NRF on tariffs, stress buying, items from TPIE & Atlanta and reminders



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Green Profit's buZZ

Retail news from inside and outside the green industry

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

NRF on Tariffs
Stressed But Buying
The Problem Solvers
And the Fun Plants
Five from Atlanta
Cards and Cardinals
Webinar Re-Alert!
YRA/YGA Reminder
Green Career Week



NRF on Tariffs

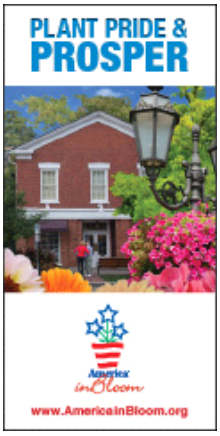
I know what I know, and I know I do not fully understand tariffs. That's why I am leaning heavily on the National Retail Federation and their take on tariffs as they relate to retailers.

The association representing retailers' interests released this statement about the Trump administration's tariffs imposed on Canada, Mexico and China:

"We support the Trump administration's goal of strengthening trade relationships and creating fair and favorable terms for America.

"But imposing steep tariffs on three of our closest trading partners is a serious step. We strongly encourage all parties to continue negotiating to find solutions that will strengthen trade relationships and avoid shifting the costs of shared policy failures onto the backs of American families, workers and small businesses.



"The retail industry is committed to working with President Trump and his administration to achieve his campaign promises, including strengthening the U.S. economy, extending his successful Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and ensuring that American families are protected from higher costs."



The 25% tariffs imposed on Canada and Mexico and the 10% tariffs (in addition to the current 25% tariffs) were announced February 1. Just days later, it was announced there would be a delay in implementing those tariffs imposed on Canada and Mexico. NRF's Executive Vice President of Government Relations David French, released this statement on the delay:

"The announcement that tariffs for Mexico and Canada have been delayed is good news. This will allow for diplomatic solutions to be pursued in order to help stop the illegal trafficking of fentanyl into the United States as well as receiving more help from Canada and Mexico to secure our northern and southern borders. It is important that these talks continue in earnest with tangible results so that our long history of cooperation with our North American neighbors continues, and that massive new tariffs are seen only as a measure of last resort. The retail industry remains committed to working with all parties to ensure continued economic security and opportunity for the consumers we serve every day."

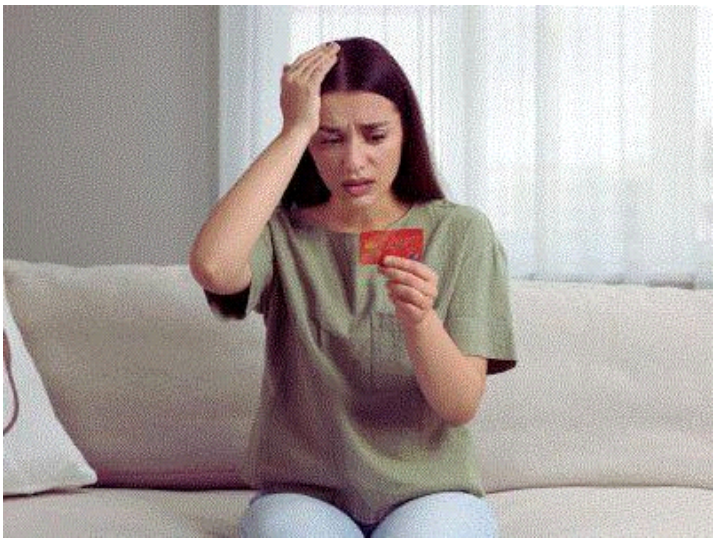
Okay, so as of today the tariffs for China are still on. How will this impact your goods and your business in the next 30 days? The next 90? Are you implementing any strategies in the case of all the tariffs happening at once? Drop me a note about it HERE.



Stressed But Buying Anyway

A recent edition of the Retail Brew newsletter revealed the results of the Consumer Stress Index prepared by the Kearney Consumer Institute. And the results are, well, humans are a complicated animal. I say that because the survey of 24,000 consumers across 12 countries found that consumers are concerned about prices but are still buying stuff anyway. As Retail Brew put it, "Consumer behavior can be more accurately measured using consumers' personal situations rather than their feelings about the economy."

The Index found that 85% of consumers said they feel the impact of prices at the grocery level, but more than three-quarters of them said affording food "is generally not a concern or occasionally concerning."



The report noted that while some may be facing sticker shock, they'll likely get used to elevated pricing and stop thinking prices should be much lower than they are. That reminds me of the cartoon of a lobster sitting in a pot with the water slowly increasing, and it says, "This is just the perfect temperature."

Katie Thomas, the lead on the Kearney Consumer Index, stated that consumers are working to get the most bang for their buck for the items they "need" and focusing more on the "wants," like dining or recreation. Here's the question for you—can you appeal to both customer sets shopping for your products? What do they "need" from you and can you help them feel they are getting the most bang for their buck while also offering stuff they really "want," i.e. items they feel they can splurge on?



The Problem Solvers

I'm flipping through my notebook and scrolling through my camera pics, and I can tell you that I will be discussing faves from last month's Tropical Plant International Expo for a while. I'll dose them out a few at a time.

I have four new ones for you this week, none of which won the TPIE nor Cool Product Awards. These are my own highlights of the show. Two solve some sort of consumer problem, and two are some fun plants.

Starting with the consumer problem solvers, let's discuss the Cowbell Self-Watering Kit from Cowbell Plant Co. If you're gone for a long time and those inverted water bottles just do not provide enough water for your precious houseplants, the Cowbell Self-Watering Kit comes to the rescue. Invented by an MIT grad (and former business banker), the device is a lot different from the upside-down wine bottle options that release a slow but constant drip. Those water plants maybe up to 10 days. The Cowbell will water up to 35 days (depending on the plant) thanks to its patented pressure regulation technology. And while it looks like a beautiful glass bottle, it's actually a BPA-free, luxury PET sourced from Japan. Available in two sizes—750ml and 250ml.



Sol Biotics from Sol Soils is for the folks who are busy, forgetful or who struggle to understand plant and soil nutrition. They have designed a limited set of complementary nutrition and amendment products to make caring for plants more convenient and worry free. Sol Biotics contains four different products that you apply at regular intervals: The bi-monthly Repot Recovery to help de-stress plants; the alternating bi-monthly Necessary Nutrients to provide macronutrients and beneficial microbes; the Monthly Myco with beneficial fungi and bacteria for a robust root system; and the quarterly Soil Salvation to refresh soils on a seasonal basis.





And the Fun Plants

Continued from above.

Thanks to consistently good finds at the Biostok Foliage booth, I knew they'd have something worthy to write about. I found it in the form of a new sansevieria called Golden Wendy.



Sansevieria Hahnii Golden Wendy is a compact variety that features wide yellow stripes along its green, strap-like leaves. And the coolest part is its whorled rosette form. Its habit is way more whorled than other bird's nest types out there. If you can somehow grow this on a wall, do it! It's a sansevieria for general plant lovers and collectors alike. (Thanks for the pic, Will Heeman!)

Speaking of collectors, the folks at Aroid Greenhouses had lots of collectible plants, but let's talk about their non-aroid items, which may get overlooked.



I believe it's for sister Paula Amezquita that, as my notes indicate, "hoyas are her jam." I was toured through the booth's hoya collection with the enthusiasm of someone who *loves, loves, loves* all her little hoya babies, saying things like "Look at this one's leaves! And the hairy petals on this one!" I hadn't realized hoya leaves could be so lovely (even though I do have a variegated one myself).



I knew the "average Joe" hoya had a lovely scent, but I had no idea both the flower and fragrance could vary so much from variety to variety. The one above is Hoya Noona, and its delicate buttercup-yellow flower emits the most lovely butterscotch fragrance. Amazing!

I could (and maybe I should?) do a whole write-up on their hoyas at some point. If I do, you'll see it in my *Tropical Topics* newsletter sometime later this year.

Five from Atlanta

Remember colleague Jen Polanz's trip to the Atlanta Market? Well, what she included in buZZ! *last was just the tip of the iceberg. She has five more items for this week.*

Lighting has consistently been near the top of homeowners' outdoor décor wants, and Alfresco Home is meeting the moment with beautiful and practical outdoor lighting options. They are all made for outdoors with LED lights that are rechargeable (the same way you charge your phone), and they come with a remote control. Some on display were tabletop options, while others were larger for patios and porches.



Sometimes just wandering the showrooms yields dividends, like when I stopped into Mary Lake-Thompson Ltd. based on the apron that caught my eye from the hallway. "To plant a garden is to dream of tomorrow," is the theme, and there are aprons, multiple types of towels and more. And this isn't the only garden theme they offer. One other tidbit, the aprons (and anything else) can be customized to include a company name.



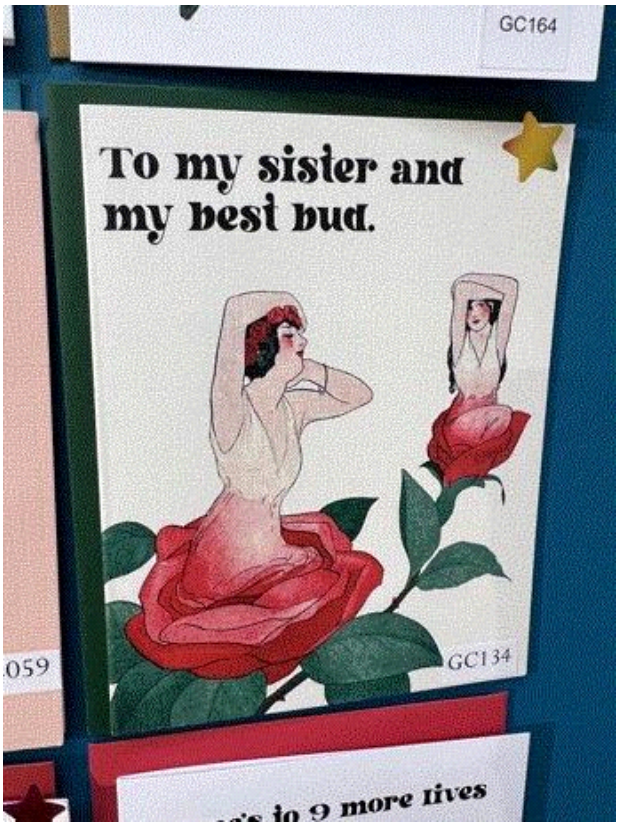
Some people … ahem … love their college or pro team so much they want to put their logo on everything. Flags, signs, even bird feeders. That's right, Fan Creations has your sports-crazy customers covered with birdhouses and bird feeders with logos from NFL, MLB, NHL, MLS and more than 100 colleges. The only teams they don't have are NBA (I forgot to ask why!). All are manufactured and printed in the USA.



Cards and Cardinals

Continued from above.

I am always in the mood for sassy greeting cards, and the ones from Emma Lewis at The Twentieth Art fit the bill. Not only are they witty and fun, but they are made from art deco prints she already owns as the proprietor of Rare Form, an art shop on the North Side of Chicago. These images are over 100 years old and modernized for the cards. Some are appropriate for museum shops and some are, well, Not Safe for Work (NSFW). You know your customer best.



One of the most eye-catching displays in The Gardens featured disco balls and Elvis' Burning Love blaring through the speakers. The product? Disco Inferno bird seed from Mr. Bird, a blend featuring medium chip sunflower, safflower, peanuts, cranberries, raisins, mealworms and gelatin, with hot pepper spice. I spoke to owner Birch Smith, who said it's six times more potent than typical jalapeno-based mixes, and twice as spicy as their current Flaming Hot Feast bird seed. It's available in a bell shape, as well as in 2- and 4-lb. bags, small and large cake style and small and large cylinder shape. Those last two go with the cylinder feeders Mr. Bird is known for. Of course, spicy seed keeps away critters like squirrels, deer, skunks, rabbits and even bears!



Thanks for the news about these items, JP! I love that outdoor lamp and the Disco Inferno packaging is fabulous!

Webinar Re-Alert!

Speaking of retail, we hosted our January webinar on how the Square system can help encourage repeat business and create loyal customers, all of which should and hopefully will increase your revenue. The webinar, sponsored by Square, included Square's Katie Miller and Thomas Doumalin and *Green Profit's* own Amanda Thomsen, who uses Square at her own store, Aster Gardens.

Yes, the webinar was held back in January BUT luckily all of our webinars are archived for your convenience. And it's free! View the archived version HERE as you prep yourself for the upcoming spring sales season.

Young Retailer/Grower Reminder

Folks, we have less than a month until the deadline for Young Retailer and Young Grower nominations. As you know *Green Profit* and *GrowerTalk*s are awarding young (35 and under—yes, that's "young") garden retailers and growers who have a passion for what they do and are excellent at it, too.

If you need a refresher of the YRA and YGA basics, they are as follows:

- We choose three finalists for each award, and each writes an essay for the June issue of *Green Profit* and *GrowerTalks* based on a topic selected by our editors.
- All six finalists are invited to attend Cultivate'25 in Columbus in July and attend dinner with editors, judges and sponsors before the awards ceremony.

- The winners for each award are announced at the Cultivate'25 Unplugged event for young professionals.
- The two winners will be featured on the covers of the September issue of *Green Profit* and *GrowerTalks* and will be a judge for next year's award.

The deadline is coming up fast—March 1! It doesn't take long to fill out the forms, but don't leave it to the last minute, either. Nominate an employee, a colleague, a friend/family member—or even yourself! Here are the nomination forms for Young Retailer and Young Grower.

Green Career Week

Speaking of young people and March, get ready to participate in Seed Your Future's Green Career Week March 3-7. This is a nationwide initiative to connect students with careers in what you've dedicated your lives to, as well—horticulture! And with sustainable-focused jobs and STEM careers gaining steam, it's more important than ever to put the horticulture industry out there as a viable, sustaining and fulfilling option.



"Horticulture lies at the intersection of science, art, and sustainability," said Jazmin Albarran, executive director of Seed Your Future, in a press release. "Through Green Career Week, we aim to spark curiosity and passion in young people, showing them how green careers empower them to make a lasting impact on the world."

Seed Your Future offers free resources to help participants plan and execute Green Career Week activities, including lesson plans, career guides and promotional materials. Participating businesses, organizations and educational institutions can take part in activities such as hands-on demos, facility tours, mentoring sessions and others that will highlight horticultural career paths.

What can you do to grow the next generation of hort industry members? Plenty! Learn more about Green Career Week, access resources, or get involved by visiting 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-at-Large
Green Profit

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