

# Winners, plants and products from Cultivate, plus a Rosy future



THURSDAY, JULY 18, 2024

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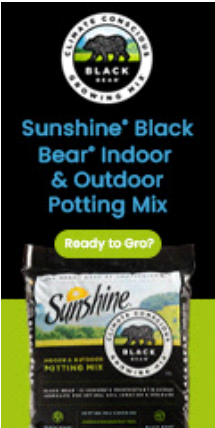
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**buZZ!**  
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**COMING UP THIS WEEK:**

- The Winners Are ...
- Two Products
- Two Plants (Actually Three)
- Prevent Blowovers
- Packaging with Less Plastic
- A Rosy Future
- AFE's Travel Grants



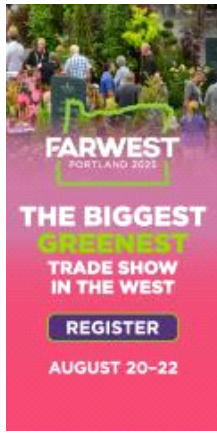
## The YRA and YGA Winners Are ...

Before we get to the topic of the subject line, I'd like to thank everyone who took the time at Cultivate to say hello and share their appreciation of *buZZ*. As my fingers type away at this weekly newsletter it's hard to know if anyone besides my proofreading colleague Jen Polanz reads it each week. You do! Thank you!

And I also want to thank the AmericanHort staff for all their hard work putting on a show that I am sure has a million moving parts. We'll get the official numbers from them sometime soon, but I can attest Cultivate'24 was a well-attended event with (I heard) a sold-out show floor and some phenomenal education sessions. Another great job.

And now on to the winners!

Taking home the *Green Profit*/The Garden Center Group's Young Retailer Award for 2024 is ...



McKenzie Lain of Watters Garden Center in Prescott, Arizona!



Congratulations, McKenzie! You will see McKenzie's smiling face gracing the cover on *Green Profit's* September cover, as well as a one-on-one interview inside that issue's pages. Well-deserved! From what I hear, the judge's decisions for this and also the Young Grower Award winner were yet again incredibly difficult. You young people are too good!

Speaking of the *GrowerTalks/Ball Horticultural Company* Young Grower Award, its winner for 2024 is Drew Groezinger of Clara Joyce Flowers in Stockton, Illinois. I'm telling you, cut flowers are having a well-deserved moment.







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PRESENT:



Left to right, YGA finalist Carleton Stuecker of Metrolina, YGA winner Drew Groezinger, YRA winner McKenzie Lain, YRA finalist Jake Scott of Piedmont Feed & Garden Center and YGA finalist Trevor Stark of Hoffman Nursery.

Who are the next Young Retailer and Young Grower finalists? Could be YOU! Submit your name or brag about someone deserving of the awards [HERE](#).



## Two Products

While I *do* know the winners of this year's Retailer's Choice Awards, I'm going to wait for The Garden Center Group's Danny Summers to send along the official details of the plants and products that caught the eyes of his aisle-walking cadre of garden center folks. Meanwhile, I'm sharing a few products and plants that got my attention as I walked the show floor.

First up, the **EarthLifter**. This tool is deceptively simple. This 1020 steel-made, hollow-handled pitchfork-like tool has a "rolling fulcrum" near its lower end to aid in lifting items out of the ground. No need for your hands and arms to act as that lifting force, as the physics of the device does it for you. Use it to harvest bulbs and tubers, lift out giant weeds, move rocks and till the soil. And it does it all with less effort on the user's part.



Great for people with bad backs (that's just about everyone), older folks and those with

disabilities. In fact, the inventor himself has a hand injury, which prompted him to find a solution for his digging needs. The tool helps keep gardeners gardening longer. Find out more information at the [Earth Lifter website](#).

The **Globee** pot in the **Very Cool Stuff** booth caught my eye because I loved the way one plant pot connected to the other. It's a 100% recycled product that has three uses—hang it as I've mentioned, or it also attaches to a wall, and of course you can place it on a table. Did I mention it has a water reservoir, too? And its shape allows for the opening to be either 100% horizontal or at an angle. It comes with a chain for hanging and it's available in multiple colors. It's an excellent item for retailers and was told even some growers had inquired about it to grow in. It's a new product for Very Cool Stuff and they're trialing it out to see what retailers think. Contact [Amy Mort](#) directly and give her your thoughts.



## Two Plants (Actually Three)

The Retailer's Choice Awards include quite a few plants, but I wanted to tell you about two that I spotted. The first, which was actually pointed out to me at the show by Jen Polanz, is this **Frozen Queen calla** from the folks at GardenWorld/2 Plant.





According to them it's the first variegated *and translucent* calla out there. Yes, translucent, so you can *see through the leaves*. Crazy! Even the sales rep said the flowers aren't much, but it's the coloration that is appealing in its unusualness. The breeder has had it growing for five or more years and can attest to the stableness of the variegation.



Sticking with items from the same booth, this **Musa Ever Red** with red highlights is a game changer for northerners who want to grow tropicals. That's because Ever Red is hardy down to Zone 5. Also hardy to Zone 5 is the **Colocasia Polargreen**. They've been calling these two items their "hardy tropicals."



Musa Ever Red



Colocasia Polargreen

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Prevent Blowovers



Before heading to Cultivate I received a press release from A.M.A. Horticulture about two new products I would see there. They are two racking systems that will save growers, nurseries and garden centers from having to reset pots that have blown over due to wind. You've probably had to send out staff to upright potted shrubs, small trees and perennials after a wind storm has blown everything every which way, and it takes a lot of time (which equals a lot of money).

Through a partnership with the Dutch company Van Schaik Rack Solutions, A.M.A. is now offering two customizable wire grid systems that help to stabilize potted plants. The Original Rack, designed with outward facing sides, works well in gravel and paved surfaces.



**The Original Rack**

The V-Foot Rack is designed with inward-facing supports. This helps to prevent damage to landscape fabric or anything that is covering the ground.



**The V-Foot Rack**

Both rack systems can be transported by forklift—pots and all—if you want to move the plants from one spot to another. That is totally a time and labor saver. If you'd like more information visit

HERE.



## Packaging with Less Plastic

I also received a press release after Cultivate about a new sustainable packaging option from Spring Meadow and Proven Winners ColorChoice that is available to their grower partners. This new packaging is made of high-density polyethylene (HDPE #2) and uses 83% less plastic than your typical nursery containers.



The new packaging, created by PlantRight, is made of woven plastic. Its wide base helps with stability and allows for root expansion. With drainage holes in the bottom and around the sides, as well as handles to help move these around, the new package checks all the boxes for a growing vessel.

Said Spring Meadow's general manager Jeremy Deppe of this product and the PlantRight partnership, "[PlantRight has] a wealth of experience in the packaging for our industry, and we knew they'd provide a more sustainable container solution that provides huge benefits to growers, as well as to retailers, landscapers and homeowners. The packages cost less and are easier to handle, install and recycle after planting."

The new packages are for use with 5- to 20-gal. sizes. They've been trialing these units at Spring Meadow and have found that finishing time with these is equal to and sometimes even less than when growing in standard containers.

If you're interested in ordering the new Proven Winners ColorChoice Packages, contact your Spring Meadow Nursery account manager.



## A Rosy Future



*Colleague Jen Polanz wrote up this information for you about Rosy Soil.*

Recently an industry friend put me in touch with Chad Massura, founder of Rosy Soil, a new line of indoor potting mixes (and now plant food) for garden retailers and plant shops. We chatted in June about how the company came about, what their focus is and what's coming down the pike. I waited to hand this over to Ellen until their plant food was ready—and now it is!

"I grew up gardening, but I got kind of obsessed with biochar specifically. The kind of rabbit hole that I went down in the biochar world, I think, kind of reconnected me to my background in gardening," he said. "I just got totally obsessed with the idea of trying to create a higher performance soil with a much lower environmental footprint."

He brought in lead researcher Justin "Jules" Guiliano, who has a background in vermicompost and natural and organic farming, to explore formulations that would have a reduced carbon footprint. "We just continue to sort of optimize towards those two metrics: how do we make the plant performance as high as possible, and how do we make the footprint as low as humanly possible?" Chad said. "And so that has meant replacing peat with biochar, replacing synthetic fertilizers with compost and worm castings, replacing perlite with pine bark fines, replacing virgin plastics with PCR plastics and plastic neutral packaging."

"It's trying to make decisions all the way up and down the supply chain."

The biochar is essentially the base of the mixes offered, and it creates a unique soil structure and texture. They've had most success with high-temperature wood char, but they're also exploring other types, like crop residue chars that are made from the crop leftovers.

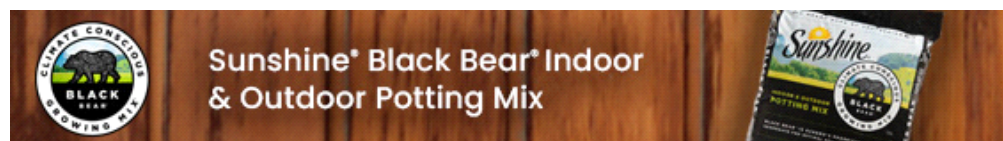
Along with its unique internal components, Rosy Soil also has a trendy, high-end look to the packaging that lets it stand out. The company, while selling to independents, also recently landed a seasonal deal with Target for 250 stores, which will help them scale up the operation. It's a win for Target, too, who gets to tout the product's lower carbon footprint as part of its sustainability initiative.



Currently Rosy Soil has three blends: the Houseplant Mix, Cactus & Succulent Mix and Seedling Mix. The company JUST last week launched its brand new Plant Food, too, which can be used as a topdressing on the soil and includes biochar, kelp meal, worm castings, compost and mycorrhizae, as well as bokashi, a fermented compost.



What's up next for the team at Rosy Soil? They will be at the Ace Hardware Fall Convention in Chicago in early August, as well as Farwest in Oregon in August, and the BFG Expo East in Cleveland in September. Find out more at the [company's website](#).

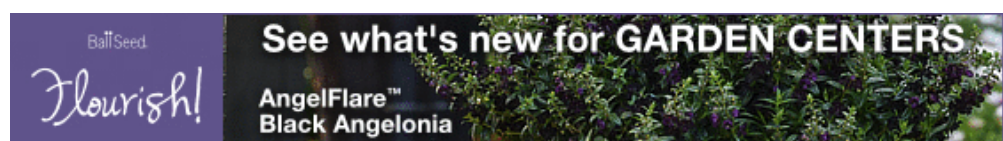


## AFE's Travel Grants

Bettering your skills is an important aspect of succeeding in business, and sometimes travel expenses can be a roadblock. Thanks to a very generous gift of \$50,000 to the American Floral Endowment's Ken and Jean Royer Family Fund, travel expenses to expand your retail florist skills has been a lot less of a worry.

The donation to the Ken and Jean Royer Family Fund comes from Greg and Amy Royer. The relatively new fund provides travel reimbursement grants to retail florists looking to beef up their education and participation in networking at industry conferences and events. The grant is particularly interested in helping folks who might otherwise face financial barriers to participation.

How does it work? You must be a first-time attendee of the specific conference you plan to join, and you would either own or work for a traditional brick-and-mortar retail floral shop. Each grant will cover half (or up to a max of \$2,000) of the conference's registration and travel fees. Good deal! The deadline for applying is October 1 of each year. Interested? Find out more [HERE](#).





*Rudbeckia 'Treasure Trove'*  
New to Proven Winners  
Perennials for 2025-2026!



Questions, comments, suggestions? Drop me a line if you'd like at [ewells@ballpublishing.com](mailto:ewells@ballpublishing.com).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ellen'.

Ellen Wells  
Senior Editor  
Green Profit

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