reports that much of British Columbia was up well over 200% vs. previous year, but that interior BC was up “only” 145%. Wrote Phil, “Who would ever think that a comp of this rate would be classed as lagging behind?”)

Ontario (12). “New record. Too busy, though. Missed maximizing sales. Not enough product out and not enough people working for this level of sales. All good, though.”—*Rob Gemmell, Gemmell’s Garden Centre*

British Columbia (9). “Fantastic week, one of the best we have ever had. Only reason for a 9 is that it got too hot (34C) on Saturday, which slowed down afternoon sales, so we were not able to beat last year’s Mother’s Day numbers.”—*Tim Vaandrager, Vaandrager Nurseries*



Comments from those scoring less than 10

Virginia (9). “The only thing that prevented us from setting a new ‘peak-week’ sales record for the week was 9 to 10 in. of rain on Saturday. Other than the rain, Saturday had lots of traffic, eager customers and impressive sales!”—*Duane Weaver, Millmont Greenhouses*

Wisconsin (9). “While Saturday was overcast and cooler and not ideal for what you would think would be rock-and-roll weather, it was still a busy, steady day. I was surprised at the end of the day that it was our second-biggest day ever, as it never seemed overwhelming. Maybe due to my great team! I gave the weekend a 9 as Sunday was okay, but not record territory.”—*Kris Shepard, Caan Floral & Greenhouses*

Wyoming (8). “Cold, low 50s F for highs for five days. Constant rain (good for extreme drought area). Saturday was close to an all-time record, Sunday okay, but not great. Super sales given the weather.”—*Jeff Jones, Great Gardens*



A question about “the new normal”

Reader Aimee Rohrback of [Musselman Greenhouses](#) in Cashtown, Pennsylvania, after sharing a score of 10, posed this thought:

“Perhaps Spring 2022, which was not particularly good, was the exception and this sales level is the new normal we can expect in the post-pandemic world. Many of the small garden centers/greenhouses we serve in the mid-Atlantic region also had record-breaking sales last week/weekend. We are so fortunate in this industry that COVID grew many of our businesses!”



Aimee and her brother, Andy, at Musselman's when I visited in February 2022.

I'm curious what you think. The industry as a whole was worried that COVID sales were a fluke and that we'd be headed back to 2019 sales. The sudden end of Spring 2022 due to poor weather didn't help our confidence any, either. Now, with much of Spring 2023 under your belt, what is your assessment of the “new normal”? Is it a trendline upwards from 2020-2021 with a dip down in 2022? Or is this another anomaly year and we're due for a decline back towards 2019? Let me know [HERE](#).



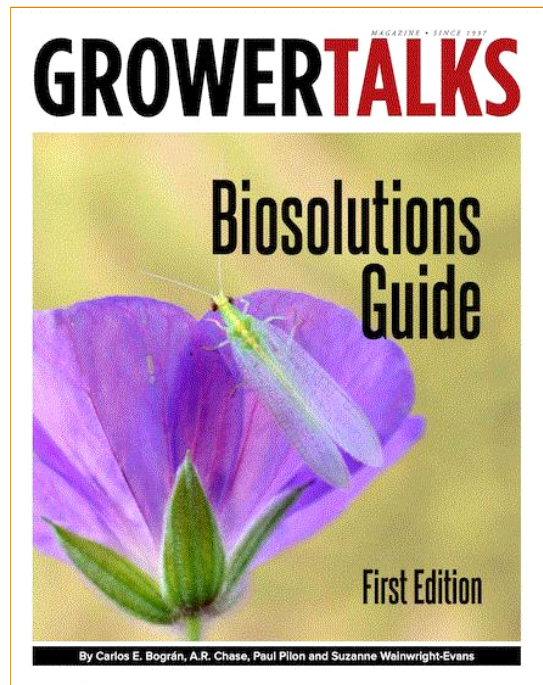
First Edition Biosolutions Guide now available!

It gives all of us here at Ball Publishing, plus our expert contributors (without whom this would not have been possible), great pleasure to introduce the **First Edition of the *GrowerTalks* Biosolutions Guide**, available now as a [PDF file](#) and coming soon along with your June issue of

GrowerTalks. Our vision was to provide invaluable information from industry experts, share efficacy tables for bioinsecticides and biofungicides, provide a list of biocontrol agents, and deliver a go-to resource on biosolutions products and how to use them.

What are biosolutions? Biosolutions is the term used for any biologically based approach to managing insect pests, mites and diseases in greenhouses, nurseries and agriculture. Bioinsecticides, biofungicides (both referred to as biopesticides) and biological control agents (BCAs) are all examples of biosolutions. Biopesticides contain living organisms, are derived from naturally occurring microbes or consist of natural botanical extracts. BCAs (AKA natural enemies, beneficial insects or beneficials) are insects or mites (the good guys) used to control other insect or mite pests (the bad guys).

As mentioned, we partnered with some of the industry's leading experts to develop this resource, including Dr. Ann Chase (Chase Agricultural Consulting), Suzanne Wainright-Evans (Buglady Consulting), Dr. Carlos Bográn (OHP Inc.) and Paul Pilon, Director of Growing for Opel Growers in Michigan and Editor-at-Large of our *Perennial Pulse* e-newsletter.



Kicking off the guide, Dr. Bográn describes bioinsecticides, how they've been used for more than a century and how the use of bioinsecticides can often be complementary when used in conjunction with traditional chemistries or beneficials.

Next, Dr. Chase discusses many of the myths and misconceptions that exist regarding biopesticides and then dives deeper into factors affecting biopesticides and how they can be used in conjunction with conventional pest management strategies.

Finally, Suzanne describes how the use of beneficials in our industry has evolved over the past 30 years, sharing fun facts on several biological control agents and offering guidance on how to implement successful biocontrol programs.

Oh, and we included a very important glossary of biosolutions terms, so everyone is on the same page in an ever-expanding area of IPM.

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

See you next time,

Chris Beytes

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