

Delosperma; At Griffin's Expo; Upward (it's a Paint)



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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2023

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# GrowerTalks' Acres Online

News and Commentary from GrowerTalks Magazine

## COMING UP THIS WEEK:

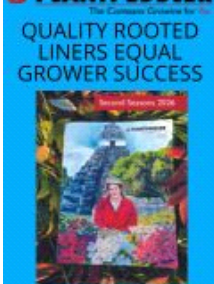
Sedum, delosperma look great!  
New, improved Salary Survey  
At the Griffin Expo  
- Our panel discussion  
- On the trade show floor  
A Diervilla wins Best Novelty  
S-W's Color of the Year  
Finally ...



**DÜMMEN ORANGE.**

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**PLANTPEDDLER**

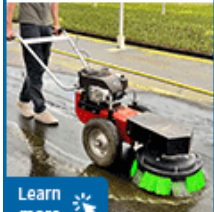


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**Goodbye Grime.**



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Not a regular feature of *Acre's Online* (perhaps it should be?) is "What I like the looks of in The Gardens at Ball" at any given time.

I was out there a couple days ago, getting some air and pondering a problem, when I found myself in the perennial area. Now, late September is not when I expect to see spectacular color leaping from perennial beds. But there it was, this rainbow of color looking fresh and cheerful.

What was it?

Bed 8, sedum and delosperma.



I've got sedum in my own garden, but not en masse like this. As for delosperma (ice plant), I've never even tried it! I certainly didn't know it offered this sort of color this time of year.

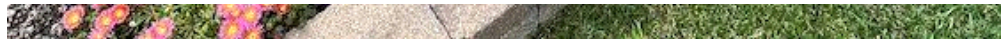




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The delosperma varieties you're seeing are Ocean Sunset (Darwin Perennials), Wheels of Wonder (Concept Plant) and Delmara (Green Fuse Botanicals). They've held up through an interesting spring and summer of cool, hot, wet, dry ... a bit of everything. (The few weeds you see are an indication that garden maintenance has been curtailed for the season.)

We all know that stonecrop-type sedum are great foliage fillers in the landscape, so no surprise there. Behind the delosperma, you're looking at Lemon Ball, Angelina, What a Doozie, Coral Reef and others; I particularly like the texture of Darwin's Prima Angelina (below).



## New, improved Salary Survey—last chance!

Help yourself and help your industry by participating in the new and improved *GrowerTalks/Green Profit* annual Wage & Benefits Survey. This is the handy tool that owners and employees of growing and retailing operations can use to gauge their pay and benefits against their peers.

As I've mentioned before, we're taking it to a whole new level: We've partnered with AmericanHort to create an expanded survey with the help of research firm Industry Insights. They do similar surveys for many other industries and the end results should deliver even greater results in terms of the pool of respondents, amount of data captured and a deeper analysis of the data. Also, the results will not only be published in our magazines, but also shared with the entire AmericanHort membership (who get an exclusive deeper dive into the data).

[HERE](#) is the link to take the survey.

Deadline for completion is October 6. Because offering a deeper analysis means we need a little bit more of your valuable time to fill out the survey, you'll automatically be entered into a drawing to win a YETI Tundra 45 Hard Cooler (a \$325 value!) for your trouble.

Thanks in advance for participating—we can't do it without you!



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## At the Griffin Expo

I've only been to a few distributor shows, and only because I was an invited speaker, and it's interesting to see what goes on at one. Order-writing is the main thing, I'd say, based on what I saw going on last week at the [Griffin Expo](#) in Edison, New Jersey. It featured an impressive 180-vendor trade show, visited by 350 or so companies, with anywhere from one to four folks from each company in attendance, I was told.



The trade show was like a mini version of Cultivate, with some of the old IGC Chicago thrown in for the retailers—everything from automatic transplanter to painted metal whirligigs.



The White Elephant area drew an enthusiastic crowd of bargain hunters looking for closeouts and end-of-lot offerings. I was tempted to bring home a few myself!



## Our panel discussion

I was at the Griffin Expo to be part of a panel discussion on the topic “Navigating the New Normal.” Griffin Sales Manager Bill Riffey took my usual role as moderator while I got to field questions alongside Mark Schermer, Syngenta’s Global Head of Flowers and Abe VanWingerden, co-CEO of Metrolina Greenhouses. Here’s a bit of what I can remember each of us said:

**Mark:** Breeding is only going to get better, faster and more focused, especially for insect and disease resistance. But it still takes time—upwards of 10 years from the initiation of a breeding program until commercial launch. He also talked about how a global company like Syngenta has to create products for diverse markets, and pressures on sustainability and carbon footprints and the like coming from Europe are driving innovation that growers everywhere benefit from.

**Abe:** Abe said several times that businesses should tell their story. Every business has one, whether it’s their sustainability efforts, the new varieties they’re featuring or what have you. Tell it and repeat it—because people won’t be aware of it otherwise.

He also discussed artificial intelligence (AI) and why you shouldn’t be intimidated by it—it’s just a way to analyze and use large quantities of data. For instance, Metrolina has daily sales data for 1,700 customers in 17 states (if I recall his numbers correctly; if not, don’t worry about it). They also have weather data for every one of those sales days. With some AI, one can determine how sales were when it was 74F and sunny vs. when it was 74F and overcast and—presumably—more accurately forecast sales for the next time it’s 74F and either sunny or overcast. I asked Abe if a small retailer could do the same for their single location and he said there’s no reason they couldn’t.

**Me:** Looking around the audience, I saw a lot of Amish and Mennonite faces, so I did my best to focus on solutions that any business could implement. I told them about three simple tools created by South Carolina grower Daniel Gravano—a motorized jib for lifting heavy bales (a video of which I linked to in the last AO); a boat-roller hose guide for when he’s applying shade spray to his greenhouse roofs; and a hand-operated plant spacer with half-circles cut from a sheet of aluminum and a handle so you can space multiple plants without bending over.

I also emphasized an untapped niche: quality—of both product and of service. If you grow fantastic plants—truly world-class plants—customers will find you and keep coming back. And if you provide world-class friendly service to go along with it, you should have no worries ... that’s my view anyway. And I know it sounds easier than it is.



## On the trade show floor

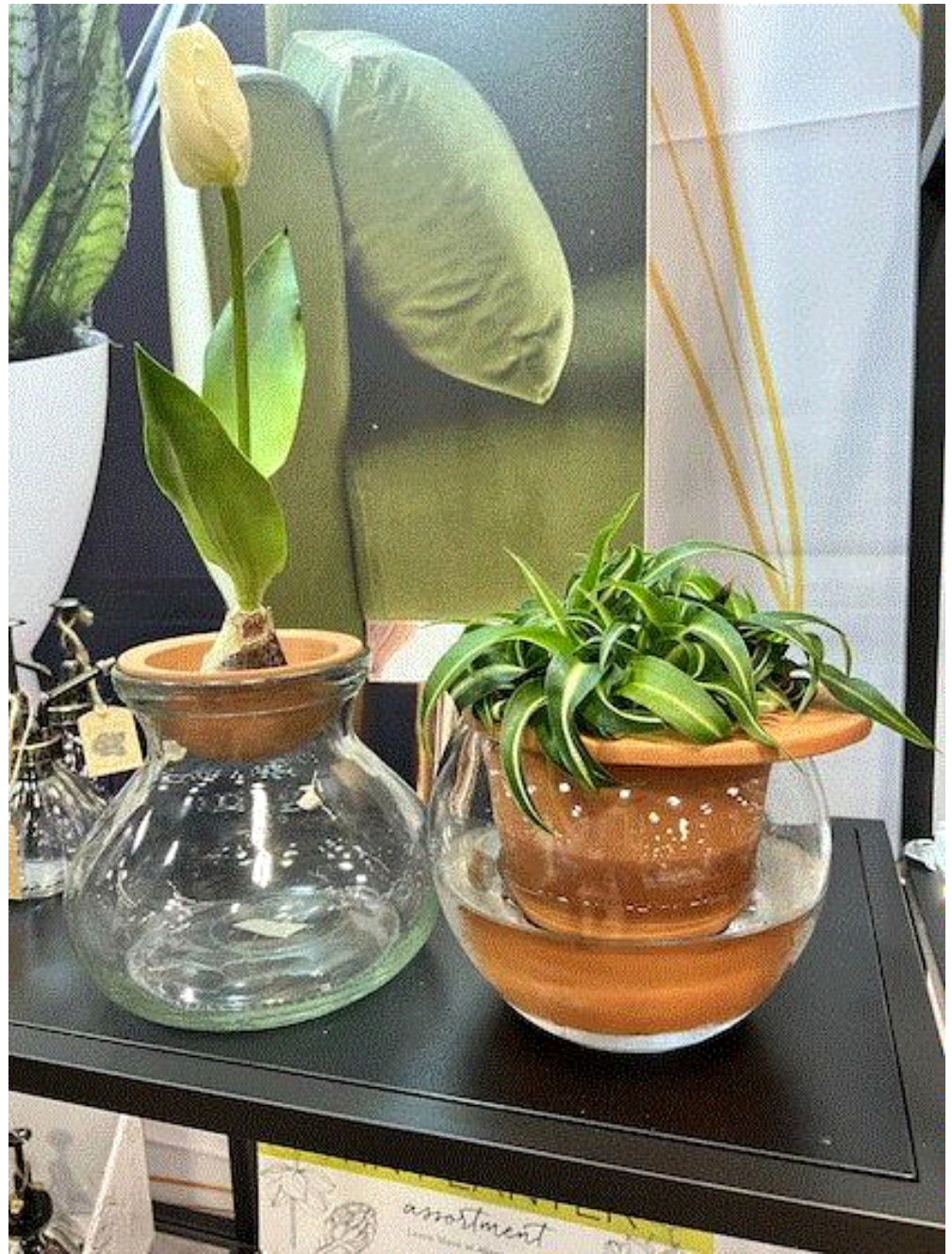


TTA partnered with **Pack Manufacturing** to show a whole automatic planting line from filler to offload conveyor. Allen Bucker, TTA's service and installation manager, told me smaller growers are their fastest-growing market, and they felt they could inform some potential new customers about how accessible and affordable automation is getting ... especially as wages keep rising!



## Glass & Terracotta

**Syndicate Home & Garden**, a division of Syndicate Sales, showed off two glass-and-terracotta planters—one for bulbs and one a self-waterer for houseplants. They also had a product I'm surprised nobody has done before: A hanging basket with built-in windchimes! Available in two sizes (10 in. and 14 in.) in white or gray.





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Here is a [VIDEO](#) showing the stuff fizzing away.

## **A diervilla wins Best Novelty at Plantarium**

You can't get it in North America (at least not yet), but Kodiak Mixx Diervilla (*Diervilla x splendens*) won the Gold Medal in the "Best Novelty" category of the recent Green Retail Awards at Plantarium, the largest garden plant show in the Netherlands. Kodiak Mixx, a sport of the very popular Kodiak Orange, was found during production at Spring Meadow Nursery. Kodiak Orange is part of Proven Winners' Color Choice shrub line.

As they describe it, Kodiak Mixx, a newly introduced diervilla, "produces a colorful mix of green variegated leaves with a creamy white margin, brightened with spectacular young pink shoots

that appear all season long. The plant produces soft yellow flowers from early summer through fall, attracting bees and other pollinators.” Sounds nice!



“This diervilla is colorful and has a stable shape, making it innovative in the diervilla range,” stated the award jury’s report. “The plant has a good bushy growth habit and is neatly presented without burnt foliage. It boasts a beautiful, colorful mixture of green variegated leaves with creamy white edges and attractive pinkish red shoots.”

Kodiak Mixx is going to be launched first in the EU through Valkplant, the Proven Winner’s ColorChoice partner for Europe, said Rick Grazzini, plant breeder and executive director of [GardenGenetics](#).

“Whether or not it will go to market in North America is yet to be determined,” Rick added. “The original variety from which the sport originated, Kodiak Orange, is a very popular ColorChoice shrub variety.”

## **Sherwin-Williams Color of the Year**

[Upward \(SW 6239\)](#), “a breezy, blissful blue,” is Sherwin-Williams’ Color of the Year for 2024.

Upward, they say, is the color “of a perfect, ever-present peace found when we slow down, take a breath and allow the mind to clear.”

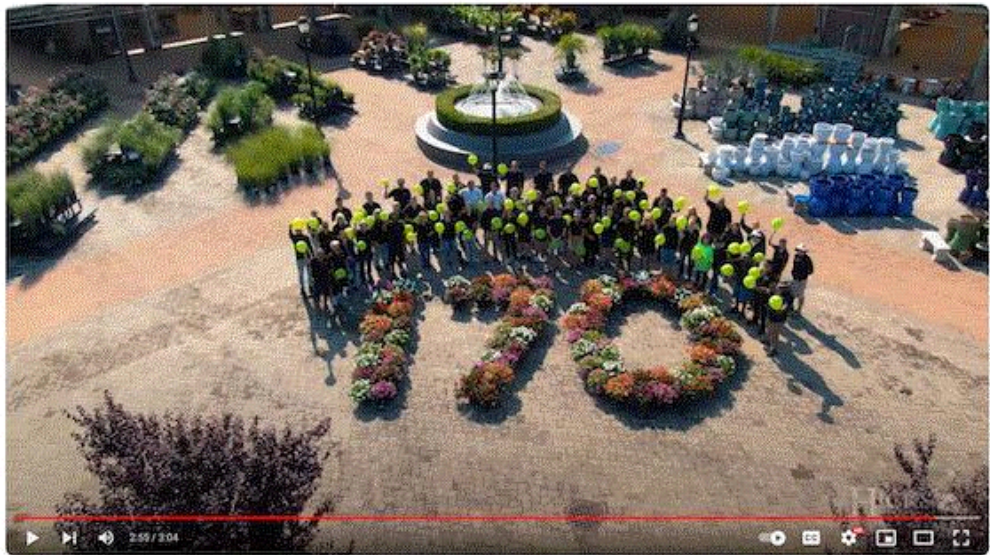


Alrighty then! But there's more:

"This cool, crisp blue offers a fresh perspective and a new look," promises Sue Wadden, S-W's director of color marketing. "Promoting steady optimism and tranquility, the ease of Upward encourages a gentle forward momentum to uplift us all while opening our minds to the future."

I say spread some around your office or store and give your staff and customers a little forward momentum.

## Finally ...



Hicks Nurseries Celebrates 170 Years of Serving Long Island

Congratulations to [Hicks Nursery](#) of Westbury, New York, for being in business for an amazing 170 years! The well-known, six-generation Long Island garden center started as a family farm in 1853, selling to friends and neighbors.

"170 years ... it's an amazing milestone and we're very proud of it," said Stephen Hicks in [THIS VIDEO](#) marking the celebration.

I'll bet Ellen Wells' ancestors did business with those early Hicks ... they've been farming continuously on Long Island since 1661.

Feel free to email me at [beytes@growertalks.com](mailto: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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