

Easter Scores; Aris Sells; CAST Dates Change



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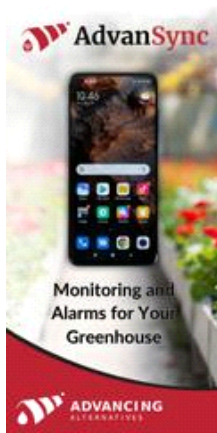
News and Commentary from GrowerTalks Magazine

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Easter: 10 or 7?
- Explaining those 7s
- More comments
Aris sells Green Leaf GH
Live Stream: Smarter Growing
CAST moves up a day
Congrats to Al, Les
Celebrate Women in Hort
Finally ...



How was Easter? "10" and "7" were most popular answers

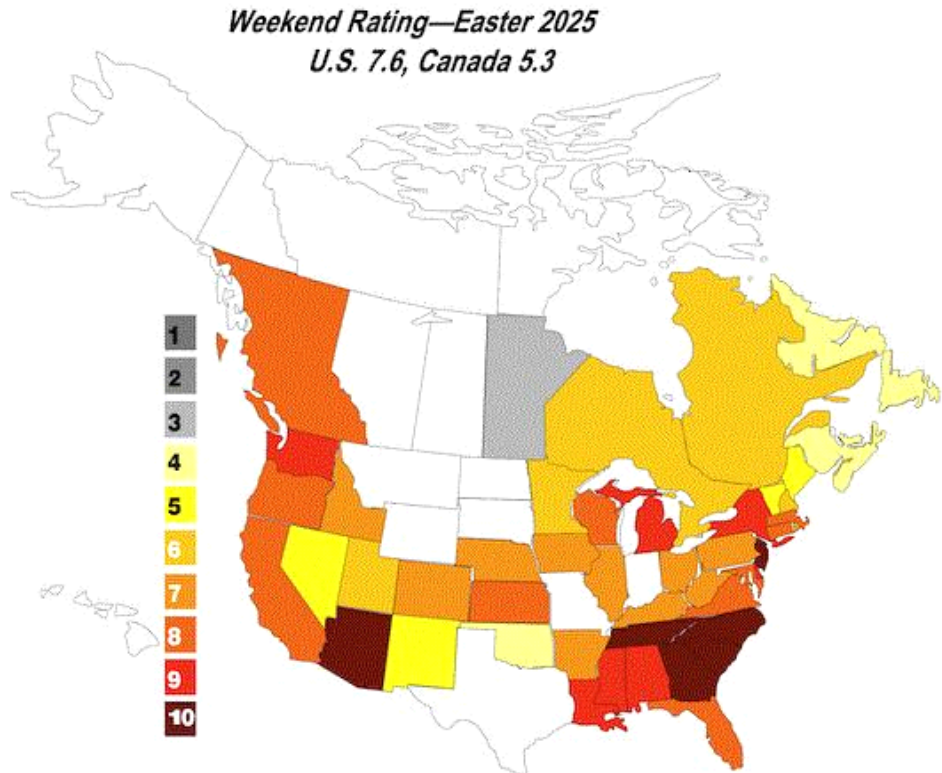


Although the average score in the U.S. worked out closer to 7 than 10, unfortunately—7.6 to be exact—meaning Easter weekend was a bit “blah” for a majority of you. It had so much potential, and the Friday before Easter was the strongest day of the weekend for many, but poor weather, especially on the big day itself, squashed any hope of setting records.

Canada, meanwhile, struggled to break free of winter's icy grasp, scoring a below-average 5.7. Although British Columbia did better, at 8.3 for the province, despite a downturn in the weather for Sunday.

So again, **7.6 in the U.S.** and **5.7 in Canada.** The 11-year average for this weekend (not Easter overall) is 7.3 in the U.S. and 6.5 in Canada.

Here's the map:

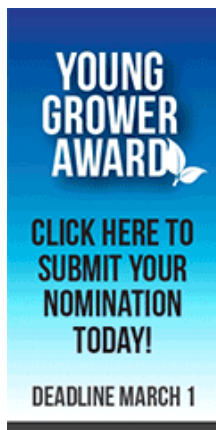


That's based on 93 scores from 40 states and eight provinces.

Interestingly, when Easter has fallen on this weekend, the score has been 7.4/6.2 (2012) and 7.4/6.8 (2019). So in the U.S. we did slightly better than previous Easters at this same time. The best-ever for this weekend were the pandemic years of 2020 (7.8/8.2) and 2021 (7.7/8.5). Oh, and 2016, which for some reason excelled at 8.1/8.0. I remove the pandemic-year scores, the average falls to 7.2/6.1.

Which doesn't help you Canadians very much, does it? Like you tell me, winter just won't let go! But you had it equally bad in 2015 (5.3) and even worse in 2017 (5.1) and 2022 (4.3), so don't lose heart—spring has to arrive sometime ... right?

Not that a quarter of you didn't have a perfect or near-perfect weekend! Eighteen of you (19%) scored it a 10. Another seven scored it 9. Meaning, yet again, when the weather cooperates, customers are shopping!



Thankfully, I got just a single 1 (actually a 0, which I rounded up) from Oklahoma.

Grow What Sells

The 2026 Proven Winners® new introductions and National Plants of the Year are the high-demand varieties that drive traffic and boost sales.



Explaining those 7s

I did a count and you actually sent in more 10s (18) than any other score. But 7 was the second-most popular score, with 15 of you rating it a number that I take to mean, “not bad, but it could have been better.” Here are seven comments about 7:

Illinois (7). “Good week with nice sales, good spending per customer. We are up against an amazing April last year so hard to stay in line with that. Saturday, we had a great day, but Sunday we got a rainy day with not the sales we expected. Weather is going to get really nice, so it is about time to get a weekend we can give a 10.”—*JP, Countryside Flower Shop*

Colorado (7). “Snow on Friday knocked us down from a very good weekend.”—*Gene Pielin, Gully Greenhouse*

Kentucky (7). “A GREAT Friday, lackluster Saturday. Wet and cold, down to 26F Thursday, really took thunder out of veggies and greenhouse materials Friday. Wet and cold wind Saturday, with storms north of us, but just cold and steady wind here. Still seeing good sales of fruit trees, brambles, berries. Poor sales of ornamental trees. Afraid it’s a sign of what’s awaiting us this spring.”—*Jesse Shelton, Shelton’s Greenhouses*

Illinois (7). “Good weather and early enthusiasm made for a pretty Saturday since it is still early. We were closed Sunday for the holiday.”—*Liz Leider, Leider Greenhouses & Garden Center*

Ontario (7). “Gut feeling was blah, but when comparing numbers with weekend of Week 16 last year, the bit of sales we had was up! We were closed on Good Friday and are always closed Sunday. It remains relentlessly cold, with an occasional sunny day. Once it warms up, we expect pent-up demand!”—*Joanna Steckle, Steckle’s Produce & Flowers*

Alabama (7). “Good, not great. Getting warm. Up for the week, but Saturday was not great. Weird year. Average sale down for sure.”—*John David Boone, Dothan Nurseries*

Ontario (7). “Still on the cooler side with lots of rain.”—*Carlos Dias, Bradford Greenhouses*



More comments, great and terrible

If you wanted to be doing business anywhere this past weekend, it was North Carolina, which scored four 10s and a 9. Interestingly, New York was also stellar, with two 10s, an 8 and a 7.2. Tennessee was two 10s and an 8.5. And Alabama was two 10s and a 7.

North Carolina (10). “Moon, calendar, weather and holiday weekend all aligned to make it ‘better than good.’”—*Sam Franklin, Franklin Brothers Nursery and Greenhouses*

New York (10). “For comparison, I looked all the way back to 2022 and we surpassed all

weekends. Traffic and average sale are all up thanks to the first nice spring weekend. Sales of trees and shrubs were especially strong and (a bit of a surprise). Many purchased our planting services.”—*Sig Feile, Atlantic Nursery*

Ohio (10). “I had to keep looking at the calendar to make sure it was Good Friday and not Mother’s Day week! Record sales on both Friday and Saturday, and those are my first two days open for the season. If I could give a score of 110, I would!”—*Heather Pariso, The Garden Gurl*

Virginia (10). “Mother Nature cooperated this time and we saw incredible sales Friday and Saturday. We will take more like this one!”—*Mark Landa, Boulevard Flower Gardens*

North Carolina (9). “The weather was nice to us and we had a great Friday and Saturday weekend (closed Sunday for Easter). Even being closed, we saw a 9% increase over the same weekend last year. Friday was actually larger than Saturday. Folks were out for the holiday and getting a jump start on the beautiful weekend.”—*Jake Scott, Piedmont Feed & Garden Center*

Oregon (9). “Gardeners spending with apparent disregard for their 401(k)s.”—*Ed Blatter, Cornell Farm*

British Columbia (9). “Well, started as a 10 and then Sunday weather changed it to a 9.”—*John Derrick, Elk Lake Garden Centre*

Washington (8.5). “A solid weekend with good foot traffic, but with chilly temperatures, a lot of the people shopping were just looking and making their game plan at this point, with smaller purchases. Still, we had a good weekend with strong sales—we’re just waiting for the weather to warm up and the flood gates to really open!”—*David Vos, Vander Giessen Nursery*

British Columbia (7.5). “Friday was fantastic. Weather was great. If the whole weekend was like Friday it would have been a 10. BUT by Sunday it was cold. And wet. Basically miserable and that sure keeps the customers away.”—*Pamela Pilling, Canadian Tire*

Minnesota (6). “Friday was pretty good, about on par with last year. Saturday was about half of what we did last year in sales. We got hit with some bitter cold wind, and with the Easter weekend I don’t think anyone was thinking of doing anything in their garden. Definitely one of the slower starts we have had in recent years, but some good weather is coming and we hope to see some excellent sales days ahead.”—*Jay Holasek, Fred Holasek & Son Greenhouse*

Nevada (5). “Easter distractions slowed business transactions despite positive weather and early spring momentum.”—*Bruce Gescheider, Moana Nursery*

New Mexico (5). “Cold, windy, dusty Saturday. Not a fun day!”—*Gary Guzman, Guzman’s Greenhouse*

Ohio (4). “It has been cool and rainy. April off 50% compared to last year.”—*Brian Sabo, Sabo’s Nursery*

Manitoba/NW Ontario (3). “I’ve been visiting customers on the western side of Manitoba and believe it or not it’s snowing like crazy in some parts of the province. The weather is keeping traffic slow, but no denying it’s starting to build.”—*Duayne Friesen, Ball Superior*



Aris sells Green Leaf Plants’ facility

Aris Horticulture has announced the sale of its Lancaster, Pennsylvania, [Green Leaf Plants](#) perennial liner production facility to a company called Frankarl (aka [FLO Canada](#)), based in

Quebec, but doing considerable business in the U.S. The purchase of the Green Leaf greenhouses and real estate “strengthens its U.S. operations; enables local production in the areas already being served; provides a base for future expansion; reduces costs; supports vertical integration; and meets growing market demand,” said a letter from Aris President and CEO Scott Schaefer, who added that Frankarl was attracted to the Lancaster community due to its experienced workforce and market access.



Now, while Aris is selling the greenhouses and land, they are NOT selling the Green Leaf perennial line or business. However, Aris will discontinue future production and sales of their perennials liners and unrooted cuttings for shipping after Week 40.

Why the decision to sell?

“Continuing shifts in product forms to lower-cost unrooted and grower self-propagation continues to diminish growth in demand for perennial liners,” explained Scott in the letter to stakeholders.

However, don’t get the idea Aris is getting out of perennials—they say they expect to continue the Green Leaf Plants perennials line at their Alva, Florida, location—albeit a “limited perennial liner and prefinished product assortment”—with deliveries starting in October.

And they'll continue producing their tropical plant line, including Tradewinds Hibiscus, at their Keepsake Plants greenhouses in Alva.

Not all plants can be propagated without authorized permission.



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Live Stream: Smarter, More Sustainable & Cost-Effective Growing

Sign up **NOW** for a Thursday, May 1 live stream titled:

Greenhouse Trends 2025: Smarter, More Sustainable & Cost-Effective Growing

The controlled-environment agriculture world (and floriculture, too!) is evolving rapidly, and 2025 is shaping up to be a pivotal year for greenhouse growers. Rising energy costs, climate change and

the push for sustainable practices are driving innovation in greenhouse operations.

Which is why you need to join me with my special guest expert Felix Chassouant of Harnois Greenhouses for an in-depth live stream where he'll explore the key trends shaping the future of greenhouses in general and controlled-environment agriculture specifically. Topics Felix will cover include:

- Smarter resource management with renewable energy, heat recovery and water-saving solutions
- The rise of soilless growing systems
- The transition from open-field farming to protected culture with high tunnels

You'll also learn how growers are looking at lower-tech high tunnels, optimizing costs, looking for ways to have more predictability and making greenhouses more autonomous.

Don't miss this opportunity to stay ahead of the curve in sustainable, high-performance agriculture! **SIGN UP** today!



CAST dates for 2026—a slight twist

While CAST (the California Spring Trials) just concluded about a month ago, the dates for the 2026 event have been decided by the powers that be (the main participating breeding companies, I think). And the consensus is to move the dates up by just one day: instead of Wednesday through Saturday, it'll be Tuesday through Friday—specifically March 24-27, 2026. I believe most trial hosts said those were the days that got the most traffic. Plus, who wants to stay open Saturday for a few stragglers (namely, me and my fellow editors) if you don't have to?

Meaning, as someone who's finished up on Saturday for years, I now have to adjust my travel plans ...



Congrats to Al and Les at Dramm

A couple of noteworthy changes at DRAMMwater, Dramm's commercial water management division. Al Zylstra, who was instrumental in building DRAMMwater starting in 2010, will be retiring in July. Water will figure heavily into his retirement—both on his boat and doing some consultation as DRAMMwater Emeritus Manager.

Taking Al's place will be Les Evans. Les first joined Dramm in 2009 after more than a decade working with several other industry-leading companies. As Dramm's first Northeastern U.S. Technical Representative, Les helped build that territory and the company's current Commercial Products sales structure. After a brief stint away with a waste-management startup, Les returned to work on the DRAMMwater team. Covering a range of responsibilities from regional sales to managing system engineering, Les has helped establish DRAMMwater as a leader in complete water management for the horticultural industry.

Congrats to both gentlemen!



Celebrate women in hort May 25-31

Having 88 years of *GrowerTalks* at one's disposal is a fascinating exercise in American horticultural history. The war years of '41-'45 are especially interesting because all the young men left the greenhouses to cross the oceans to fight alongside our allies, leaving the ladies to stoke the boilers ... and prove themselves more than up to the task, as that "Greatest Generation" of greenhouse growers learned.

Which is why it makes complete sense that Garden Media Group has announced the Sixth Annual Women in Horticulture Week, May 25–31, 2025. This national campaign "celebrates the trailblazers, mentors and innovators reshaping the green industry—and inspires the next generation" of women in horticulture.

In case you hadn't noticed, there's been a rise of female entrepreneurs, executives and decision-makers, with women-owned businesses accounting for nearly 40% of all U.S. businesses, generating \$2.7 trillion in revenue annually. Some cleverly call it the "she-economy."



Woman in horticulture: Irma Andersson-Kottö (1895–1985), Swedish botanist and a pioneer in fern genetics.

Katie Dubow, president of the women-led Garden Media Group, which was founded by her mother, Suzi McCoy, said, "As we enter the she-economy, it's time for the green industry to embrace this momentum, support women leaders and create more opportunities for female entrepreneurs in horticulture."

And like a good marketer, Katie offers stats to back up her point:

- Women-owned businesses in the U.S. have grown by 114% over the past 20 years, outpacing overall business growth
- Female-founded startups receive only 2% of venture capital funding—yet they generate twice the revenue per dollar invested compared to male-founded companies
- By 2030, women are expected to control two-thirds of all U.S. wealth, shifting the economic balance and increasing investment in industries focused on sustainability and wellness—including horticulture

Learn how you can celebrate and encourage women in horticulture [HERE](#).



Finally ...

Where am I off to this time? I'm up in Eastern Michigan at Four Star Greenhouses for a special Proven Winners showing of their 2026 annuals, perennials and shrubs. Editor Jen Zurko and Publisher Paul Black will be with me, and we are sure to shoot some compelling video of the festivities to share with you here and on social media.



Last year's preview ... what will this year have in store?

I've been given no sneak peek at their offerings, so I'll be as surprised as you! I only know that Proven Winners has set their own bar pretty high, so it's bound to be good stuff. Will anything be worthy of "Shark Tank," as Bill Calkins asked us about CAST [in our recent PODCAST](#)? We will see!

Feel free to email me at beytes@growertalks.com if you have ideas, comments or questions.

See you next time!



Chris Beytes

Editor-in-Chief

GrowerTalks and Green Profit

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