

Unbe-leaf-able Grasses, Plus Hoffman Nursery's Infrastructure Collection



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THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2024

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Perennial PULSE

News and commentary on the global perennial plant market

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- Unbe-leaf-able Grasses
- Green Infrastructure Collection
- OH Floriculture Conference
- Plug & Cutting Conference
- Summer Planting—Now What?

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These New Grasses are Unbe-leaf-able

I couldn't resist and just had to use that pun in the subject line. I guess what I'm trying to say is these new grasses from Emerald Coast Growers are a cut above the rest. (Sorry, that's my last grass pun ... at least for this newsletter.) Here are three new ornamental grasses offered by ECG:

Panicum Dream Catcher Smoky Rose





Smoky Rose is a durable new panicum cultivar. It has a tight bouquet-like growing habit with dark green foliage and produces a crown of billowy smoky-rose flowers from mid-summer into fall. Smoky Rose is versatile and can be used as an accent plant or in mass plantings. It reaches 3.5 ft. in height and is hardy to Zone 4.

Miscanthus Morning Sun



Morning Sun has striking variegated foliage with gold horizontal bands and an arching 6- to 8-ft. tall growth habit. This infertile maiden grass is hardy to Zone 5.

Schizachyrium Free Spirit Exclamation Point



This new schizachyrium has a unique upright, pincushion-like habit. The bluish-green foliage develops flecks of purple and maroon as the summer progresses. Exclamation Point is very cold hardy, surviving all the way to Zone 3.

Check out these and other recent grass and perennial introductions by visiting at [ECG's website](#).



Hoffman's New Green Infrastructure Collection

To address the recent interest and increased demand for green infrastructure programs and projects, Hoffman Nursery introduced the Green Infrastructure Collection. This collection contains plants selected for their ability to provide aesthetic quality while reducing water use, improving water quality and having human well-being benefits.



Joe pye weed in a pollinator mixed planting.

David Hoffman, Chief Operating Officer at Hoffman Nursery, Inc., said, "The Green Infrastructure Collection streamlines the process for customers to source and cultivate these plants for their green infrastructure programs or projects, since many of the plants in the collection are approved for use in municipal and state stormwater design manuals."

The Green Infrastructure Collection includes Hoffman Nursery's existing Grass Solutions line and their new Perennial Solutions line of flowering perennials. [GO HERE](#) to view Hoffman Nursery's Perennial Solutions and Grass catalogs.



Ohio Floriculture & Nursery Conference

I always like to pass along some upcoming trade events I think have value to both you and the industry. Here are a couple that have crossed my radar:



SAVE 
the DATE

October 17, 2024
Columbus, OH

Floriculture & Nursery Conference

When: October 17, 2024

Where: Columbus, Ohio

(Online options are also available for this conference.)

Topics Covered:

- **Don't Take Turns, Make Turns! Top Tips for Finishing Annuals Efficiently**—Dr. Christopher Currey, Iowa State University (I'm sure some of Dr. Currey's tips will also apply to several perennials)
- **Identifying Novel Plant Growth Promoting Bacteria to Reduce Fertilizer Applications During Floriculture Crop Production**—Dr. Michelle Jones, The Ohio State University
- **Ethephon Drenches: New Option for Dialing in Annuals and Perennials**—Dr. Garrett Owen, The Ohio State University
- **Identification and Management of Common Diseases of Ornamental Plants in Greenhouse and Nursery Production**—Dr. Francesca Peduto Hand, The Ohio State University
- **A Sampler on Sampling: How to Collect and Submit Samples to Diagnostic Clinics**—Dr. Francesca Rotondo, The Ohio State University
- **Fertilizing Annuals: Designing a Plan for Success**—Dr. Christopher Currey (Again, I'm confident many of these concepts will apply to perennials)
- **Managing Water to Ensure Profitable Production into the Future**—Dr. Jim Owen, USDA-ARS Applied Technology Research Unit
- **Establishing and Maintaining Rootzone pH in Container Substrates**—Dr. James Altland, USDA-ARS Applied Technology Research Unit
- **Gearing Up for Spring: A Greenhouse, Nursery and Garden Center Checklist**—Dr. Beth Scheckelhoff, The Ohio State University

As you can see, this is a full day packed with lots of great educational content.

For more information, [GO HERE](#).

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AmericanHort Plug & Cutting Conference

I attended the last Plug & Cutting Conference when it was in Denver, Colorado, a couple years ago and let me tell you it was an excellent experience. If you propagate plants of any type (annual or perennial), I highly recommend you attend the upcoming conference. It's being held in Orlando, Florida, September 23-25, 2024.

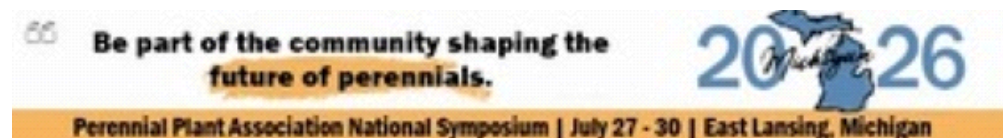
The Plug & Cutting Conference is chock-full of invaluable educational content, tours and networking opportunities. Here's where I usually list the educational sessions, but I'm not kidding when I say there are too many good sessions to list them all, and looking them over, I can't possibly narrow them down to just the best few. That's how good the program is.



Since I can't bring myself to specifically list any of them because I wouldn't want to leave some of them behind, I thought I'd provide a listing of the topics to give you an idea of how well-rounded and complete the program is:

- Off-shore production
- Tissue Culture
- Optimizing Root Development
- Managing Mist
- Lighting
- Nutrient Management
- Insects
- Diseases
- Troubleshooting Problems
- Automation
- Maximizing Profitability
- Work-Life Harmony

What a great lineup! I encourage you to check out the program ([Plug & Cutting Conference](#)) and recommend you attend.



Summer Planting—Now What?

Many perennial growers plant a portion of their inventory for spring sales in the summer or early fall before the spring they're going to be sold. There are several reasons why growers elect to produce perennials in this manner:

- It's traditionally how perennials were grown in the past
- To build a better plant—summer planting allows them to bulk up before being overwintered
- Summer planting allows growers to keep the labor they have busy during the summer months, and more importantly, they can reduce the workload in the late winter to early spring the following year

Apart from a few odds and ends, we've pretty much wrapped up our summer/fall planting. In

northern climates, I prefer to complete my potting by late August or early September to ensure there's adequate time and temperatures to allow the plants to become well rooted before colder temperatures set in. I also don't want to provide heat to crops in the fall—I prefer to allow enough time to do this on Mother Nature's dime.



Recently planted perennials at Opel Growers in Hudsonville, Michigan

From my perspective, the main goal this time of year is to build a good, strong root system. A well-established and healthy root system is essential for overwintering. Poor root mass and unhealthy root systems often lead to poor overwintering and losses. Having said this, it's important for growers to frequently check their root systems during the early fall.

If roots are unhealthy, being attacked by soil pathogens or sparse, I usually opt to apply broad-spectrum fungicide drenches to these crops. I also find it beneficial to apply fungicides to crops that appear variable (lacking uniformity) and to most crops started from bareroot. My go-to fall drenches usually consist of the fungicides [Empress](#) or the combination of [Segway O](#) + [OHP 6672](#).

The key is to apply them before small problems turn into big ones and to apply them early in the crop so there's enough time to rebuild root systems in the fall. It's usually not necessary to apply fungicide drenches to all summer-planted perennials.

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,



Paul Pilon

Editor-at-Large—*Perennial Pulse*

Director of Growing—Opel Growers

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