

Cultivate hits for the tropicals and houseplants crowd



TROPICAL PLANT  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
EXPO **2027** FT. LAUDERDALE



News and Inspiration from the world of foliage and tropical plants



TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2023

subscribe



**Get to the Root of It**  
*We know greenhouses!*



# TROPICAL TOPICS

## COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- Cultivate's Hits
- Colocasia Redemption
- Aspidistra Tokyo Skies
- Gen Z 2-In. Tropicals
- Plant Care Kits
- Low-Profile Tray
- New Houseplant Book Alert!

**FIND MORE**  
*Search with confidence.*

Hundreds of growers. Thousands of plants.

**SEARCH NOW**

NEW! **NurseryGuide.com**

Built for **wholesale** plant search.

## Cultivate's Hits for the Tropicals/Houseplant Crowd

Cultivate might not be *the* must-attend show for the tropicals and foliage world, but it does have vendors with plants, products and services that you could find a use for. A good way to find out what those items might be is to see what's winning awards at the show.

The Retailers' Choice Awards, administered by The Garden Center Group, are a great place to start. These awards are chosen by a group of retailer volunteers who scour the trade show floor for items they would sell in their own stores. In fact, six of the 15 award winners this year are either directly or somewhat connected to the tropicals industry. That's nearly half!

Now, keep in mind these don't have to be "new" items but they do have to be items that the volunteers believe would hit it outta the park at retail. And with that said, let's begin with some cool tropicals, shall we?

**Schefflera Cayman from ForemostCo.** At least that's what they are calling this unique-looking Schefflera at the moment.



The judges were blown away by its deeply serrated leaves. Apparently they ended up calling it the Edward Scissorhands plant, it looked so much like that character's appendages. (They have a point.) And this got the folks at ForemostCo thinking that perhaps Cayman might not be the catchiest name for something as unique as this. They are now holding a competition and accepting suggestions for a new name. You have until July 31 to submit your suggested name [HERE](#), and if your name is chosen for the plant, they will ship you your very own specimen. And lucky you, if you get one. I was speaking with ForemostCo about this plant and they said they still have some production questions to answer and such, and availability is a year or more out.

*Editor's note: In the last TT, I called ForemostCo's founder Joe Roberts as the III. I was a V off—he's actually the VIII!*

## **Colocasia Redemption: Green Trade Horticulture/Plants**

### **Nouveau**

This item was a head-turner, too. Rippled, shiny leaves emerge green and turn black. As they mature, a neon-pink blotch appears and grows larger, radiating outward as a bright pink starburst in the leaf's center.



A relative of Pharaoh's Mask, this colocasia's 3-4 ft. height is riveting in garden beds, in containers and near water features. Read more about it [HERE](#).



### **Aspidistra Tokyo Skies: PDSI/Plants Nouveau**

This Cast Iron plant (*Aspidistra elatior*) may have caught the attention of many of the judging retailers because it reminded them that their grandmothers had this plant at their homes. Why? Because it's as tough as cast iron. But this one is different, as you might be able to tell: It's wonderfully and intricately variegated, perhaps looking a bit like Tokyo at night with all the buildings lit up.



This is one of those delightful plants that serves as both a killer houseplant and a water-wise, evergreen plant for Zones 8-9. And it's manageable, too, topping out at 2-3 ft. tall and just 1-2 ft. wide. Find PDSI [HERE](#).

### **Gen Z 2-In. Tropicals from Biostok Tropicals**

This is an item I had spotted as something to write about here even before the Retailers' Choice Awards were announced. Biostok's assortment of 2-in. tropicals are purposefully for the Gen Z market. This Gen Z Tropicals program has three different packages you can choose from: the BELEAF includes the easy-to-care-for basics; the BECOOL includes plants that are a step up for plant parents wanting to add some unique items; and BEBOLD includes harder-to-find rare and exotic varieties for experienced plant parents.



A sampling of the BEBOLD 2-in. plants.

They have a total of about 120-150 varieties. All are in 2-in. pots and offer the end-user the opportunity to watch their plant babies grow to full-on mature plants. Find which varieties are in the three categories and other info [HERE](#).



## Plant Care Kits from We The Wild

This young company won a Retailers' Choice Award last year for its unique 100% organic, made-by-earthworms houseplant care products. This year they bring home the award for how they are bundling their products.



We The Wild has three new assortments: Revive + Thrive Duo for houseplant vitality; Leaf Care Duo for lush, healthy and shiny leaves; and Houseplant Essentials for general, all-around plant care. I also saw they have an Orchid Care Essential Kit, too. Find out more about the company, their products and wholesale orders [HERE](#).

## Low-Profile Tray from The HC Companies

Bossman Chris Beytes and I were ogling the new items in Cultivate's New Product Showcase like two kids with their noses pressed against a penny candy display's casement when the Retailers' Choice Award winners pinged into my inbox. Lo and behold, the item we had just commented "Well, that's cool and different" about had come up a winner. Chris got the scoop on the Low-Profile Tray like only he could, and so I will include it below:

"I can't recall the last time someone innovated the lowly shuttle tray. But HC asked growers what they wanted in a tray and growers replied, "Less soil loss, less labor to assemble and less space taken up in the production barn."



“The solution was found in a six-pack carrier, which is basically what the Low-Profile Tray looks like. But rather than flexible plastic, this is hard plastic with clips that hold pots in place, plus slots for tags. Fifty of these, with pots, takes up the same space as eight regular shuttle trays with pots.



And they're strong! They had some 10-count trays with heavy weighted balloons in each pot and the pots didn't come loose. A video showed a worker carrying four at once and not losing a single pot.”

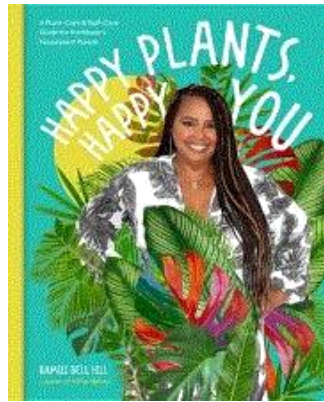
Thanks for the details, Chris! You can read more about the tray [HERE](#).



## New Houseplant Book Alert!

Books are still big deals for folks, especially for those who have some sort of hobby or obsession (hobsession, perhaps?). Plant parents are just those kinds of people. And there's a book publishing in September that will definitely appeal to them—and maybe to you, too.

It's called “Happy Plants, Happy You” by Kamili Bell Hill. In the book, Kamili shows all the ways that plants are an integral part of a person's self-care practice. When you tend plants, Kamili says, you are also tending yourself.



In “Happy Plants, Happy You: A Plant-Care & Self-Care Guide for the Modern Houseplant Parent,” Kamili includes easy houseplant care tips that not only help your plants but also helps the plant parent grow in confidence. Also in the book is information on:

- How to choose the right plants for you as a person, not just for your growing conditions
- Advice on avoiding “vampire relationships” with plants (and people!) that suck you dry
- How to date several plants before settling on the best ones for you
- The art of letting go of things that aren’t thriving
- Giving up on the illusion of control—and being totally okay with it

Kamili Bell Hill, a trained lawyer, put her practice on hold to pursue her passion for interior design, quickly realizing the important role plants play in interior settings. You can find her on Instagram at [PlantBlerd](#) and [BlackPeople.wPlants](#). “Happy Plants, Happy You” will be published by Cool Springs Press. Contact your favorite book rep to order!

Comments, questions, suggestions? Email me about them at [ewells@ballpublishing.com](mailto:ewells@ballpublishing.com).

**Ellen Wells**  
Senior Editor  
Green Profit

**This edition of Tropical Topics was sent to 29,776 loyal readers!**

If you're interested in advertising on Tropical Topics, contact [Kim Brown](#) ASAP!

