YRA Finalists, TikTok, Easter and Titchmarsh's pants



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Green Profit's buzz

Retail news from inside and outside the green industry

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Easter's Upon Us

The Easter holiday is approaching this weekend. What can we expect as far as sales? Well, the National Retail Federation (NRF) once again partnered with Prosper Insights & Analytics to figure out who plans to spend how much and on what.

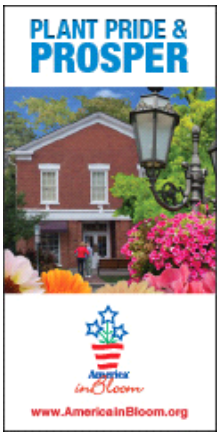
The 30,000 ft. view on Easter is that consumers are expected to spend $22.4 billion this year. That's a drop from last year's record of $24 billion. One of the reasons for the anticipated decrease may be that Easter weekend is occurring nine days earlier than last year. It's also smack-dap in the middle of March Madness this year, if that influences anything.

The survey found that 81% of Americans plan to celebrate the holiday, with average per-person spending expected to be $177. What will they spend that money on?

- Food ($7.3 billion)







- Clothing ($3.5 billion)
- Gifts ($3.4 billion)

“Gifts” seems like a very general category, doesn’t it? Also, candy is expected to ring up $3.1 billion in sales while flower sales are expected to reach $1.6 billion. Pro tip for you floral retailers: Set up a candy display somewhere nearby.



The Easter holidays are driven by spending time with family and friends, with little exchanging of gifts like those year-end holidays. As such, the survey found that people are inspired in their Easter-related purchases because it’s tradition (64%). Sales and promotions are not a big draw for sales (unless it’s the day after and the candy is on sale).

Where are folks shopping? Discount stores (53%), department stores (40%), online (33%), local/small businesses (22%) and specialty stores (20%).

Another interesting fact that I picked up HERE is that Gen Z consumers are twice as likely as older generation to buy alcohol for Easter, and beer is their top choice. They are also three times as likely to order takeout or delivery. Again, maybe that’s because it’s the Sweet 16 this coming weekend.

What are your expectations for Easter sales over these next few days? Drop me a note about it at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



Speaking of Young People

We are excited to announce the three finalists for the 2024 The Garden Center Group/*Green Profit* Young Retailer Award! As in years past, narrowing the nominations down to just three was difficult for Bossman Beytes, Jen Polanz and Jen Zurko. But slog through them they did. And now for the drumroll, please.

The three finalists for the Young Retailer Award are:

- McKenzie Lain, General Manager for Watters Garden Center in Prescott, Arizona
- Jake Scott, General Manager for Piedmont Feed & Garden Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- Zachary Pitchford, COO/Owner of Wilcox Nursery & Landscape/Pitchford Design & Landscape in Largo, Florida

Congratulations to all! They’ll be interviewed by our expert judges and write an essay on a

pressing industry topic for the June issue of *Green Profit*. All that on top of handling spring sales!

As you know, *GrowerTalks* has its own awards thing going on for growers, too. The three finalists for the Ball Horticultural/BASF/*GrowerTalks* Young Grower Award are:

- Carleton Stuecker, Head Grower of Propagation for Metrolina Greenhouses in Huntersville, North Carolina
- Trevor Stark, Assistant Head Grower for Hoffman Nursery in Portland, Oregon
- Drew Groezinger, Owner of Clara Joyce Flowers in Stockton, Illinois

Congratulations to those folks, too. Best of luck to you all.

And I want to give a special shout out to AmericanHort, a wonderful and important sponsor for both the YRA and YGA contests. We couldn't do it without you!



Prepping for Possible TikTok Ban

You've likely heard that there are legislative maneuvers afoot that would require TikTok's Chinese-based parent company ByteDance to divest its U.S.-based business within six months or face a ban in the U.S. As of now, this bill has passed the House and has not yet been taken up by the Senate. But let's say the Senate does pass the bill, TikTok remains a Chinese-based company and a U.S. ban is subsequently enforced. Then what?

Some argue that other apps existed before TikTok and other apps will pop up to fill the void after a potential ban of the platform. Perhaps. But just take a look at Meta's Threads, a Twitter/X alternative, and its lackluster user acquisition numbers to see that it's not always a given that new and/or alternative apps are a 1:1 replacement.

This excellent article from PR Daily, which presents a rundown of the current situation, points out that if the bill passes the Senate and a divestment doesn't happen, "the move could impact the way brands and organizations that have been successful on TikTok interact with and build their audiences. They may have to pivot to other platforms and communities, and **potentially lose access to audiences they have cultivated in the past."** I emphasized the latter half of the sentence to point out that businesses, small businesses in particular, spend enormous amounts of time and money acquiring followers. This audience, many of whom are supporters and customers, may not follow a small business to another platform. The "What Now?" section of that article gives some advice about what strategies businesses should implement to prepare for either potential situation.

An Associated Press article on the topic rebuffed the idea of easily substituting Instagram Reels or YouTube Shorts with this: "Even though you can replicate the technology, you can't really replicate the culture, and people aren't behaving necessarily in the same way as they are on TikTok," a principal analyst at research firm eMarketer said. Read that article HERE to find out how a potential ban could impact live-streamed sales on TikTok Shop.

If you are an active and enthusiastic TikTok user, drop me a note HERE to let me know what your plans are if a ban does take effect.



This Week's Pinterest Trends

This week's Pinterest trends introduce us to the term "forest garden," or as National Garden Bureau's Gail Pabst clarifies, "a food forest, or a layered approach to growing food that will provide an easy source of food for many years to come." Or maybe you already knew that! Regardless, as you can see here searches for the term "forest garden" have increased 200% in the last 30 days. Are you supplying your customers with the products and education they need to build a forest garden?



Forest gardening pops up as number 12 in the Top 25 Pinterest growing search trends for everyone across Pinterest in the gardening category. It's interesting to note that low-maintenance, DIY, raised beds and succulent/rock gardens dominate the list.

Rank	Trend	Monthly change
1	succulent landscape design	500%
2	resurrection garden	500%
3	diy sandbox	300%
4	galvanized raised garden beds	300%
5	flower bed edging	300%
6	garden yard ideas	300%
7	bee watering station	300%
8	fake plants outside front porches	200%
9	vegetable garden design layout	200%
10	fast growing privacy shrubs	200%
11	hosta gardens	200%
12	forest garden	200%
13	cheap raised garden beds diy	200%
14	container flowers	200%
15	full sun landscaping ideas	200%
16	spring flowers	200%
17	river rock garden	200%
18	low maintenance garden	200%
19	raised flower beds in front of house	200%
20	driveway entry landscaping	200%
21	rock flower beds in front of house	200%
22	landscape border ideas	200%
23	simple flower beds in front of house	200%
24	natural garden	200%
25	shrubs in front of house	200%

Hey, Southern readers, are these trends matching up with sales in your stores? Drop me a note about it HERE if so.

JP's "Ship My Plants" Experience

Colleague Jen Polanz shares another way consumers can get plants delivered directly to their doorstep with Ship My Plants.

In the last *buZZ!* I told you about my experience with Amazon's Just Walk Out technology (you can read that HERE). This week I have a new experience to talk about: Ship My Plants.

After writing about the online plant store that works with growers and retailers across the country, I decided to test it out for myself (Okay, I was lured in by free shipping, don't judge me). File this under the category "enewsletter promotions work." I received an email with gorgeous photography of indoor plants, along with the free shipping enticement. I couldn't resist.

I picked out my plant, a reverse spider plant, and the order process was smooth—only a few clicks until I was through to the checkout page. I immediately received an email verification of my purchase, and two days later had my plant via USPS (I'm including a few pics of the unboxing process here).


LIVE PLANTS
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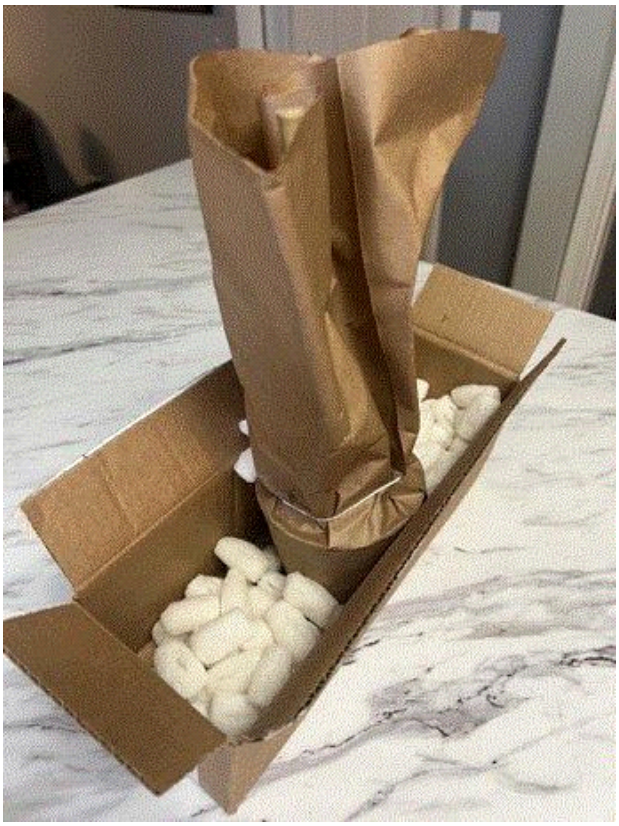



I was a little worried that my plant wouldn't arrive in good shape as it was being shipped from The Plant Farm in Washington State during a cold snap in March, but it looked great right out of the box and continues to thrive.

It was an easy and satisfying process, and it's something that needs to continue to be on every retailer's radar. I'm not suggesting you ship across the country, mind you; I'm saying consumers are attuned to who is offering omnichannel options however you do it. If you only offer online sales to a local audience, that's a fine option, too. Or, if you offer them the ability to research online and buy in store, that's getting closer to what consumers are looking for.

Thanks for the report, JP! And this reminds me that my mother is looking for two 6-in. English ivy baskets and I can't find nice ones locally. Perhaps I'll look online!

Arett Expands to West Coast

New Jersey-based lawn, garden, home and holiday supplies distributor Arett Sales just announced a growth spurt. They have established a West Coast distribution center in Fairfield, California, in partnership with Hydrofarm. This new facility will allow Arett to offer enhanced service, faster delivery and greater flexibility.

What does this mean for West Coast customers? Said Arett Sales President Noah Chesbrough, "We will continue to serve strategic partners such as Colgate, Church & Dwight, Pequa, Duracell and Procter & Gamble to national chains through our West Coast facility. Additionally, we are proud to expand our partnership with Fox Farm by introducing a West Coast Drop Ship program, a brand new offering from Arett available exclusively to West Coast retailers. We are highly enthusiastic about these new ventures and look forward to our ongoing contributions to the growth and success of our industry."

In addition, a few Arett's key private label brands—Good Tidings and Terra Verde—will now be accessible to customers on the West Coast.

If you're a West Coast retailer and are interested in learning more about how this new distribution center can support your business, visit www.Arett.com or email them at arettcs@arett.com.

Griffin Expo Dates

Mark your calendar for hort distributor Griffin's upcoming 2024 Expo. Or, I should say, Expos—they've added a second!

The first Expo will take place at the New Jersey Convention Center in Edison, New Jersey September 25-26. You'll find it all there—the latest trends, products and technologies for the horticulture industry. The virtual edition of this Expos will take place August 19-October 31.

The second Expo, created to accommodate a growing community, will be held at the Silver State Pavilion at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, Nevada on August 28-29.

Both editions of the in-person Expo will include seminars, networking opportunities and Expo-only deals. The virtual Expo will also have exclusive deals and show specials, and they've taken great pains to create an easy-to-navigate platform for the best user experience.

"We are thrilled to announce the dates for our 2024 Expo and the addition of a second event. This expansion is a testament to the incredible support and enthusiasm we have received from our community," said Jim Rottenberg, Vice President of Retail Sales at Griffin.

Find out more HERE.

Titchmarsh’s Pants Banned

British gardening personality and host of the BBC show “Garden Secrets” has had his pants banned in North Korea. That is a bit of news that piques the interest of any person, whether you’re into gardening or not. Why is this guy on North Korean television? What about his pants are offensive? Are they too tight? Do North Koreans have an interest in gardening?

All but the last question was answered as I listened to the story on the BBC Global Podcast.

First, it’s not clear how the 2010 episode made it onto North Korea’s Central TV programming. Western programming is pretty much prohibited, and what does appear on their channel is often pirated. It’s also possible that this episode was in a bundle of shows that was perhaps provided to the regime in 2014 by the BBC and the Foreign Office in hopes of opening "[the North Korean] people's eyes to the world beyond the closed republic without offending the regime."

Well, something was indeed offensive about Alan Titchmarsh’s pants, offensive enough to make Central TV blur them out. But what?



The offense was simply that his pants are jeans. Back in the 1990s, North Korean leader Kim Jung-il declared denim trousers to be a sign of Western imperialism and placed a ban on the legware. This ban continues under Kim Jung-un. As for Alan’s response to this blurring out of his jeans? He’s quoted as saying, "I've never seen myself as a dangerous subversive imperialist. I'm generally regarded as rather cozy and pretty harmless, so actually it's given me a bit of street cred, really hasn't it?"

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



Ellen Wells
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