

It's Summerific Time, Meet Daisy Digs and New Perennials at Cultivate'24



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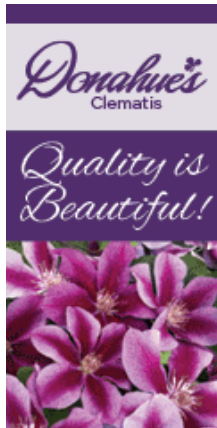
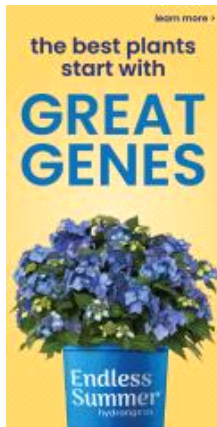
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News and commentary on the global perennial plant market

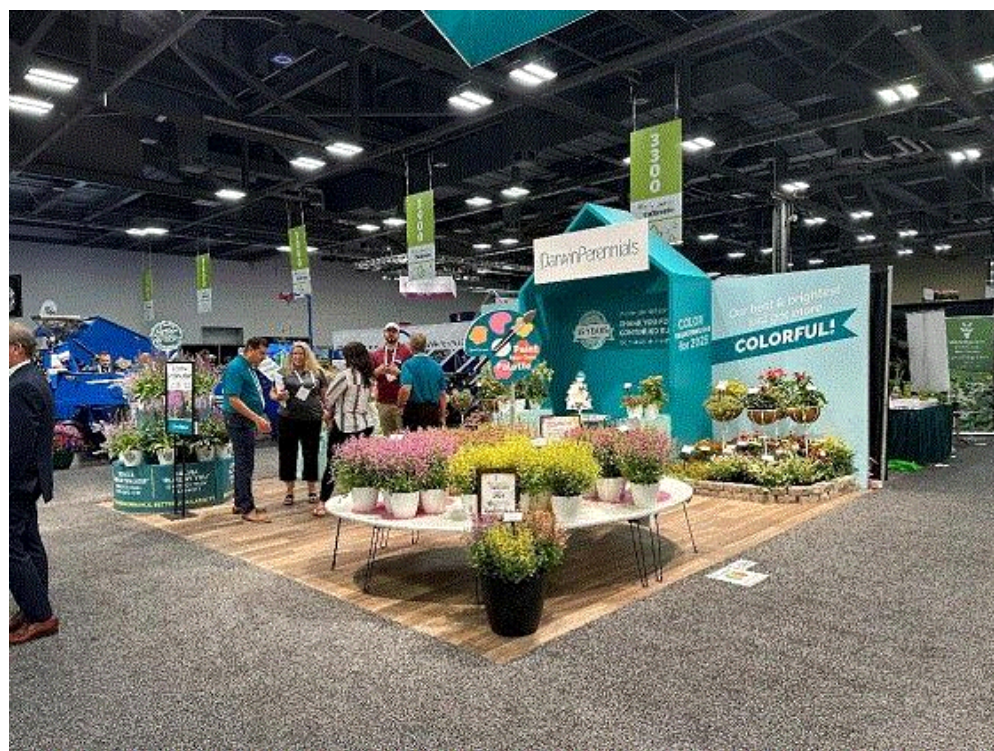
COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Perennials at Cultivate'24
New from Proven Winners
New Biofungicide
2024 Biosolutions Guide
Meet Daisy Digs
Simply Summerific



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

Perennials at Cultivate'24



Darwin Perennials booth at Cultivate'24.

I can always count on finding some new gems—or should I say, stunning new perennials—at Cultivate. This year was no exception. Here are a couple of intros that stood out to me.

Phlox Blue Ribbons



This one instantly caught my eye while visiting the [Pacific Plug and Liner \(PP&L\)](#) booth. Blue Ribbons is a variegated woodland phlox (*Phlox divaricata*) from [Concept Plants](#). It has evergreen variegated leaves. Blue Ribbons covers itself with fragrant, light lavender flowers in the spring. Hardy to Zone 4.

Echinacea Sunmagic Vintage series



I love all the colorful echinacea on the market and never expected to have one of them, let alone an entire series of them, to be one of my favorite new perennials I saw at Cultivate. **Bull Plant Genetics** launched the introduction of the Sunmagic Vintage series of echinacea. If I counted correctly, there are currently 15 cultivars in the series. They're easy to produce, well branched and the series offers many unique flower colors. Hardy to Zone 4. The Sunmagic Vintage series is available from **ThinkPlants**.



Electric Orange



Hot Pink

Better-Performing Double Echinacea!

START GROWING ▶

DarwinPerennials.

Echinacea Double Scoop™
Raspberry **DELUXE**



New from Proven Winners

You can always count on Proven Winners to have some incredible perennial introductions showcased at Cultivate. As expected, there were several noteworthy new plants on display this year. I can't show them all here, but I can share a couple that grabbed my attention.

Coreopsis Designer Threads Golden Needles



Coreopsis Golden Needles is a great new threadlife (*C. verticillata*) cultivar with large 2-in. bicolored, long-lasting flowers (several weeks). Golden Needles shows excellent resistance to powdery mildew and covers itself with bright golden-yellow flowers with sharp maroon central eyes. It grows 18- to 20-in. tall and is hardy to Zone 5.

Salvia Living Large Big Sky



Salvia Big Sky is a supersized salvia reaching an impressive 28- to 32-in. tall when blooming in the late spring to early summer. The lavender blue flower spikes appear later than traditional perennial salvias. Big Sky is hardy all the way to Zone 3A.

Look for more great new perennial introductions showcased at Cultivate'24 in future newsletters.



New Biofungicide from Koppert



One of the new products that caught my eye at Cultivate'24 was **Bacilirid** from Koppert.

Bacilirid is a highly effective biofungicide containing *Bacillus amyloliquefaciens* strain MBI 600. This is a new strain to our industry. The wettable powder formulation has great solubility allowing for ease of tank mixing well with other biosolutions products, as well as many conventional products and leaves little to no residue on the foliage.

Bacilirid's unique strain of beneficial bacteria works by colonizing on root and shoot systems of plants, therefore preventing, controlling or suppressing plant pathogens through competition. Growers can use it for managing Anthracnose, Botrytis, Fusarium, Pythium, powdery mildew and Rhizoctonia on their crops.

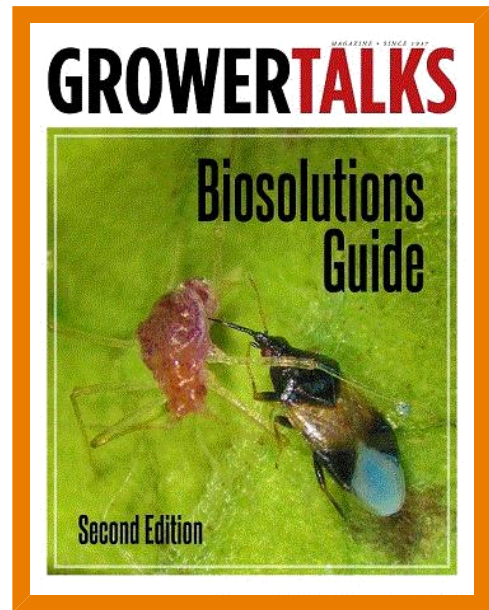
Bacilirid is an excellent product to incorporate into your IPM programs.

Learn more [HERE](#).



Speaking of biofungicides, earlier this month *GrowerTalks* published its second edition of the Biosolutions Guide. Like the inaugural edition published last year, the second edition is absolutely packed with tons of content aimed at providing growers with the information they need to know to achieve success with BCAs and biosolutions products. Here's a brief synopsis of what's in the 2024 guide:

- Using Mycorrhizal Fungi Products in the Greenhouse
- Biofungicides: An Essential Part of Your Future
- Biofungicides Efficacy Table
- Biofungicides Derived from Plant Extracts
- Bacillus-based Biopesticides
- Bioinsecticides Efficacy Table
- Banker Plants: On the Rise (Again)
- Biocontrols: Hey, Buglady! I have a Question
- BCA Release Systems & Methods



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Meet Daisy Digs

Unless you've been completely focused on growing and selling perennials—or you live under a rock with absolutely no connection with the outside world (which is highly unlikely since you're reading this)—you've likely heard how artificial intelligence (AI) is going to be taking over the world. AI may not actually take over the world, but it will change how most industries do business.

One recent example of how AI is being used in our industry is through **Bloomin' Easy's** chatbot **Daisy Digs**. Daisy is designed to provide guidance to consumers by answering their questions and troubleshooting their gardening issues. Her answers are nearly instantaneous.



My colleague Jeb Fields over at [Nursery & Landscape Insider](#) describes Daisy Digs as “a fun-loving, passionate greenthumb with a youthful twist.” I decided to see for myself how quick and accurate she was. I asked, “What are the benefits of perennials?” and Daisy instantly answered.

"Perennials are a fantastic choice for gardeners for a variety of reasons: Longevity, Cost-effective, Low Maintenance, Variety, Seasonal Interest and Wildlife Friendly." Daisy Digs also provided short responses to each of these topics.

Okay, that was both quick and accurate. So I thought I'd ask Daisy Digs a harder question, “What are the parts of a flower?” Her response was a little slower as she combed through massive amounts of data, but then she impressively responded with the correct answer.

Daisy replied, "Petals, Sepals, Stamen, Receptacle, Nectary" with brief descriptions of each of these.

Bloomin' Easy is the first major plant brand to implement an AI consumer support chatbot. I have to admit, I don't have a crush on her, but I kind of dig Daisy Digs.

I encourage you [to check and test Daisy Digs out](#).



Simply Summerific

One of my favorite perennials of summer is hardy hibiscus and next week is [Summerific Week](#). I like to refer to it as the celebration and promotion of Sumerific Hibiscus.

Why celebrate Summerific Hibiscus? The Summerific Hibiscus from Proven Winners is impressive and has many desirable features. Let me start off with its flower power—the Summerific cultivars are indeterminate, which means they produce flower buds along the length of the stem, not just near the top of the plant, and they have large 8-in. colorful flowers. Additionally, these hibiscus grow fast, but are sturdy plants. They have various leaf shapes and colors and are cold hardy to Zone 4.



Industry professionals, garden writers, social media influencers and hibiscus lovers are invited to post photos and videos on social media and tag them in their images on Facebook or use #SummerificWeek in Instagram when posting their Summerific Hibiscus. This is a great method to let consumers and customers know about these great perennials that are usually under the radar during the spring retail season. The hope is Summerific Week will help lure customers back into the garden center during the summer.

If you have an image, video and/or comment you'd like to share, please post them to help improve the awareness of these great summer-flowering perennials. Join in on hibiscus mania and share your photos and comments. Be sure to include #SummerificWeek and tag [@waltersgardens](#) in your post to improve the success of this initiative.

Go [HERE](#) for more info on Summerific Week.



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

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul".

Paul Pilon

Editor-at-Large—*Perennial Pulse*

Director of Growing—Opel Growers

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