

Mother's Day Rocked! Plus Grok, Darwin and a Glowing Mum



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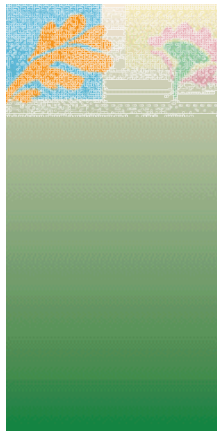
News and Commentary from GrowerTalks Magazine

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Mother's Day: Almost best!
- It could have been even better
- Where it was extra good
- Your comments
Did Grok enlighten you?
Darwin Perennials Day June 18
Finally ...

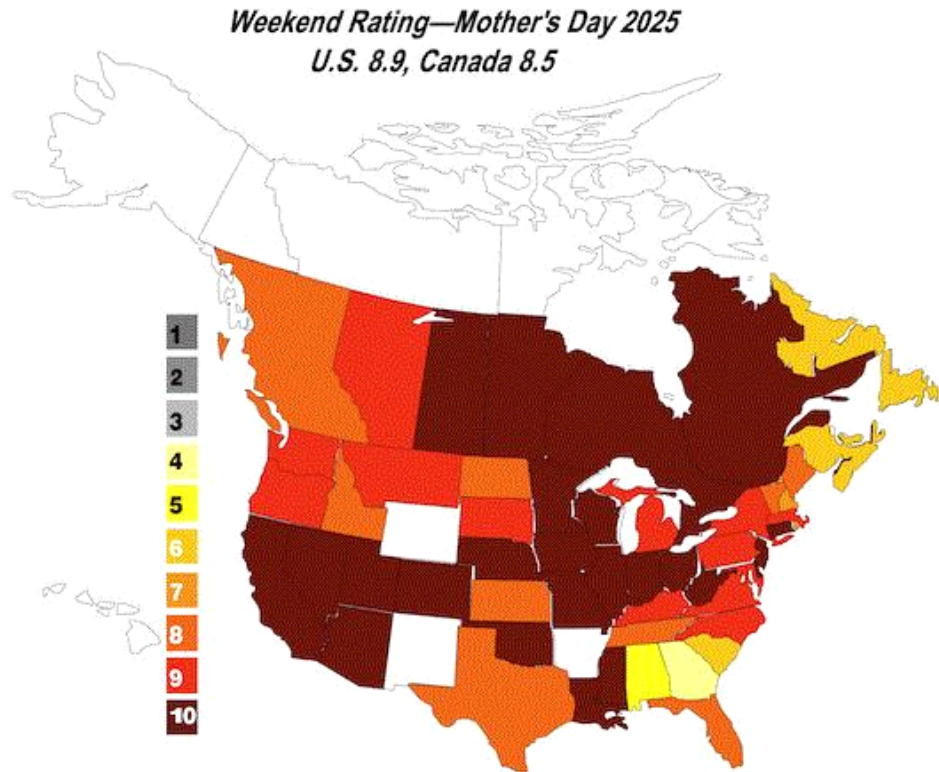


How was Mother's Day? Best ever in the U.S.! (Except for two)



I was warned over the weekend that I should be seeing a lot of 10s for Mother's Day. And when I started opening your email replies to me, I quickly realized my informant was right: 83 perfect 10s out of 151 scores (55%) to give Mother's Day 2025 a score of **8.9 in the U.S.** and **8.5 in Canada.** Even some years with higher scores had fewer perfect 10s.

Here's the map:

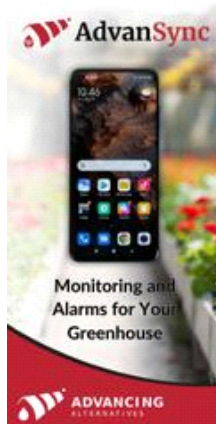
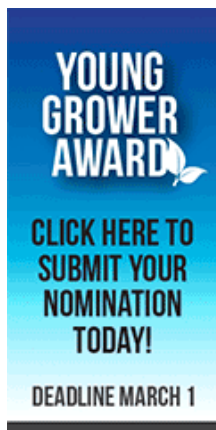


That's based on 151 scores from 45 states and 10 provinces. The average for the second weekend of May is 8.2 in the U.S. and 8.6 in Canada.

Here are the regional averages:

Mountain	10
West	9.9
Midwest	9.8
East	9.4
Plains	8.9
Northwest	8.9
South	8.0
New England	8.0





Great ... but it could have been even greater!

As I said, it was the best Mother's Day Weekend ever* in the U.S. except for two other Mother's Day Weekends: 2021 (9.4/9.0) and 2023 (9.1/9.8). And only for two other Mother's Days have you sent this high a percentage of perfect 10s in 2020 with 61% and 2023, also with 61%).

And many of you broke records! Nineteen of you, in fact. And 156 of you scored it 10-plus.

But the heck of it is, if the weather had cooperated in a couple spots, it could have been better! New England was sad, with scores as low as 4 in Vermont, 5 in New Hampshire and 6 in Maine, due to rainy, windy, raw conditions on Saturday. Sunday was nice, which helped the New England average to 8.0, but it was still the lowest-scoring region in the country.

The South, too, averaged "just" 8.0, due to rain. Georgia was the low state on the totem pole, with scores of 5, 2 and 5 for an average of 4.0. And Alabama sent in 5, 4 and 7 to average 5.3.

The Pacific Northwest, at an 8.8 average, didn't contribute quite as much as it could have, either. Not bad, but just a few too many 8s.

**Well, since 2012, when I started keeping track.*



Where it was extra good

Scanning the spreadsheet, my former home state of Illinois stands out, with nine perfect 10s. I don't know if I even saw that during the pandemic! Ohio was almost as good, with six 10s, a 9.5 and two 9s for an average of 9.7. California scored three 10s and a 9 (9.8), and Minnesota scored four 10s and a 9 (9.8). Wisconsin had four 10s and a 9 (9.8). Oklahoma, New Jersey and Indiana each scored two perfect 10s.

Canada was stellar across Quebec, Ontario, the Plains and Rockies, scoring nothing but 9s and 10s in those provinces (well, except for one 7 from Alberta) for an average of 9.6. British Columbia, however, was slightly below average, with scores of 7, 9, 8, 8 and 10 for an average of 8.4. It was the four Atlantic provinces at 6.0 that hurt you the most. If I drop them from my spreadsheet, Canada jumps to 9.4. But I call 'em as my contributors on the ground report 'em! I guess winter is just hanging on out there in and around the Maritimes.

They've got their big three-day Victoria Day holiday coming up this weekend, so expect big things from Canada ... and let's hope the Atlantic region warms up! And how about a report from Canadian Tire up in Yukon and Nunavut?!



Your comments

Here's a sampling of the positive comments about Mother's Day. It's immensely gratifying to see all your hard work growing, delivering, displaying and staffing pay off.

Washington (10 x 10). "Finally good weather! And the only thing we needed was a bigger parking lot. People were in a great mood—staff, customers and even me. Was huge, and such a relief knowing that folks were out there waiting for the weather to get them going."—*Kathy Wheaton, Kathy's Corner*

Illinois (10+). "Broke all sales records this weekend! Really our first nice, dry weekend this year, so the combination of that and being Mother's Day Weekend led to stellar sales."—*Ted Ahner, Ahner Florist & Greenhouse*

Missouri, Illinois (10). "Wow, Wow, Wow! Thank goodness we have finally had a dry weekend. Our sales definitely reflected the weather. Everyone was so ready to plant and we were finally able to do so. Hoping for a repeat this weekend."—*Amy Morris, N.G. Heimos Greenhouses*

Wisconsin (10). "The weather couldn't have been better. We couldn't keep up restocking the greenhouse. It took us all day Monday to get somewhat caught up."—*Chris Williams, K&W Greenery*

Ohio (10). "After a slow April, a dismal one and a half weeks of rain, finally a perfect weather weekend! A new record high!"—*Jonathan Gingerich, Yonie's Greenhaus*

Washington (8). "By any normal standard, we had a solid weekend and very good sales. My score is tainted by last year's high-water mark in my mind, though—last year we were recovering from an abnormally cold winter that killed a lot of typically hardy plants, so customers were shopping last spring for many more shrubs and trees than this year. Since this year's winter was much more mild, we didn't see those bigger-ticket purchases again this year, which brought our sales totals down relative to last year. We did, however, have a very strong showing on annuals and hanging basket purchases—two of our standard categories for Mother's Day—so all in all, it was a very good weekend!"—*David Vos, Vander Giessen Nursery*

Ontario (10 +++). "Finally had a weekend that was warm and the sun was out. Sales were the equivalent of the May long weekend. Can't wait to see what this week brings!"—*Denise Huck, Colour Paradise Greenhouses*

Virginia (9). "We had ideal weather and were very happy to set a new Mother's Day Saturday revenue record. What kept it from being a 10 was the fact that customer transaction count was essentially flat and we are still behind last year for customer transactions YTD."—*Duane Weaver, Milmont Greenhouses*

Oregon (10). "Fantastic weather, record sales the last two weeks! We beat 2021 on piece count, which had previously been the best year ever."—*Renee Phelps, Spring Creek Garden*

Wisconsin (10). "Perfect weather here in Sheboygan! All-time record day on Saturday and best-ever Sunday. Also, two 5-star Google reviews over the weekend, as well as a local blogger who writes Facebook reviews (positive and critical) was here on Saturday and gave us rave reviews. Overall great weekend!"—*Kris Shepard, Caan Floral*

Minnesota (9). "Strong sales both Friday and Saturday, favorable weather, did not shatter any records, but we will always take strong and steady sales. The hope is that we can continue to have good sales numbers through the next three weekends and that we don't see a drop off post-Mother's Day like we did last year."—*Jay Holasek, Fred Holasek and Son Greenhouse*

Colorado (10). "I hesitate giving out 10s, but when you have a record weekend and the baskets and pots are flying out, why not? We're tired, but happy, and the season has just started. And we're packed again today! Hopefully, the weather holds because the customers are ready to plant."—*Gene Pielin, Gulley Greenhouse & Garden Center*

Montana (10). "We had record sales both wholesale and retail. Our weather was perfect."—*Bob Hitzeroth, High Country Growers*

Ontario (10+++). "Warm and sunny—we had the Mother's Day crowd plus the gardener crowd. I suspect we could've sold potted dandelions if we had had the foresight to grow them."—*Joanna Steckle, Steckle's Produce & Flowers*

North Carolina (10+). “Perfect weather. Low of 62F and high of 74F, partly sunny. Second-biggest day ever for sales dollars and biggest day ever for number of customers! So far for 2025 we have had five days in the top 10 for sales. Our retail expansion is paying off.”—Judy Mitchell, Mitchell’s Nursery & Greenhouse



Did Grok enlighten you about tariffs?

Last time, I provided some “tariff tips” you might say from the AI chatbot Grok, and I asked if what Grok had produced was in any way useful to you or just common sense stuff you already had figured out. I got a couple of replies. This one is from Dick Chase, West Shore Farm, Alburgh, Vermont:

We haven't raised prices at our Vermont farm, as all of our supplies (plugs, growing media, containers) were brought in from Canada before tariffs were in place. We're also thinking that this is not a year to raise prices, as everything else eats into our customers' discretionary income (shopped for groceries lately?). But we will react quickly if tariffs dip into our margins for next year! So, no, your AI bot didn't enlighten us much at all.

And here are some thoughts from *Green Profit* business columnist Bill McCurry:

As you so capably said, nobody (including Trump) knows how this trade war will settle out. Grok is suggesting Vietnam, Mexico or India as alternatives ... all have very uncertain tariff futures today. My understanding of the tariff rules is whatever is in effect the day the goods clear customs is what the tariff is ... It is naïve at best (criminally negligent most likely) to assume the provider of the goods will eat the increased tariff costs ... single-digit percentages, possibly they will cover. Double-digit increases all at once, not a chance, you're on the hook. If you're a grower/garden center with pallets or containers of goods coming into the U.S. and your shipment clears the day the new tariffs go into effect, you own the goods at a significantly higher price than you envisioned ... Then a week later the tariff is reduced and your competitor brings in the same goods at a substantial discount ... Depending on the circumstances and volumes this could be a substantial and immediate loss.

I do not believe Grok took the present-day situation into his/her evaluation ... over time this may have made sense. There are many examples of AI getting things wrong; very little has been documented about how the information becomes obsolete, but Grok and others are still using “inoperative” information as if it were current. Today, you need instant information on international tariffs, as well as shipping times and rates. The UK tariff deal was put together to give PR coverage to two country leaders that needed victories to tout with no substantial change in relationships for the bulk of their respective populations. Window dressing. If you were bringing in products from the UK, there's 99% chance the “historic trade deal” with the UK will NOT favorably impact your horticultural operation (steel perhaps being the biggest exception ... or your new Range Rover).

For many in our industry, their seasonal imports have already landed ... ordering for fall and Christmas, however, are fraught with peril. One piece Grok got correct was: “Consult with customs experts or legal advisors” ... It's a minefield out there today—especially for the smaller importer.

Thanks for weighing in, Dick and Bill!

Although, Bill, I will comment that Grok is noted for accessing up-to-date online information, which is one reason I prefer it to ChatGPT. And Grok wrote this limerick about you in 1.1 seconds:

*Bill McCurry, with Green Profit flair,
Pens columns with wit debonair.
His insights, they gleam,
Chasing wealth's golden dream,
Guiding fortunes with wisdom to spare!*

See how useful AI is?!

I will say one more thing on the subject of tariffs: The fact that this time last week the China tariffs were 145% and this week they are 30% is more evidence why I don't cover federal or global economic news in this newsletter or in *GrowerTalks*—it can change overnight.

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.



Plan to attend Darwin Perennials Day (it's June 18)

Perennials remain a hot and growing category, which is why you need to stay up on the latest perennial varieties, trends and information. Which you can do at the annual Darwin Perennials Day, slated for Wednesday, June 18, at The Gardens at Ball in West Chicago, Illinois.

ONLINE REGISTRATION is now open.

Darwin Perennials Day connects growers, garden centers and professional landscapers with North America's top plant suppliers (not just Darwin!). You'll get a complete perennial experience, with Zone-5 overwintered trial garden comparisons, new variety introductions, and access to perennial vendors and plant specialists for further education.



The day's schedule includes:

- Extensive perennials gardens containing more than 500 varieties
- A 2026 New Variety Showcase from the world's best breeders
- More than 25 suppliers to engage conversation and information

- Tours of the gardens, the new Seed Distribution Center (the Opex seed picking robot will blow your mind!) and an interactive video tour of the Darwin Colombia Vegetative Farm
- Keynote Panel Discussion titled “Stop Stressing About Perennial Production!”

Your day at Darwin is free—even including a continental breakfast and lunch. And, hey, every visitor goes home with a perennial plant!

Register online [HERE](#) where you'll find the full schedule of events, as well as travel and lodging information.



Finally ...



It was a Facebook post from more than a year ago, but it just came across my feed this week:

"Dreaming of a luminous future with Light Bio! Biotechnological advances promise brighter Firefly Petunias, a kaleidoscope of hues and patterns, and an expansive garden of bioluminescent wonders! For now we sell petunias, but our capabilities are blooming! Like this bioluminescent chrysanthemum from our research. What botanical dreams do you envision?"

A glowing mum! Well, why not? Seems they can put it into anything with a white flower. No word on when or even if this one will be commercialized; I suspect they want to improve the glowiness of Firefly Petunia even more and expand its reach before adding sister lines. But the idea of a glowing combo planter is intriguing!



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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