

# It's Nearly Summertime—Catch a Trade Event or Two



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*News and commentary for the perennial market*



MONDAY, MAY 13, 2024

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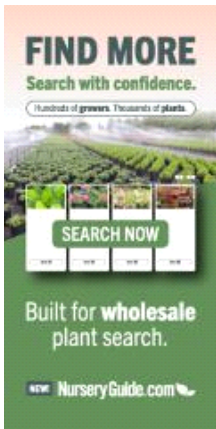


# Perennial PULSE

News and commentary on the global perennial plant market



Quality is Beautiful!



### COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- Summer is Near
- Walters Gardens Perennial Expo
- Darwin Perennials Day
- Cultivate'24
- PPA National Symposium
- Just Cuz

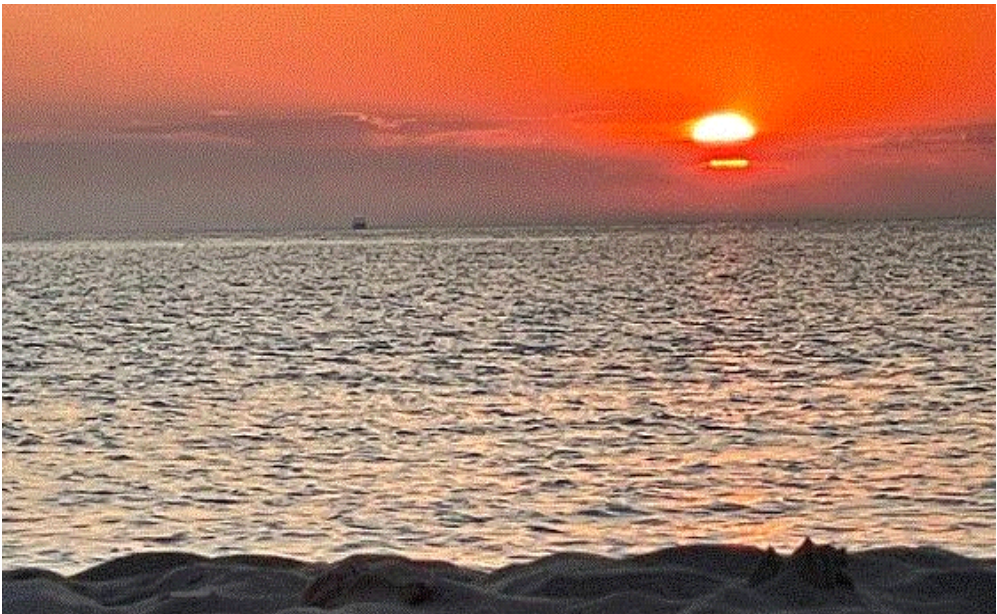
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**FIRST-YEAR FLOWERING PERENNIALS!**

## Summer is Near

Time flies when you're having fun. It sure seems like spring is speeding right along. As I write this, I'm at the end of our biggest shipping week of the year. Sure, there are still a couple good weeks ahead until Memorial Day, which typically signals the beginning of summer even though the official start kicks off with the summer solstice on June 20, 2024.

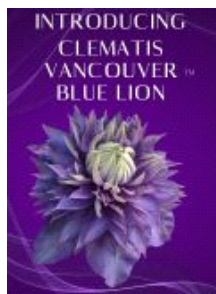
With spring in the rearview mirror and summer peaking over the horizon, I look forward to life returning back to normal and spending time with family, friends and neighbors during the summer days ahead.





Some of my favorite things to do when I'm not working, landscaping or gardening include taking in the beautiful sunsets over Lake Michigan and gathering around the firepit to roast smores and relaxing in a hammock. I also enjoy taking in a few trade events to network and enhance my mind with the numerous educational sessions they have to offer.

Below are a few of my favorites.



## Walters Gardens Perennial Expo

Walters Gardens kicks off the summer season with its annual Perennial Expo—"New Intros. New Ideas. All About Perennials."



**WHEN:** Tuesday, June 18, 2024, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Walters Gardens—Zeeland, Michigan

During this one day FREE perennial event, Walters Gardens opens their doors for attendees to learn about who they are and what they do, see their newest introductions, and stroll through the beautiful perennial gardens.

The Perennial Expo is loaded with educational opportunities:

- **Connecting Perennials, Pollinators and People (KEYNOTE):** Steve Foltz—Director of Horticulture for the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanic Garden

- **Get to Know the Walters Gardens New Plant Introductions:** Hans Hansen—Walters Gardens Director of New Plant Development
- **Marketing Track: Tips and Tools to Engage with New and Existing Customers:** Jessica DeGraaf—Proven Winners Director of Retail Accounts
- **Grower Track: Back to the Roots:** Jessie Carle—Walters Gardens Trials Manager, Jaclyn Workentine—Lead Grower, and Craig Meyer—Walters Gardens Bare Root Inventory Manager
- **Grower Track: Practical IPM:** Emily McKay—Walters Gardens Lead Grower & IPM Manager
- **Marketing & Plant Track: Perennials for Shoulder Season Programs:** Laura Robles—Walters Gardens Regional Product Manager
- **Grower Track: Greenhouse Automation:** Aren Phillips—Walters Gardens Greenhouse Systems Manager

Plus, there will be numerous tour opportunities to see the display gardens, bare root field production and even a FREE lunch in the gardens. Everything is FREE, they just simply ask you to RSVP for the event.

Go [HERE](#) to learn more.



## Darwin Perennials Day

If you enjoy seeing recent introductions, as well as reliable perennial standouts in landscape settings and comparison trial beds, the upcoming Darwin Perennials Day is for you.



**WHEN:** Wednesday, June 19, 2024, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** The Gardens at Ball, 1017 Roosevelt Road, West Chicago, Illinois

Darwin Perennials Day is your opportunity to see hundreds of perennial varieties grown in display gardens, trial beds and containers. There will be a New Variety Showcase featuring the best breeders from around the world where 25 of the industry's best perennial suppliers will have their products on display. This year's event will feature a new perennial cut flower display.

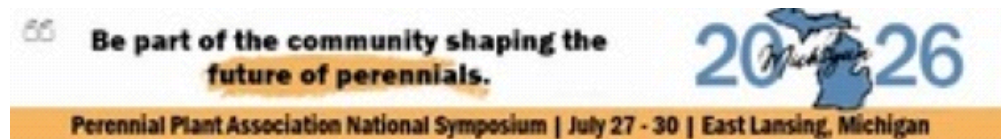
Attendees are invited to participate in one or more tours, including the Perennial Gardens, Darwin

Colombia Video Tour, and the Ball Helix Central Research and Development facility.

There's also a spectacular lunch included for all attendees, During lunch there will be keynote speaker panel titled "Tips and Tricks for Perennial Production" featuring Paul Pilon (hey, that's me!)—Director of Growing at Opel Growers (Hudsonville, Michigan), Chris Fifo—Product Representative for Darwin Perennials and Kieft Seed, and Nathan Jahnke—Culture Research Manager for Ball Seed Technical Services. Bring your appetite and questions.

[GO HERE](#) to learn more and register for this FREE event. I hope to see you there!

And there's only a four-hour drive between Walters Gardens and The Gardens at Ball, so many people attend both events.



## Cultivate'24

This will be my 31st year attending Cultivate. I first attended it when it was the OFA Short Course when I was an intern at Ball Seed. As a newcomer to the industry, I was absolutely blown away. In fact, the event and the horticulture industry still amaze me. If you've never attended or it's been a while since you have, I encourage you to go to Cultivate'24.



**WHEN:** July 13-16, 2024

**WHERE:** Greater Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, Ohio

Cultivate is one of the industry's top events, attracts over 10,000 attendees each year and has something for everybody. Cultivate'24 has an expansive trade show covering over 8 acres of space (over 1,500 booths). Plus, there are more than 150 educational sessions, numerous workshops, several industry tours, a large new varieties display and much more.

Like any trade event, you can gain as much or as little as you allow yourself to. Cultivate has been one of the most productive trade events I attend each year. Are you open to attending this event and allowing it to cultivate relationships, ideas and results?

Go [HERE](#) to learn more about Cultivate'24.

## PPA National Symposium

For many perennial enthusiasts, a summer wouldn't be a summer without attending the Perennial Plant Association's (PPA) National Symposium. This multi-day event is packed full of tours, networking opportunities and educational sessions.



## PERENNIAL PLANT ASSOCIATION

# NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

July 29 - August 1 | Asheville, North Carolina

**WHEN:** July 29- August 1, 2024

**WHERE:** Asheville, North Carolina

OMG, there's so much going on at the symposium, I don't know where to begin and can't possibly list them all. That being said, here's a few that caught my eye.

### **Tours**

- Botanical Gardens at Asheville
- North Carolina Arboretum
- Dover Private Garden
- Healing & Hops Tour
- Asheville Hiking Tour
- The Gardens of Biltmore
- Botanical Treasure Nursery
- Hopewood Private Garden
- Mr. Maple
- Carolina Native Nursery
- Willow Creek Nursery

### **Educational Sessions**

#### General Sessions

- **40 Years with the PPA** – Allen Bush
- **Exploring Southern Appalachian Flora** – Tom Ranney
- **English Tools for a Southern Garden** – Molly Hendry

#### Grower Track

- **Native Plant Propagation Panel** – Emily Driskill, John Mark Courtney, Nathan Buchanan, Benjamin Pick
- **Favorites from Plant Trials** – Elliott Duemler, Paul Westervelt, Dr. Mark Yelanich
- **The Future of Perennials** – Jared Barnes

#### Gardening Track

- **Gravel Gardens** - Jeff Epping
- **Plants I Loved ... Until I Didn't** – Holly Scoggins
- **Design to Fit the Site** – Rodney Eason

### **Networking**

- Welcome Reception
- Trade Show Social
- Special Evening Dinners

Again, this is just a synopsis of the great offerings the 2024 PPA National Symposium has to offer. There's so much more, including lots of well-deserved awards. You can check out the program by visiting [2024 PPA National Symposium](#), or better yet, register and attend the event in Asheville.

See you there!

## Just Cuz

It's seems like I just began and now I'm at the end of the newsletter. As you can see, there are definitely some great summer trade events worth attending. Perhaps a working vacation or two that you can write off are in your future. Stay tuned—I'll be announcing more summer trade events in future newsletters.

Since I was heavy on events and light on perennial content, I thought I'd share a glimpse of a vivid delosperma I observed in the gardens at Casa Pilon (not open to the public—my wife would kill me if I extended an open invitation to all).

### **Delosperma Jewel of the Desert Garnet**



This little gem lights up the garden with its vivid color. The plants seemed iridescent in the sunlight with their bright red flower petals with sizzling hot pink centers. The plant covers itself with blooms in the late spring and will flower continuously throughout the summer. Exceptional drought tolerance and hardy to Zone 4.

Thanks for reading this edition of *Perennial Pulse*. My email is [paul@opelgrowers.com](mailto:paul@opelgrowers.com) if you have any comments, article suggestions or if you'd just like to say hello.

Best regards,



**Paul Pilon**  
Editor-at-Large—*Perennial Pulse*  
Director of Growing—Opel Growers

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