

Spotted at CAST, Nat'l Orchid Day, Costa a Top Workplace



The logo for the Tropical Plant International Expo 2027 is displayed in a horizontal banner. On the left, the acronym 'TPIE' is enclosed in a double-bordered orange and red square. To its right, the text 'TROPICAL PLANT INTERNATIONAL EXPO 2027 FT. LAUDERDALE' is written in a dark red, sans-serif font. On the far right, a vertical orange-to-yellow gradient bar contains the dates 'JAN 20-22' in large, white, bold, sans-serif letters.



A blue horizontal bar contains the text 'News and Inspiration from the world of foliage and tropical plants' on the left. On the right side of the bar are two logos: 'GROWERTALKS MAGAZINE' and 'greenPROFIT MAGAZINE'.

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TROPICAL TOPICS

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Spotted at CAST
National Orchid Day
Costa Farms a Top Workplace
Justin Hancock on IDYS
New Fertilizer



Ball Culture Guide

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Spotted at CAST

Petunias and sunflowers may dominate the displays at the annual California Spring Trials (CAST), but my Ball Publishing colleagues tell me a few companies did in fact introduce new tropicals and houseplants at the event.

Like what? Well, like the following:

Selecta Divina Mandevilla. Selecta One's Divina mandevillas has two subseries: **MegaFlora** is "mega" in that it is vigorous and has lots of branching to give you big, beefy plants. Use it in gallons to get the most out of it! It has two colors—Red and Neon Pink.





Divina Neon Pink

The second subseries is on the other side of the size spectrum. **Divina Compact** is a bush-type mandevilla good for quart or gallon production. Lots of flowers on this one with strong branching. Colors are Pink, Red and White.



Looks like Compacts are on top and MegaFlora are on the floor.

Green Fuse gave its **Pistachio White** tradescantia a friend with the more traditional green, purple and white coloring. It's called **Pistachio Pink**. And because it starts from tissue culture, its variegation is more stable and will not tend to revert to more green.



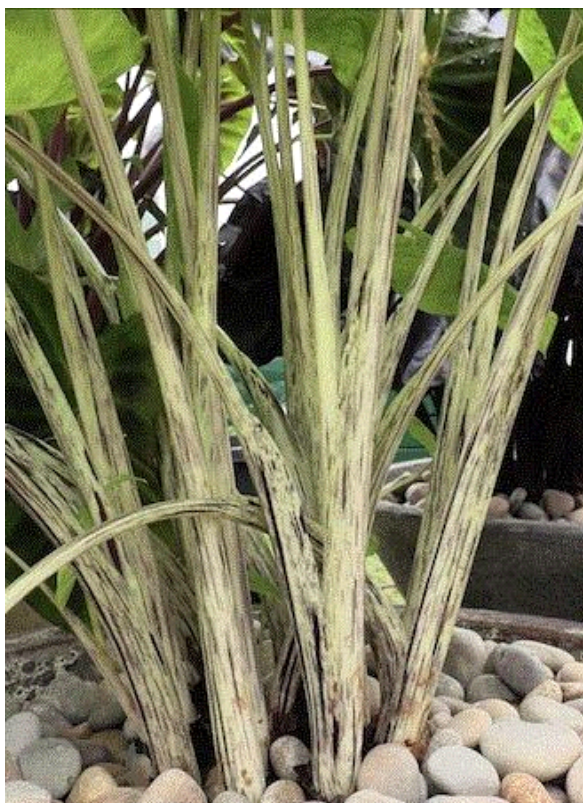
By the way, if you haven't seen Pistachio White (which was introduced two years ago), it's pretty darn cool looking. I can't say this for sure, but it does look at though its leaves are bigger, more oblong and also flatter.



A visit to the PlantHaven display is guaranteed to show you the latest outputs of their collaboration with the University of Hawaii's colocasia breeding program. This time around it's **colocasia Mai Tai**. It has medium green leaves that are touched with slightly darker green camo markings.



But the really interesting thing is its striped lighter green stems! I'd grow this one big and feature it solo in a container so the stems stand out. Check out this [VIDEO](#) to see more of it (it's at the 5:06 minute mark).



NEW FOR 2026



National Orchid Day

April 16 is National Orchid Day! Gosh, that nearly missed my radar. Hopefully it hasn't missed yours.

I was clued in on the holiday by a press release from the folks at [Westerlay Orchids](#). That release included a heads up on a few trends the Carpinteria, California-based grower is seeing in the orchid market.



The key trends include:

Refined Tropicals: They are seeing a demand for orchids paired with anthurium and lush greenery and composed into clean, modern arrangements.

Simplified, High-Impact Designs: Think fewer stems for more statement.

Color Pop: Popular orchids are those with vibrant, "mood-boosting" hues that are replacing neutral colors.

Textural Pairings: Orchids are being mixed with grasses and other unexpected elements.

Orchids Going Mainstream: Phalaenopsis orchids are becoming a staple in homes, offices and as gifts year-round. "Orchids have evolved from a luxury statement into an everyday essential," said Westerlay President Toine Overgaag in the press release. "People are gravitating toward blooms that feel intentional, lasting and emotionally expressive. Orchids deliver on all those fronts."

What are you seeing in terms of orchid trends? Drop me a note about it [HERE](#).



2027 TROPICAL PLANT INTERNATIONAL EXPO
FORT LAUDERDALE JAN 20 - 22

Costa Farms a Top Workplace

Miami, Florida-based **Costa Farms** did it again. They have been named to *USA Today's* 2026 Top Workplaces list. This makes two Top Workplaces lists in the last two years, the other being the South Florida Sun Sentinel 2025 Top Workplace. The award is given to national employers with 150 or more team members that prioritize exceptional workplace environments and strong, people-first cultures. And considering that more than 42,000 companies were invited to participate in this annual listing, it's impressive Costa Farms came out on top!

"We're truly honored to be recognized as a Top Workplace by *USA Today*," said Joche Smith, CEO of Costa Farms, in a press release. "This achievement reflects the dedication and passion of our entire team. Our people are at the core of everything we do, and we're committed to fostering an environment where they feel supported, valued and empowered to grow."

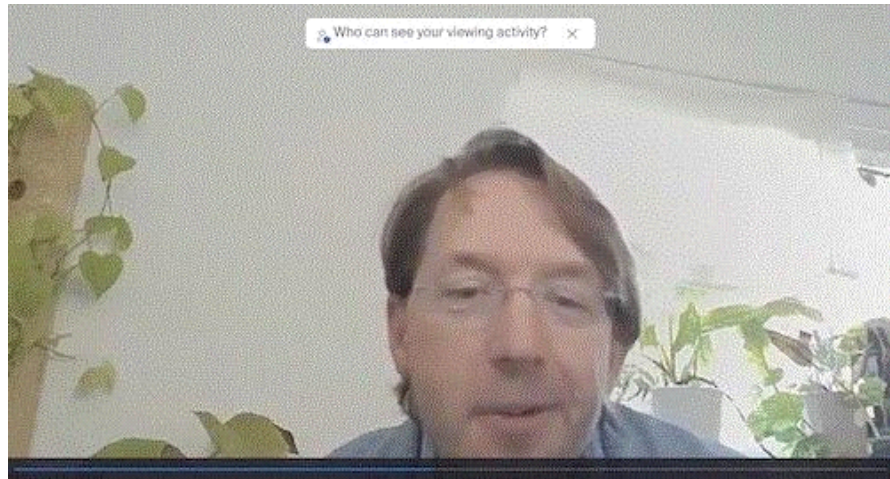


What a way to celebrate Costa Farms' 65th anniversary. What's even more precious is that the USA Today Top Workplace list rankings are based entirely on confidential employee feedback that measures how they consider key pillars of workplace culture, including alignment, execution and connection. So to be in the top, the employees had to give them great scores in these and other key areas. In other words, Costa's more than 5,000 employees *really like* working there.

"This recognition truly embodies our 'Love Where You Work' philosophy," said Arianna Cabrera de Oña, SVP of People & Culture at Costa Farms. "We are committed to building a culture where every team member feels valued, respected, and empowered, and this award affirms that we're delivering on that promise."

Justin Hancock on the IDYS Podcast

It was coincidence, then, that I released my I Dig Your Story podcast episode featuring a Costa Farms employee the same week this announcement was made. I chatted with Justin Hancock, Costa Farms' Director of Research, Development, Horticultural Content, and Brand Marketing to talk about how a Minnesotan such as himself ended up in South Florida. Sure, he had to adjust to the climate turning his growing seasons upside down. But he wouldn't have it any other way.



Justin loves everything about plants, and sharing his passion and knowledge with everyday plant lovers gets him really jazzed. He was so steadfast in his dedication to plants that he even hurdled a few obstacles thrown in his way. “I have the best job in the world being able to interface with everyday plant people,” Justin said at one point. I truly couldn’t see him doing anything else.

Check out the episode on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [Amazon Music](#) and [iHeart](#).

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New Fertilizer

There's a new houseplant (and container and small-space garden) fertilizer debuting this spring and it's called BountiPODS. The company's goal for this particular product is to take the confusion out of fertilizing. Research they conducted before launching the product told them that many plant owners admitted they didn't realize regular fertilizing was essential, and were uncertain about how much and how often to use it. Count me among those unsure about fertilizing, too. It has never been my thing.



BountiPODS was created by Texas-based fertilizer industry veteran Matt Arthur. After years in the business, Matt saw a shift toward convenience-driven products as well as an opportunity to create something tailored to modern plant owners.

“People love their plants,” Matt said. “What we’ve learned is that feeding just isn’t always on their radar. If we can make that step simple and approachable, more plants have a chance to truly thrive.”

BountiPODS works on the “drop a pod” concept. It’s a dry pod containing a 24-12-12 formulation that you simply drop into the soil and water it in. No scooping nor mixing. Each pre-measured pod feeds gradually over a six-week window.

“Plant care shouldn’t feel like chemistry class,” said Matt. “We wanted to make feeding as simple as watering.”

For more information visit buyBountiPODS.com.

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions for content, email me about them at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen".

Ellen Wells
Senior Editor
Green Profit

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