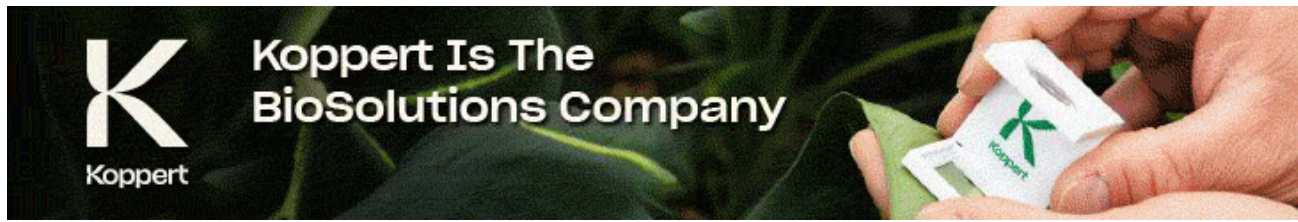


Last Weekend; New from Proven Winners; a Breakthrough Daylily



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- We slipped a bit ...
- Where the action was
- Your comments
- At Proven Winners NH
- Annual highlights
- Shrub highlights
- Finally ...

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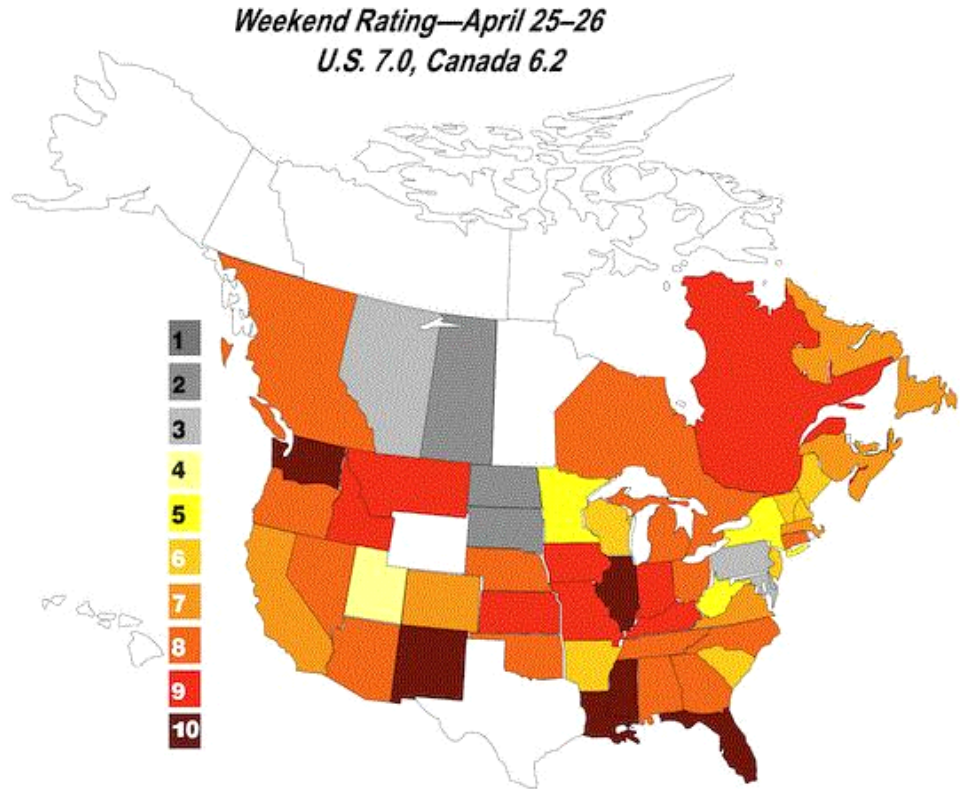


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The scores for the final weekend in April are in and ... well, they aren't as good as we might have hoped. In fact, on average, we gave back some of the gains we made in the earlier part of the month, which kicked off so strongly. The net result? **7.0 in the U.S.** and **6.2 in Canada.** That's below the 12-year average of 7.3 in the US and 6.5 in Canada.

Here's the map:



That's based on 93 scores from 44 states and 8 provinces.

Perhaps we shouldn't get too down about this result because 15% of you scored it a perfect 10, and another 17% an excellent 9—so about a third of you are happy as clams. Also, looking at previous year's scores for the same approximate weekend, I see only one year that scores above 8, even counting the pandemic years (8.1 in 2016). And I see three years in the 6s (2017, 2018 and 2023). So perhaps this last weekend of April is the calm after Easter and before Mother's Day.

Canada, however, can swing wildly on this weekend—from a low of 4.3 in 2022 to a high of 8.5 in 2021. In fact, if I drop the pandemic highs of 2020 (8.2) and 2021 (8.5), Canada averages just 6.1—right about where you landed this year. This time, I got 2s, 4s, 7s, 9s and even a pair of 10s (plus one negative number, but I never count them—it means spring hasn't yet sprung).





Where the action was

There was a flip-flop this week, with five regions gaining ground, one staying exactly the same, and two losing big. The East's drop of 2.7 points really hurt the overall average; best I can tell is that was all due to cold and rain.

	This time	Last time
Northwest	8.8 (+1.2)	7.6
West	8.3 (+0.8)	7.5
South	7.8 (NC)	7.8
Midwest	7.7 (+0.8)	6.9
Mountains	6.7 (+0.2)	6.5
New England	6.5 (+0.6)	5.9
Plains	5.9 (-2.2)	8.1
East	4.4 (-2.7)	7.1

Looking across the individual states and provinces that received multiple scores, it's hard to find a standout. I mean, Minnesota was terrible—2, 3, 3, 5—but one respondent with an online business scored it a 10. Virginia ranged from 4 to 9. North Carolina ranged from 5 to 10. Wisconsin scored a 10 ... and a 2. And British Columbia scored two perfect 10s ... and a 4. But if I had to pick the place where you wanted to be doing business this past weekend, it would be Iowa—8, 8, 8, 9 and 10.

Below are some comments from there and elsewhere, describing the week/weekend.



Your comments

Iowa (10). "Perfect weather—74F and sunny with a light breeze. Customers were crazy for plants—I think we hit a record day for April on Saturday. Lots of new-to-gardening customers looking for advice and tips on everything they need. They were buying shrubs, shovels, fertilizer and mulch to complete their weekend projects. Blooming tropicals are hot, too. All categories jumping ... nice to see patio furniture and outdoor living selling quickly, as well. Hoping this keeps up into May!"—*Kate Terrell, Wallace's Garden Center*

Wisconsin (10). "This was our Spring Open House weekend. Compared to the same weekend last year, sales were up 11%, customer count up 10% and average sale up \$1.09. I'll take that all spring."—*Chris Williams, K&W Greenery*

Florida (10). "I was wondering if we just had an early boom, as sales the last two weeks were good, but not exceptional like the beginning of April. But we're up about 75% vs. this week last year. Home Depot and Lowes sales are rocking, as are in-state landscape sales."—*Jenny Udebrock, Topiary Creations*

Oregon (9). "Perfect weather led to high demand and strong sales."—*Andrew Tyler, Grower's Nursery Supply*

Nevada (8). "Weather got a little better and the parking lots were full; customers are careful shoppers, as average ticket declines a bit."—*Bruce Gescheider, Moana Nursery*

Connecticut (8). "Weekend weather turned out better than expected, and sales powered through even at locations with cold and rain. Soft numbers from the same weekend last year helped. Overall numbers last year from today through the Mother's Day weekend were strong so there's a

lot riding on the next couple of weeks. We're definitely coming into the ruling days of spring in the northeast region—we have solid overall momentum and we're optimistic.”—*Chris Hallene, Casertano's Greenhouse & Farms*



More comments

Colorado (8). “Even a cold start to Saturday couldn’t keep the perennial buyers away. Overall, a good weekend.”—*Gene Pielin, Gulley Greenhouse and Garden Center*

North Carolina (8). “Are we starting to see folks tightening up their spending? This weekend was down 26% compared to the same weekend in 2025, but on par with two-thirds of the 2026 spring weekends so far. The weather was nice for Friday and Saturday, but dreary skies kept folks at home on Sunday.

“In other thoughts, YTD comparison as a whole is slowly moving downward, but our margin is trending up YTD over 2025. This involved being more conscious of freight costs and ensuring they are built into our pricing structure across the business. Gone are the days of letting that line item slip past you on an invoice.”—*Jake Scott, Piedmont Feed & Garden Center*

Virginia (7). “The weekend was okay, but not great. Cold weather (23F low in the week prior) and low temperatures in the near future seem to be weighing on sales.”—*Duane Weaver, Millmont Greenhouses*

Minnesota (5). “Gut feeling is we are looking at a later start to spring than the previous couple years. Foot traffic was good/borderline great for a weekend in late April, but customers were hesitant to buy and our sales numbers reflected that. More cold night temperatures slated for this week (lows near freezing) are likely to keep sales slow this week. One bright note is the weekend day temperatures currently show 65F and full sun, hopefully that will lead to a good first weekend in May. Product is ready, we are ready ... show me good weather and I'll show you good sales.”—*Jay Holasek, Fred Holasek and Son Greenhouse*

Long Island, New York (4). “This weekend was a total washout. Revenue in all departments was just about cut by half except (and this is a huge surprise for me) the perennial department mustered a modest increase.”—*Sig Fiele, Atlantic Nursery*

Alberta, Canada (4). “Alberta and Saskatchewan were hit with snow, heavy winds and terrible driving conditions late in the week. Thankfully, we had a Meet the Experts Day event on Saturday, and while talks were well attended and customers turned out to chat with product reps, sales were light. Nighttime temps are delaying the trees/shrubs from opening up until this weekend—the growing greenhouses and shop are filled with trees!”—*Tina Burbank, Greenland Garden Centre*



At Proven Winners in New Hampshire

Last week, Jen Zurko and I met in Boston and drove up to southern New Hampshire for a visit to Proven Winners Pembroke, the newer of the two former Pleasant View Gardens locations. The occasion was the 2027 New Variety Preview for Proven Winners. Since they no longer participate in the California Spring Trials, it's now our only way to see what's new from the brand (unless we want to wait for July and Cultivate, which we don't). They're also holding the same event in Carlton, Michigan, at the former Four Star Greenhouses, but Jen and I wanted a change of pace, and when we heard they were opening up NH for a preview, we jumped at the change to attend.



As with Michigan, this New Variety preview is not held in a greenhouse. That space is too valuable this time of year to give over to pretty displays for broker reps and the press. No, PW partnered with a nearby wedding and events center called Dell-Lea, which turned their pretty barn into an even prettier new variety display featuring annuals and Color Choice shrubs (no perennials; those were at Four Star in Michigan).

As with every year since PW started this New Varieties Preview, we shot video of all the new stuff. Chick [HERE](#) to see all the annuals; click [HERE](#) for all the shrubs.

In the meantime, here are a few highlights from each category.



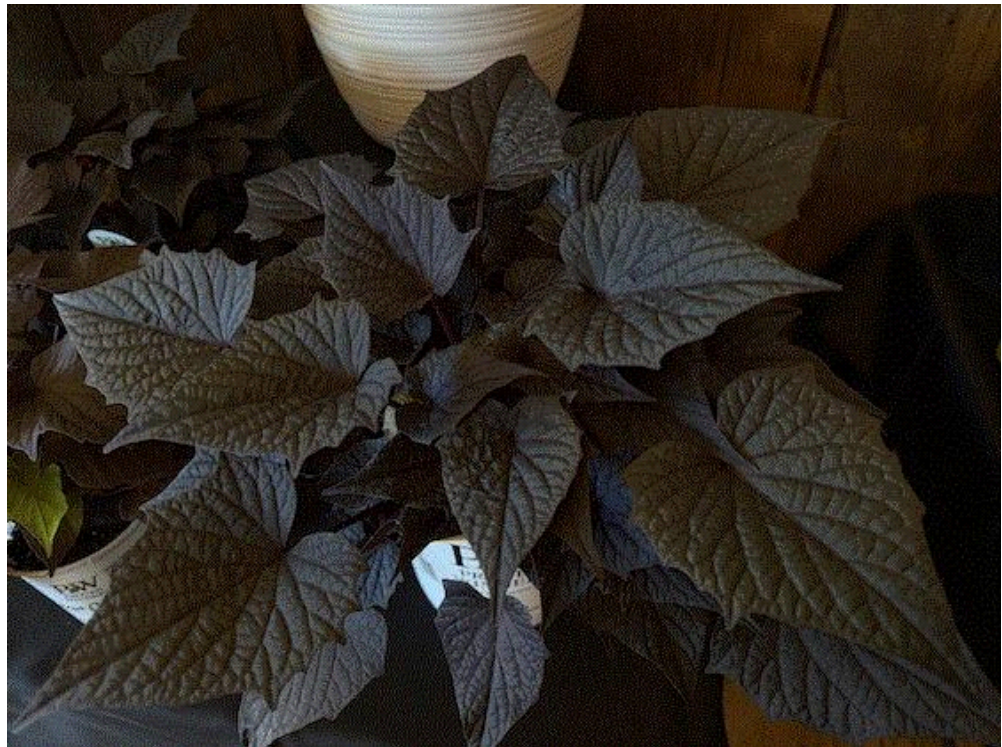
Highlights: Proven Winners Annuals

Supertunia Vista Bubblegum II



A big upgrade to a top-selling variety. The upgrade is for a richer, more intense pink. Don't worry, everything else you love about Vista Bubblegum remains the same.

Ipomoea (sweet potato vine) Sweet Caroline Bewitched After Midnight II



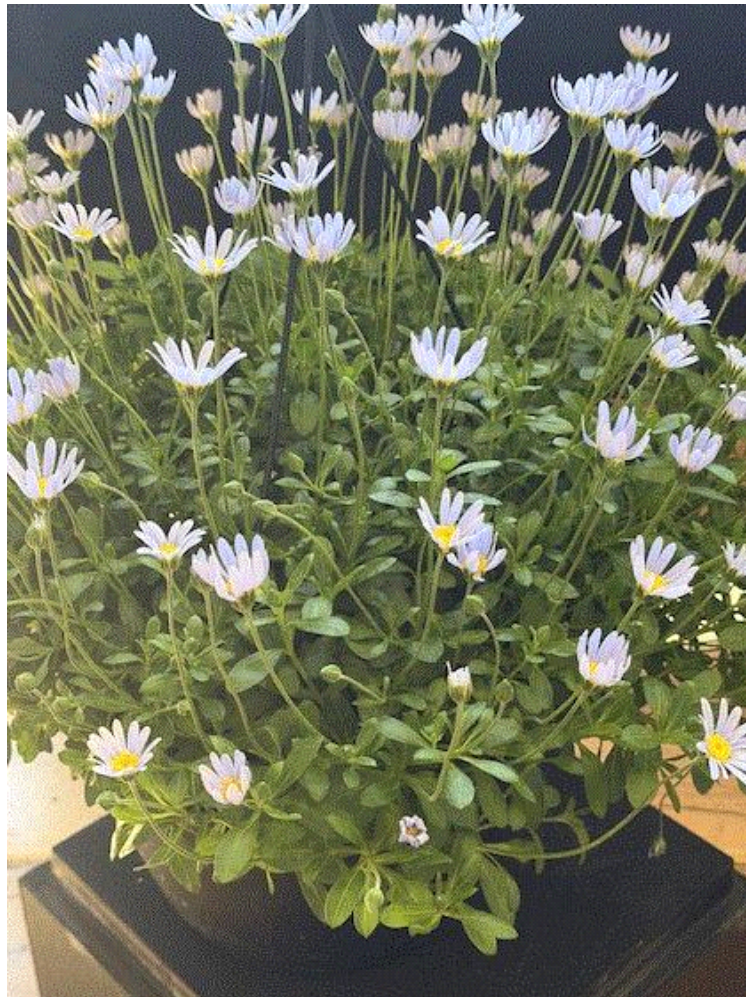
Another improvement (hence the “II” after the name). The improvement is MUCH darker, with no green young growth. And the foliage texture and shape better matches its sister ipomoea variety Green With Envy.

Fuchsia Sun Pendants Hot Pink



Proven Winners' first fuchsia—they were waiting until they could offer customers all-season color, which they say Sun Pendants does. Here it is adding a lot to a mixed combo featuring Double Delights Appleblossom begonia and Diamond Frost euphorbia.

Felicia Sea Spray



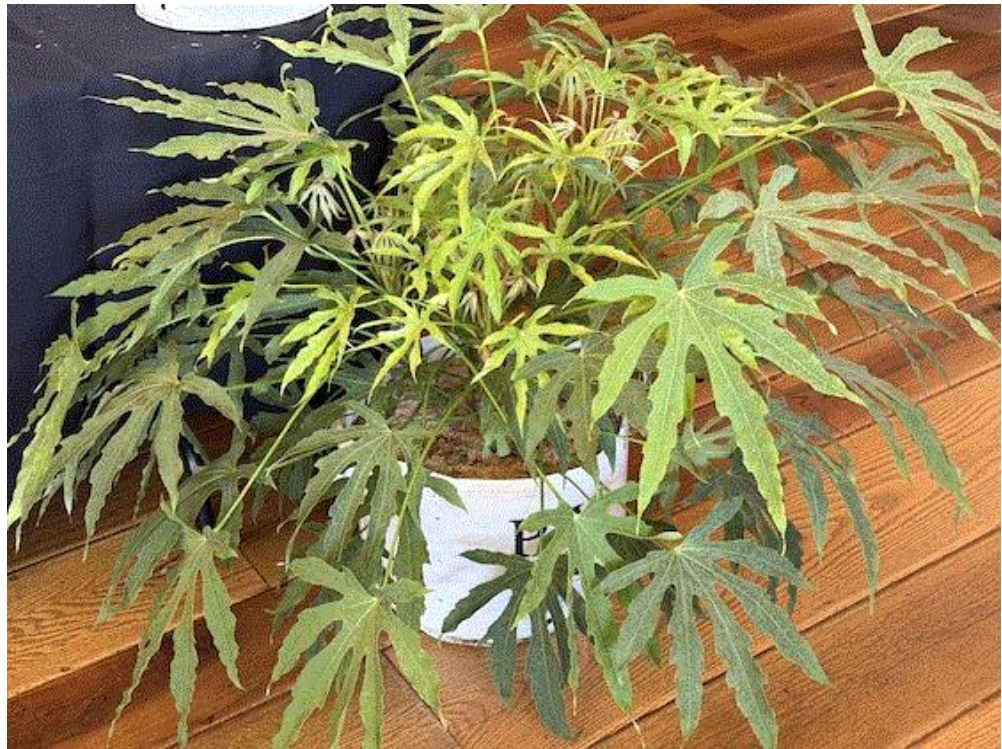
Tim Anderson calls this one a “unicorn”—one of those rare and unique one-offs that Proven Winners likes to add to their collection. Felicia Sea Spray has loads of quarter-sized periwinkle-blue flowers that are perfect for the early spring season. The color will last all summer in northern climates; it’s even got some good heat tolerance, they say.

For all of these and every other variety they showed us, watch my video [HERE](#).



Highlights: Color Choice Shrubs

Fatsia High Five Green Fingers



A tropical you can grow in the shade either in the landscape in the south or on the patio (summer) and indoors (winter). Hardy Zones 8-10.

Japanese Maple Uncommon Thread



An own-root Japanese maple with chartreuse cut foliage. It was shown in one of their cool Bloomprint plastic bag containers. Available in 5- and 7-gal. sizes, Bloomprints are said to use 83% less plastic than a regular grower container.

Clematis Moongate Mocha



Moongate is a *Clematis montana*, which blooms on old wood. It's vigorous and requires no special training or pruning to get loads of those interesting pink blooms.

Rose Reminiscent Ginger



Fourth color in the Reminiscent collection, which is selected to offer all the benefits of a traditional garden rose form in a durable and easy shrub form.

Again, for all of these, watch Jen Zurko's video [HERE](#).

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Finally ...



Where's Chris been this time? On Wednesday, I took a day trip a couple of hours south to a place I wouldn't normally be able to get through the front gate of (Apogee, a super-exclusive golf course in Hobe Sound), in an effort to see a new plant from Darwin Perennials (DayScape daylily) that could help bring back a perennial that has been pretty much eliminated south of the Mason-Dixon line due to the disease daylily rust. My tour guide was none other than up-and-coming golf course designer Tom Fazio II, nephew of Tom Fazio and son of Jim Fazio, both world-renowned golf course designers.



The group there with me included (from left to right) Cliff Burg, Savana Fisher Espada and Wes Fisher (that's Tom Fazio on the right). Wes owns Hidden Acres Nursery in Sebring, Florida, a TC lab and finished grower that is propagating all the DayScape plants for Darwin.

As for Cliff, he's Savana's grandfather, a retired developer in my hometown of Jupiter/Tequesta, and a friend of the Fazios. During a visit with Tom, he mentioned that his granddaughter ran a tissue culture lab. "Really?" replied Tom. "I need to get her number." And that is how some 8,000 of these new rust-tolerant daylilies found their way onto Apogee's newest course.

I'm working on another trip to learn more about DayScape, because if they really are rust tolerant—or even better, resistant—they could bring back a perennial that has been missing from southern landscapes for more than 20 years.

Stay tuned!

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
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