

LiveTrends, which assortment works, a lovely camellia and a question



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026

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SMARTER MARKETING

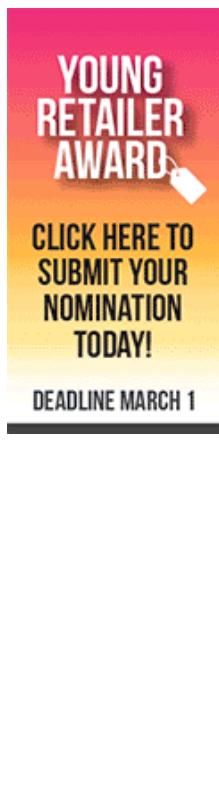
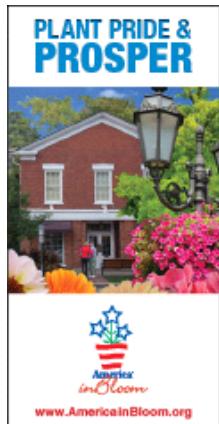


TPIE: TTCME

What is TTCME? It's shorthand for "things that caught my eye." And in today's edition, I'll share a few plants and products from the LiveTrends Design Group booth during last month's Tropical Plant International Expo.

While I didn't spend time with LiveTrends' founder Bisser Georgiev, a helpful fellow by the name of Sam unveiled some of the company's new offerings. The first item on his list is that LiveTrends is "dabbling" in 8- and 10-in. products such as totems and braided ficus. They're really starting to gain some traction in the marketplace, Sam said.





Also on the “dabbling” list is 2-in. orchids, which I unfortunately did not get a photo of. Like I said here last week and in previous *buzz!* issues, mini things are all the rage.

Another “all the rage” category is carnivorous plants, and LiveTrends is starting to offer those in a few different styles.





"Water Roots is our most popular item by far," Sam told me. "We cannot keep enough of those in inventory." He guesstimated that 20-30% of sales are in that line alone.



And the Illuminate collection also continues to be a top seller. Things that light up are very on trend.



Another very popular line is the Uncommon Roots program, and it continues to grow. This is LiveTrends' curated plant collection that features unique and specialty plant varieties. The in-store mix varies and makes it almost like a scavenger hunt for the customer, he told me. An e-blast to their mailing list before each drop gets customers excited about collecting.





I asked Sam to name his favorite product in the booth and he brought me over to this:



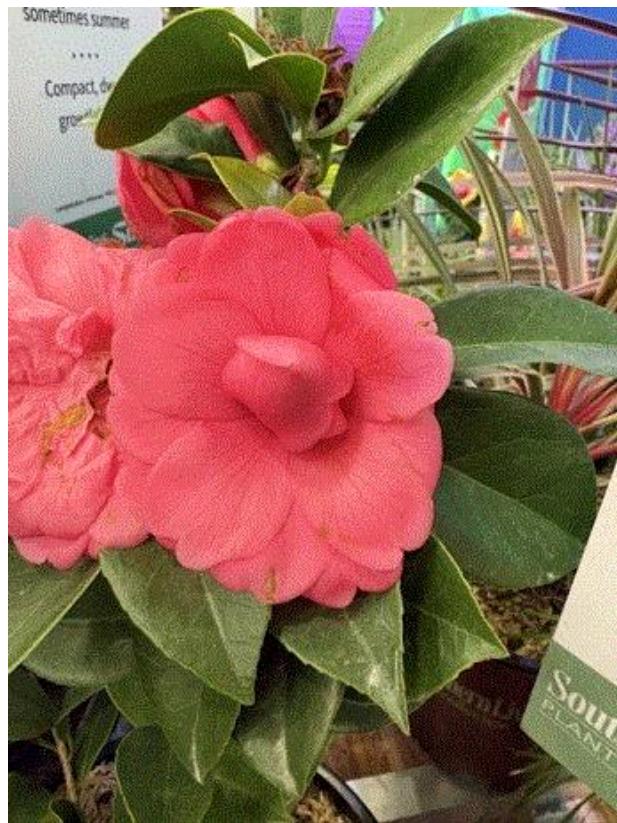
It's a music box terrarium! He was super excited about this one and said LiveTrends will be rolling out that product sometime soon. "We don't just sell plants, we sell happiness," Sam said. "If you're not happy in this booth, check yourself." And with items like this one, I agree.



One More from MANTS

Jen Polanz found the following write-up on a product from MANTS tucked under her couch cushions (figuratively speaking) and didn't want it to have been written for naught.

In the Plant Development Services Inc. booth we saw a number of new introductions, but the one that could be a game-changer is Camellia Early Surprise, the first hybrid of its kind that reliably blooms starting in August, said Business Development Director Kip McConnell. They already have Early Wonder, but that's not a hybrid, it is an earlier (October) blooming straight *Camellia japonica*. New hybrid Early Surprise, meanwhile, provides those sought-after blooms months earlier, and Kip said this could revolutionize camellia breeding.



They are looking to have upwards of 15 different bloom forms and colors coming in the future. Those future cultivars will also include some dwarf selections and some ideal for patio trees. Early Surprise is a more dwarf cultivar, topping out at about 8 feet and will be available to the trade in Fall of 2026, with retail availability in 2027.



Thanks, JP! I do love a camellia!

We Have a Question for You

Speaking of Jen, she had a question for you. Here it is: If you could anonymously ask something of your live goods and/or hard goods suppliers, what would it be? What is your wish for the coming year? An example answer might start with, "I wish my annuals supplier would/could _____."

Wishes can't come true until you speak them into existence! Speak, or rather write your wish [HERE](#).



Farwest!

It may be February but it's a good idea to start plans for the summer shows. The Farwest Show will be happening in Portland, Oregon, August 26-28, and I just received word from show organizers that hotel room registration for the event just opened.

Four hotels will play host this year, and all are located within a quick walk of the Oregon Convention Center. And since so much happens within and near the convention center, staying at these hotels will provide show attendees with the easiest access to all that's happening—the tours that take place on Tuesday, the expo and seminars scheduled Wednesday through Friday and especially all the signature social events such as the Happy Hour and Farwest Pub Crawl.

FARWEST

PORTLAND 2026

"The Farwest Show offers so much in a short period of time — exhibits, networking, social events, education and more — that staying close by really matters," said Jamie Moore, events and education coordinator for the Oregon Association of Nurseries. "This year's theme, 'Rooted in Relationships,' emphasizes what we've all come to learn, that Farwest is all about building new connections with clients, colleagues and suppliers and strengthening existing ones."

The four host hotels this year are: the Hyatt Regency Portland, Courtyard by Marriott Portland Downtown Convention Center, Doubletree by Hilton Portland, and Hotel Eastlund. When booking through Farwest, attendees receive reduced room rates and free wifi when they check in at the hotel. Secure a room a discounted rate by visiting FarwestShow.com/Hotel and follow the reservation instructions provided by each hotel.

Now, keep this in mind—there are scammers aplenty out there. The Farwest Show has not partnered with any sort of travel agency for the 2026 show. There are companies contacting exhibitors directly, claiming to have room blocks on behalf of the Farwest Show. They are *not* associated with the Farwest Show, and the show has no control over booking and cancellation fees associated with their services. Do not give credit card information to anyone calling and claiming to be a Farwest travel agent. Questions? Contact the Farwest Team at Farwest@OAN.org or 503-682-5089.



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The banner features the Epicor logo and the tagline "One Retail Platform, Infinite Growth. Total Visibility Across Multiple Stores". It includes a call-to-action button "EXPLORE EPICOR PROPELLO" and an image of a computer monitor and smartphone displaying data.

Dallas Market

Speaking of shows and hotels, Dallas Market Center is expanding its partnerships with more than a dozen hotels in its area. This will be to provide more rooms for buyers and exhibitors attending the June 2026 markets. Literally thousands of hotel room nights have been secured for folks like you.



However, and this is key—the only way to secure these rooms is through Dallas Market Center's own travel service.

You may have heard that a little soccer tournament by the name of the FIFA World Cup is happening across North America this summer. Dallas is one of the venues. There are only a limited number of dates where the Market and the World Cup games will overlap, but nonetheless Dallas Market wanted to ensure there were plenty of hotel rooms for Market attendees. Hence the expanded partnerships and the advance notice to Market attendees. And they made sure these partnerships spanned the gamut of hotel offerings and budgets.

"We anticipated increased attention on hotel availability this June and took early action by securing strong hotel partnerships at competitive rates," said Cindy Morris, president and CEO of Dallas Market Center, in a recent press release. "These accommodations are available

exclusively when booking through Dallas Market Center's official housing partner and can scale up to meet increasing demand."

The June Markets include:

- Dallas Apparel & Accessories, June 16-19
- Lightovation, June 23-27
- The Temps and Dallas Total Market & Gift Market, June 24-30
- Kids World, June 24-30

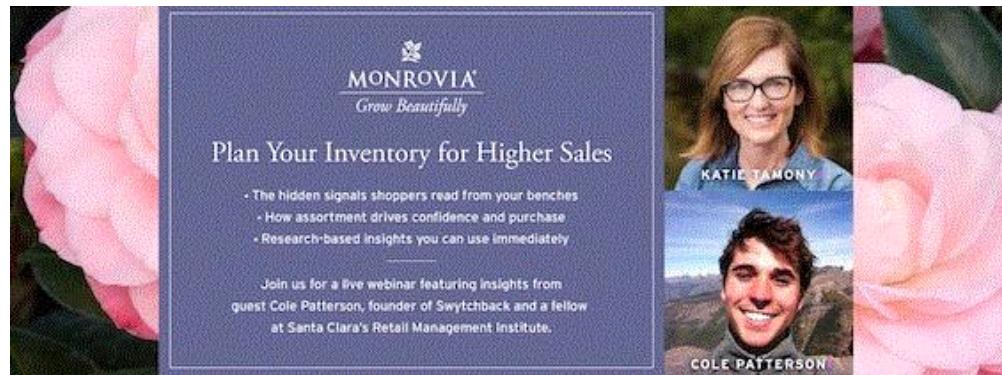
According to the FIFA match schedule, the Group Stage matches in Dallas are scheduled for June 14-27, with the biggest draw probably being on June 27 when Jordan plays defending World Cup champions Argentina. You know how everyone loves Lionel Messi.

So, yes there will be increased demand for hotel rooms but from what I hear and what Dallas Market says, there will be plenty to go around. Nevertheless, [get yourself a room for Market now](#)—and maybe treat yourself to a once-in-a-lifetime World Cup game while you're at it.



Which Assortment Works?

The folks at Monrovia offered a webinar last week—"Plan Your Inventory for Higher Sales"—and darn if I couldn't make it to the live event. Thankfully I received a link to the archived version so I could give it a listen. I'll put the link at the bottom, but first I pulled out a few of the key points in the webinar to share with you.



Monrovia's CMO, Katie Tamony, was joined by Cole Patterson, co-founder of global insights platform Swytchback, to share new consumer research on how plant size assortments impact sales—and what you can do with that information.

The question behind this research was whether consumers truly prefer small sizes (1-gal.) when shopping an assortment of 1-, 2- and 5-gal. shrubs, and which combination of sizes resonated with consumers best. So, what'd they find?

- Having just 1-gal. containers reaches 95% of shoppers, but there's a limit to how much the consumer buys. In this study, it was just about 2.5 purchases per customer.
- Having mixed sizes reaches 99% of shoppers and also results in a bigger ticket, up to 1.5 times more than 1-gal. containers alone.

What does this mean for your displays and assortment? Don't abandon the larger sizes. Customers do want larger sizes, maybe just not so many of them. An assortment of 1-gal. for price-sensitive and impulse buyers along with 2- and 5-gal. containers that create some display

magic will result in higher ticket sales.

Of course, you should experiment with exactly what size assortment works for your customer base. If you have younger or small-space customers, they may prefer smaller sizes compared to a community that also have some sizable lots. Classic A/B testing here. Try one configuration of one variety of hydrangea, for instance, and another configure of a different hydrangea and compare.

As promised, here's a [LINK](#) to Monrovia's webinar. And if you do your own testing, let us know what happens.

Web ... er, Livestream Alert!

The breeders have been busy, and you have a ton of new perennials to catch up on for the coming season. Good thing Ball Publishing will be hosting a livestream event on the topic.

Don't miss "The Hottest New Perennials of 2026 (and a Sneak Peek at 2027 Standouts!) happening Thursday, March 12, at 1 p.m. Eastern/Noon Central. During the session Laura Robles, Regional Product Manager for Walters Gardens in Zeeland, Michigan, will review 15 of the hottest new Proven Winners Perennials available at retail in 2026. And, as a bonus, she'll give you an early look at 15 standout varieties Walters is planning to introduce for 2027.

As with all of Ball Publishing's livestreams, this live online session will delivering practical insights, best practices and growing tips to help optimize plant performance and elevate your perennial program. Bring perennial questions because you'll find your answers here!

Sign up for the free livestream [HERE](#). And remember, even if you can't make it to the live session, you'll receive a link to the archived edition to watch at your leisure.

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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