Marvin, mums and other fall flowers, plus greenery, purple and SYF fundraiser



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Green Profit's buzz

Retail news from inside and outside the green industry

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Revisiting Halloween

File the following into next year's Halloween ideas folder. This comes from colleague Jen Polanz, who visited a Botanical Soiree plant show in Akron a few weeks ago.









Looking at these, Jen brought up a very good point: “I think sometimes we forget people aren’t always shopping for plants specifically, but for something that wows them and moves them,” she told me. “These are more pieces of art made with plants, which I think is a cool niche segment.”

Lose the bones and replace with some other structural component and these could be displayed year round or for some other holiday.

I know Katie Elzer-Peters and others are all into art-making workshops nowadays (and with good reason). Maybe you could create a workshop based on incorporating potted plants into the piece of art itself, like the artist did in that first photo. However you do it, it’ll be fun!



Marvin & Mums

Dr. Marvin Miller, Ball Horticultural’s man in charge of numbers, wants to know how your mum season went this year. He’s hearing that it was looking sort of grim. While “grim” might be appropriate for October decor, it’s not appropriate for sales trends.

“I think, good or bad, we’re looking for reasons,” Marvin wrote to me this week. “Some of the

chatter was whether it has been so warm that a lot of summer annuals still look good, but we note that a lot of landscaper-supervised beds did switch things out to mums. Others thought it was more about the economy, too much money going for gas and groceries."

[Ellen steps onto her soap box.]

I think you know that I am not a fan of mums. Just like I don't approve of Halloween candy in CVS on July 15, I don't want August mums telling me my summer is over. There's a full month or more of summer—and summer flowers—to enjoy. In fact, my geranium is *still* not dead (although it's not looking great) this first week of November after numerous overnight frosts. Just look at how the cold temps have changed the leaf color—I kind of like it!



I think we do a disservice to our customers by offering mums at retail in August and early September without explaining that the flowers will not last through fall. The flowers fade, often in very sad fashion, and the customer thinks they did something wrong. Maybe there's a way to remind customers of this, and to come back to the store for another round of mums. Or, begin offering them later. Or, maybe breed them to last longer?



Even so, I bought three of them around the first weekend in fall. I'm not thrilled that they look a mess at the moment, and now my porch is in that bare in-between phase waiting for holiday

greens. (Don’t get me started on pre-Thanksgiving greens.)

Thank you for enduring my rant.

Please do share your take on this year’s mum sales and your guesses as to the reason. Marvin sure would appreciate it. Send your numbers and thoughts HERE.



Other Fall Flowers

And frankly, the industry has done a really good job at promoting *other* flowers and foliage for fall. I’ve seen so many beautiful fall-themed displays this season and I’m now kicking myself for not taking photos. Case in point: Echinacea, asters, heuchera and grasses in the perennial category. As for annuals, anything dark-leaved and flowers of purple, orange, red and yellow will do, such as pansies and marigolds. And honestly, my I’conia begonias are looking good paired up with my rust-colored mum.

I was also pleasantly surprised by the hardiness and sturdiness of the Granvia straw flowers that Suntory sent to me specifically as a fall annuals sample pack. And with dark reds, golds and oranges, they come in colors that are appropriate for the season.

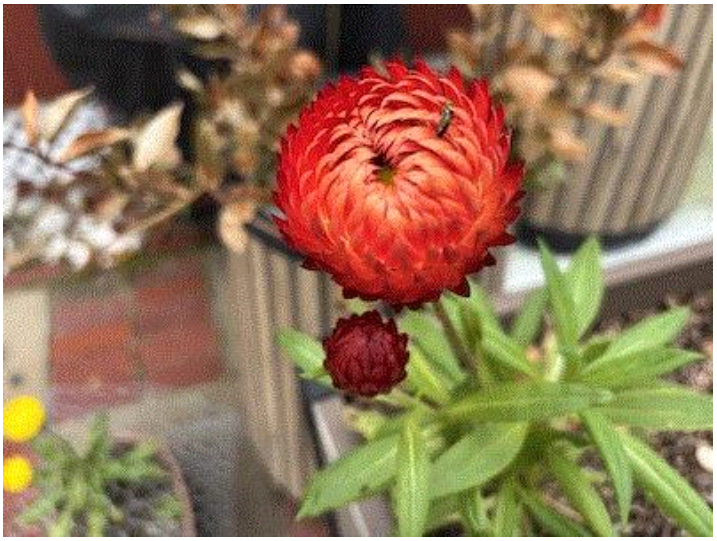


Photo taken this morning, November 5!

Also, a few weeks ago Suntory’s consumer-oriented Garden Club newsletter included a piece on a couple who grew Granvias and used the dried flowers as part of their fall wedding celebration. I particularly like that they scattered the flower heads decoratively on the reception tables.



Another couple used dried Granvia petals as their leaving-the-church confetti. Very creative!

You can read about using Granvia in celebrations HERE.



Moving On to Winter Greenery

While I may be holding off on holiday greenery until Thanksgiving week, I know others eagerly decorate their property with evergreen finery once the Halloween décor is off the porch. Ginny Hodgson of Clesen Wholesale wants to remind both garden center staff and their customers of this: Fresh evergreens may provide the scents and backbone of the season, but it is the branches, cones, weatherproof berries and other accents that really give holiday displays some visual excitement. I mean, just look at this sparkle.



Ginny tells me that neurobiological studies show that the human attraction to sparkle is hardwired into us, and also that holiday decorating—the actual act of decorating and also seeing decorations—sparks joy. We should have staff understand the importance of these sparkly décor items not just in the wreaths and porch pots they produce but also in how they just make customers happy to be shopping in a holiday-dressed environment.

When ordering holiday decorating accents, Ginny suggests that not all are created equal. Insist on the highest quality materials that can withstand whatever weather winter throws at it. This will ensure your customers have years of sparkly enjoyment. And, it also means that you'll have a product with an extended shelf life.



Ginny tells me that she loves glittery things but she has now fallen in love with accents that are "sugared." "Holiday and winter decorating is an exercise in joy and happiness that we all can take part in," she says. I agree!

Speaking of Holiday Plants

Perfect timing, because I am working on an article for the January issue of *Green Profit* about holiday plants that pair well with poinsettias. That could be something like Diamond Frost planted in a combo with the poinsettia, or maybe it's individual pots of paperwhites or lemon cypress flanking poinsettias to make a nice porch or indoor display.



I believe this lovely combo is from the folks at Plantpeddler in Iowa.

Send me your pairings, ideas and considerations for complementary plantings! Connect with me HERE.

Desch's Color Pick

If it's November, then it's time for everyone's Color of the Year picks. I did get a few color picks from an organization two months ago but it's buried deep in my inbox. And in the meantime I did reveal the Color of the Year that Garden Media Group picked for their 2027 Garden Trends Report (it's Ancient Blue). But last week I received a press release about the Color of the Year 2027 from a Dutch pot manufacturer, so let's go with that one.

To be specific, the color choice comes from the folks at Desch Creative Studio, which is part of Desch, a manufacturer of plastic products for professional horticulture. The color they chose is Velvet Plum.



Velvet Plum was chosen by trendwatcher Hilde Francq for its nature-inspired, rich and expressive hue. Inspired by dahlias and alliums, Velvet Plum combines nature with luxury and refinement. And the fact that it looks pretty snazzy on contemporary pots.

"Purple dares to stand out," Hilde wrote in THIS PIECE (page 8). "It is bold, seductive and full of emotion. Exactly what I believe color should be."

Read more about the Velvet Plum and the palette of colors Hilde created to accompany it in Desch's *Color Your Story* online magazine.

SYF's 50K to Grow 50K

Seed Your Future recently launched its 2026 year-end fundraising campaign, “From Classroom to Career: Grow the Next Generation,” with a goal of raising $50,000 by Dec. 31. The initiative, also known as “50K to Grow 50K,” aims to help at least 50,000 young people discover career opportunities in horticulture by providing educators with free career exploration resources.

And you can help! A donation of just $8.50 can help equip one teacher with Seed Your Future’s Seed to STEM lessons and career resources, introducing students to opportunities in plant science, technology, design, business, production and sustainability. But $8.50 is an awkward number to write a check for, isn’t it? A larger contribution can support multiple teachers, provide classroom tools, career exploration materials, educator training and other outreach efforts.



“Students can’t pursue careers they don’t know exist,” says Jazmin Albarran, executive director of Seed Your Future. “By helping educators bring horticulture into the classroom, we can open students’ eyes to opportunities that combine their interests with meaningful work. Every contribution helps us reach more teachers, introduce more students to the power of plants, and build a stronger future for our industry.”

Since its founding in 2014, Seed Your Future has developed 156 horticulture career profiles, more than 50 high school lessons, 30 classroom resources, a Plant Power Career Quiz, and internship and scholarship opportunities. Its Green Career Week also connects industry professionals directly with students.

Individuals, companies and industry partners can contribute through personal donations, corporate gifts or matching opportunities. Donations made by December 31 count toward the campaign goal and are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

Make your contribution on GiveButter.com today and help support a student who may one day work for you!

If You’re In South Florida This Weekend …

Head over to Flamingo Road Nursery on Friday to check out this little car.



Suntory Flowers will be sponsoring the Florida-based DGM Racing Team in the NASCAR O’Reilly Auto Parts Series race at Homestead-Miami Speedway on Saturday. As part of the campaign, they will have this full-sized Bluephoria-branded car at Flamingo Road, where they will have hundreds of Sun Parasol plants for sale. And Bluephoria smoothies in their café!

This is not the car that pro Josh Williams will be driving on race day, but how fun would it be to be passed by a bunch of flowers?

Break a leg (pop a tire?), Josh!

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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