

“Sad Beige,” gardening and IGC outlook, BOI deferred and protecting monarchs



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2024

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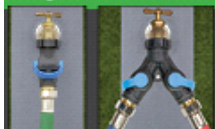
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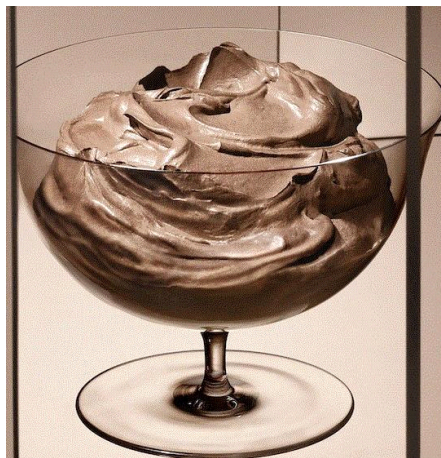
COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Pantone's Controversial Pick
We've Got Plants for That
Axiom's Gardening Outlook
How'd IGCs Do in 2024?
BOI Busted for Now
Small Business and AI
Monarchs on ESA?



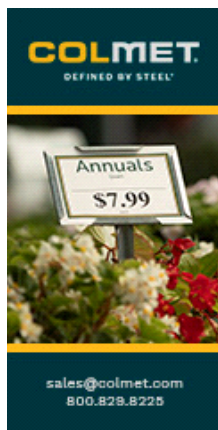
Pantone's Controversial Pick

A couple of weeks ago colleague Jen Polanz and I were discussing the imminent announcement of Pantone's 2025 Color of the Year. Half-jokingly I said I wouldn't be surprised if it was black (it's been that kind of year, ya know?). I was, however, completely surprised that it turned out to be brown. Or, I should say Mocha Mousse.



Pantone calls it "a warming brown imbued with an inherent richness that nurtures with its suggestion of the delectable quality of cacao, chocolate and coffee, appealing to our desire for comfort." Said Leatrice Eiseman, Executive Director at Pantone, of the color:

"Underpinned by our desire for every day pleasures, PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse expresses a level of thoughtful indulgence. Sophisticated and lush, yet at the same time an



unpretentious classic, PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse extends our perceptions of the browns from being humble and grounded to embrace aspirational and luxe.”

“Laurie Pressman, the organization’s VP, had this to say: *For Pantone Color of the Year 2025, we look to a mellow brown hue whose inherent richness and sensorial and comforting warmth extends further into our desire for comfort, and the indulgence of simple pleasures that we can gift and share with others.*”

Of all the years I have been following Pantone’s Color of the Year announcements, this is my least favorite. *By far.* But it doesn’t matter what I think about it, does it? It matters what the “gen pop” thinks. And it looks like there are lovers and haters of it out there. [HERE](#) is what the *New York Times*’ style editors think (gift article) and [HERE](#) is what folks on Reddit, who are calling it “Sad Beige,” have to say.

Speaking of beige, Formica Corporation sent out a newsletter shortly before Pantone’s announcement that listed the company’s [Beige Trends for 2025](#). Perhaps society is indeed in a “mellow brown” mood.

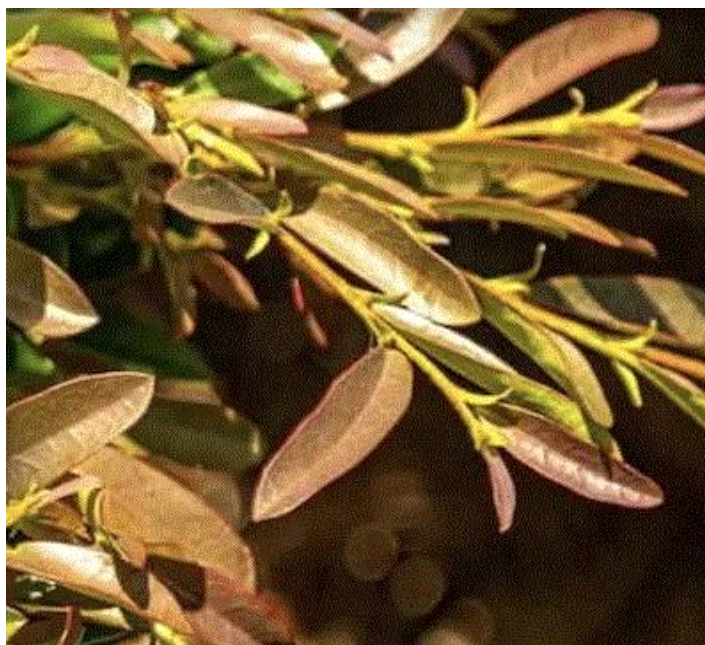


We’ve Got Plants for That

The good news is brown is the subtext of the green industry (unless you’re in hydroponics). From the soil and fiber pots our plants grow in to some with reddish-brown foliage, Mocha Mousse is deeply connected to our products.

The folks at Garden Media Group were the first to enter my inbox with products from their clients that matched Mocha Mousse. Some of those include:

Cast in Bronze Distylium from Southern Living Plant Collection





Jackson & Perkins Southern Magnolia (color under the leaves counts, too!)



Chocolate Anthurium from Costa Farms



Proven Winners also sent along some of their Mocha matches, including the four shown below:
Graceful Grasses Toffee Twist, Red Star Cordyline, Fun and Games Hopscotch Heucherella and
Sweet Caroline Red Hawk Ipomoea.



On Instagram, Dümmer Orange highlighted varieties that matched **Mocha Mousse** ...

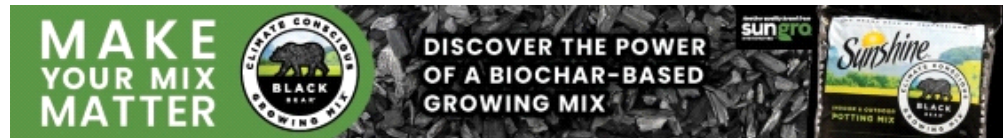


... as well as Pantone's complementary **Floral Pathways** color palette.



The colors in the Floral Pathways palette are colors I can get behind! Pantone, you should have led with Tendril.

If you have thoughts on Mocha Mousse or have varieties that match or pair well with it, drop me a line about it [HERE](#).



Axiom's Gardening Outlook

Also released last week was Axiom Marketing's 2025 Gardening Outlook study. The study found that interest in home gardening is still on the rise, and that is despite consumers' concerns about the economy. One of the big takeaways, according to Axiom's Mike Reiber, is that the respondents saying they spent more time gardening in 2024 dropped by nearly 11%. Also dropping was the percentage (9%) of folks who said they were planning to plant more and expand their gardens in the following year.



"These decreases indicate a potential leveling that merits further investigation," Mike said in a press release on the topic. "Despite these decreases, however, four in 10 respondent say they plan to spend more money on gardening in 2025 and plan to spend more time gardening in 2025."

Other take-homes from the Axiom report include:

- Gen Z (65%) and Gen Y (47%) were the top two segments reporting the greatest increases in additional time spent gardening in 2024. Gen Z (46%) and Gen Y (43%) were the top two segments that expect to spend more money on gardening in 2025. Gen Z (69%) and Gen Y (51%) were the top two segments that expect to spend more time gardening in 2025.
- The Home Depot was the top purchase source for garden supplies (32%) and garden plants (34%). IGCs were 20 percentage points lower than The Home Depot for garden supplies and 19 percentage points lower for garden plants.
- When asked where they find the highest quality garden plants, 30% of respondents named IGCs with 25% citing The Home Depot.
- Top 3 reasons for visiting IGCs included: more plant choices (30%), new plant varieties (17%) and help choosing the right plant (14%).
- 28% of respondents named websites as the most important place to learn about new

- plants and gardening supplies compared to 17% for IGCs and 12% for The Home Depot.
- 39% of respondents named YouTube as the most important social medium compared to 18% for Facebook and 13% for Instagram.

Interesting and also somewhat concerning. How will you act on this information? If you'd like to read the entire report, download it [HERE](#).

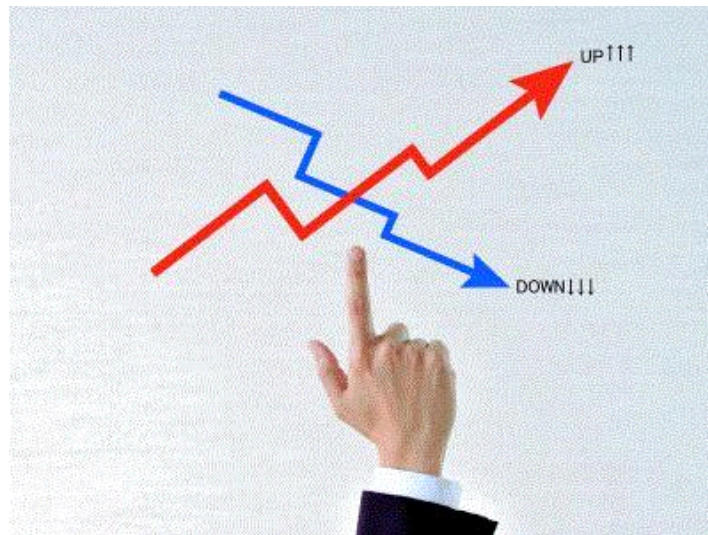
Rudbeckia 'Treasure Trove'
New to Proven Winners
Perennials for 2025-2026!



How'd IGCs Do in 2024?

Many of you receive Bossman Chris Beytes' *Acres Online* newsletter in addition to yours truly. Did you read his latest from December 6th? If not, it really is a must-read for anyone with an interest in selling horticultural products (which is probably 99% of you).

In [THIS ISSUE](#) Chris includes information on "How did IGCs do in 2024?" with information provided by The Garden Center Group's managing director Danny Summers. Danny provides a summary of 2024 as experienced by GCG members.



In a nutshell, 2024 sales were down. But, Danny says, he sees members are optimistic about 2025. What's there to be optimistic about? Danny explains, and gives a breakdown of his members' key numbers. [READ IT](#) and compare, and then join the Group so you're in on the numbers each and every week.



BOI Busted for Now

Green Profit columnist Bill McCurry, the person who originally clued me in (so I could clue you

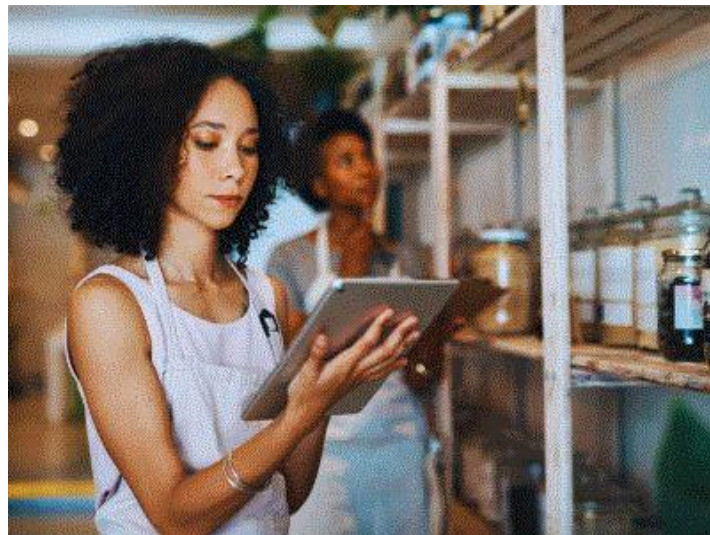
in) on the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network's (FinCEN) requirement to submit beneficial ownership information (BOI), clued me in *again* on the fact that this requirement has been blocked for the time being. The Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) mandated small businesses provide private information about each beneficial owner. Noncompliance would have resulted in steep fines and even jail time.

The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) **brought a lawsuit** against the U.S. Treasury concerning BOI enforcement, arguing the Corporate Transparency Act violated the First and Fourth Amendments. The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas issued a preliminary injunction blocking the U.S. Department of Treasury from enforcing the BOI reporting requirements. But note, the Department of Justice is appealing this decision. In other words, we'll still need to keep an eye on this situation. Stay tuned.



Small Business and AI

Ninety-one percent of small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) that use AI are reporting “significant revenue growth” and attribute the growth to that technology, according to **research from Salesforce**. Among SMBs that are growing, 83% are using AI, compared to just 55% of businesses with revenue declines. Also, upwards of 78% of growing SMBs plan to increase their investments in AI in the coming year.



How are SMBs implementing AI?

- **Marketing Campaign Optimization:** AI tools refine targeting and messaging for better conversion rates.
- **Content Generation:** Automated tools streamline the creation of marketing materials and emails.
- **Customer Recommendations:** AI delivers personalized product or service suggestions.
- **Natural Language Search:** Tools improve how businesses and customers access information.
- **Automated Chatbots:** These reduce response times and improve customer service scalability.

Now, maybe not all of the above are possible or even applicable to your operation. I think the key here is automating tasks to provide data, at which point a human can take charge.

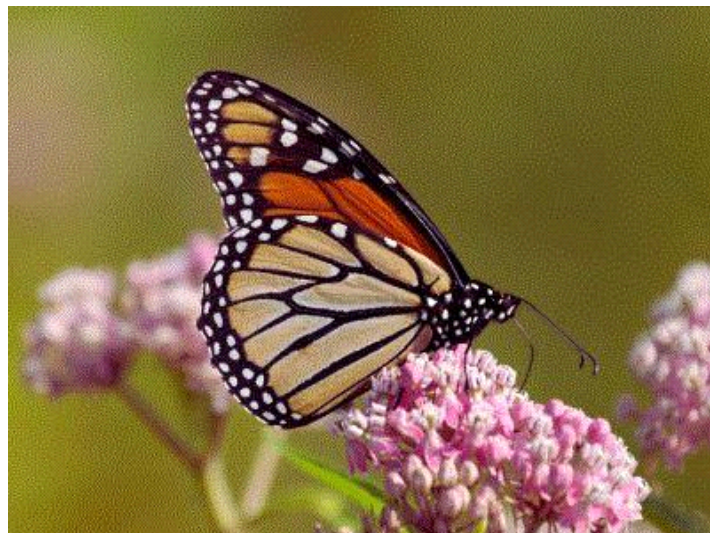
Have you implemented any AI into your business yet? If so, I'd love to know how. Drop me a line about it [HERE](#).



Monarchs on ESA?

The [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) is proposing that the monarch butterfly be named a protected species and is seeking public input to the proposal. Listing the monarch butterfly as threatened allows species-specific protections and other considerations for conservation under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The listing will be on the Federal Register and public comments will be accepted until March 12, 2025.

According to U.S. Fish and Wildlife: "Today, the eastern migratory population is estimated to have declined by approximately 80%. The western migratory population has declined by more than 95% since the 1980s, putting the western populations at greater than 99% chance of extinction by 2080. During this same period, the probability of extinction for eastern monarchs ranges from 56 to 74%."



Meanwhile, the service is encouraging everyone to be a part of this species' recovery—and that's where our industry can help. We can encourage customers at retail and landscape to plant a variety of milkweed species.

"Providing monarchs with enough milkweed and nectar plants, even in small areas, can help put them on the road to recovery," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Martha Williams. "Working together, we can help make this extraordinary species a legacy for our children and generations to come."

Find information about how to submit comments [HERE](#) by searching for docket number FWS-R3-ES-2024-0137.

Speaking of the ESA, a recent episode of NPR's Sunday Story podcast was all about how the ESA came to be. It might sound like a snooze to you, but it's actually a *fascinating* story. Listen to it [HERE](#).

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, etc, drop me a line if you'd like at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



Ellen Wells
Senior Editor
Green Profit

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