YRA finalists, IGC vandalism, a new partnership and are you better than Amazon?



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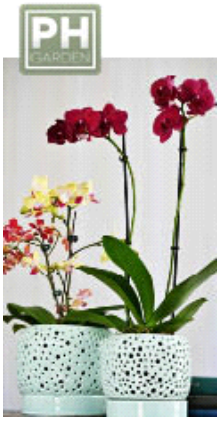
Green Profit's buZZ

Retail news from inside and outside the green industry

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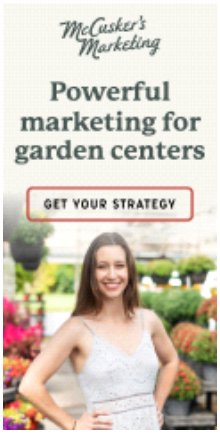
And the Finalists Are …

You've been waiting with bated breath for the identities of the RBI/*Green Profit* Young Retailer Award finalists, I just know it. Well, now that the three 35-and-under outstanding retailers have been notified, we can notify you!

Our finalists are, in no particular order (drumroll please):

- Madison Rae Landa Williams, co-owner of Boulevard Flower Gardens in South Chesterfield, Virginia
- Tanner Jones, garden center manager for Helmi's Gardens in Columbia, Missouri
- Morgan Huston, store manager for Birdsall & Co. in Englewood, Colorado

Know them? Then congratulate them! And if you don't know them, you'll get to know them through their essays appearing in the June issue of *Green Profit* magazine and again at the







awards ceremony at Cultivate'19 in July.

But wait, there's more! We've also determined the three finalists for the Nexus/*GrowerTalks* Young Grower Award, too. Those folks are:

- Brian Austin, head grower for Dutch Heritage Gardens in Larkspur, Colorado
- Tonya Diehl, lead assistant grower at Sunny Farms in Sequim, Washington
- John Terhesh, head grower at Willoway Nurseries in Avon, Ohio

Best of luck to all six finalists as they write their essays and are scrutinized by our panel of judges during what is arguably the busiest, least convenient time of year to do anything but grow and sell.



Better Than Amazon?

As I mentioned at the beginning of March, I'm working on an article for an upcoming issue of *Green Profit* magazine about how IGCs such as yourselves offer services and create experiences that tip the scales in your favor when you can't compete on price with Amazon and other online retailers. Thanks to all who replied—and folks, I could use a few more respondents!

If you can beat Amazon on service and quality, I'd love to know what you are doing and creating to set yourself apart. Maybe you have a Young Retailer-quality store manager, or perhaps you have an awesomely fast response time to customers' social media queries. Or, maybe it's an unbelievable delivery range. Whatever it is, I'd love for you to share your story with me. Let me know your "I'm better than Amazon" strategy—jot me a note about it HERE.





Vandals Hit NC Garden Center

"Deliberate and calculated." That's how Martin Garden Center's Kay Odell described the damage created by vandals of the Greenville, South Carolina, store to the *Greenville Journal*. The store and many of its plants—about 15,000 of them—were attacked last Wednesday night/Thursday morning, causing an estimated $150,000 in damage.



According to the *Journal*, employees walked in on Thursday morning to find that an orange substance, perhaps some sort of chemical, had been sprayed on the plants. In addition, it's believed that an herbicide was poured into the store's water supply. Samples of the orange chemical have been sent to Clemson's Department of Pesticide Regulation for identification. Meanwhile, the store was shuttered from Thursday until this Monday while staff and volunteers helped with the cleaning up after the incident. Portions of the store are still off limits for customers as the cleanup and the investigation come to a conclusion.

Interestingly, the store's surveillance system didn't pick up anything noticeable, the local Sheriff's Office said.

Typically this time of year any damage to structures and plants is wrought by Mother Nature. To have vandals intentionally destroy products and delay the course of business at the beginning of the busiest season, well, it's cruel. And obviously illegal. Let's hope some evidence pops up and the perpetrators brought to justice.



Get PW Certified

Has your garden center signed up and completed the Proven Winners 2019 Certification Training Program yet? The No. 1 reason to do so, of course, is so you and your colleagues are as knowledgeable as possible about all things garden center as you head into the 2019 season. A prepared staffer is a helpful assistant for customers, which in turn helps increase your profits.

Another reason to sign up and complete the program ASAP—prior to April 1—is so that your store has an active retail listing on provenwinners.com. Lots of people visit that site each year—we're talking millions—so you want those eyes on your listing.

And another very good reason to get certified by May 1? A free pizza party with the bill paid by Proven Winners. That sounds pretty good to me (and it's making me hungry for dinner).

There are other good reasons—smart reasons—for getting everyone on your staff certified, and rather than me listing the reasons, I'll let this VIDEO from a real-life garden center manager do the talking.



Get on this task before the season explodes. Head over to the 2019 Certification Training Program page HERE or download the MANAGER INSTRUCTIONS.



Time vs. Priorities

Now that it's spring and the season is in its starting gates (or just released from said gates for some of you), it's time to get a handle on your management strategy. Not the management of staff, but the management of your very own priorities.

The best way to manage my own priorities is a constant search for me. In that pursuit, I recently came across a *Globe and Mail* article by physiologist Greg Wells (no relation) that shed some light on the fact that we often confuse managing our time with managing our priorities. The two are not the same, he says.

He begins his piece with remarks given by President Eisenhower back in 1954: "I have two kinds of problems: The urgent and the important. The urgent are not important, and the important are never urgent."

This has become known as the Eisenhower Decision Principle, and Greg asserts that understanding this principle leads to a shift in how one spends one's time. This shift is from time management to priority management. Managing priorities, he says, means deciding what matters most and allocating time to those tasks, as opposed to fitting whatever tasks need to be completed into your schedule as best as possible. Are you a victim of the latter? Me too, mostly.

What do we do about it then? Greg advises:

1. Write out the goals that are important to you.

2. Break those goals into a series of specific and measurable tasks you can accomplish.
3. Rank those tasks according to priority, not urgency.
4. Start each day with a plan that ensures you allocate a specific amount of time to achieving your important tasks.

At this point, Greg continues about exactly how to make that shift from attacking every task to prioritizing goals. He's got some good points. Before diving head first into his suggested management style, give it a try on one upcoming project and see how you can make it your own.

Give his article a read HERE.



Gard'N-Wise & The Perfect Plant

Thanks to Jen Polanz for the writeup on the news about a recent industry partnership, lawn and garden supplier Gard'N-Wise and Marketing Garden LLC, involving The Perfect Plant digital problem-solver.

The Perfect Plant is a system that can be used on a retailer's website or on a kiosk in-store to help customers find plants, pest and disease controls and weed controls. The system also offers shelf-talkers with QR codes to recommend possible solutions via customers' phones.

Gard'N-Wise will offer a base package to retailers providing a problem solver pre-loaded with solutions from the manufacturers available through the supply company. The system recommends products based on what the customer is searching, and what the retailer carries.

"Retailers face challenges with staffing, education and having necessary information at their fingertips to help customers quickly and effectively," says John Bruntzel, sales manager for Gard'N-Wise. "Tying the products we offer into The Perfect Plant allows retailers to offer staff a solid level of product knowledge from day one of employment."

The interactive platform also builds confidence with consumers and helps solidify our retailers as the go-to resource for customer needs. For more about The Perfect Plant system, visit www.themarketinggarden.com.

That's one garden center department management problem solved! Thanks, Jen!



Have You Read It?

My *Tropical Topics* e-newsletter from earlier this week? Well, it's a rather informative one, so you should read it. Here's why:

- You could find out what tropicals could knock monstera out of its No. 1 popularity spot, according to J Schwanke.
- You could order some of those plants along with rare, unique, unusual and heirloom Florida-grown tropicals and other cool stuff from Garden Industries. They're now shipping!

- You could learn how to decorate with those same tropicals—or help your customers do so—by reading the newly published book, “Living Décor: Plants, Potting and DIY Projects,” by Maria Colletti.
- You could gain some insight into what the newly emerging Generation Z workforce wants out of a job (Hint: It’s different from what their Millennial siblings are searching for!).
- You could say you’ve seen a film screened at SXSW.

To find out the whats and hows and whos and whys of the above, read *Tropical Topics* HERE.



Finally I …

The only horticulturally related thing I did last week on my vacation was to note that the window boxes in London are extraordinary this time of year and that the camellias are in full bloom in Amsterdam. I would, however, like to share briefly my top “I’m so glad I did that” item from each of the three capital cities I visited, in case you find yourself walking those same streets:

Reykjavik: Take the CityWalk tour. It’s “free”—meaning, you can pay the tour guide whatever you’d like at the end of the very thorough 2-hour walk through the very colorful city. Tip your tour guide well!

London: The Churchill War Rooms are not to be missed, not only for an understanding of an ingenious man, but also for a greater appreciation for what Londoners went through during WWII. Thank you, Great Britain, for holding the line. (Watching *Dunkirk* on the plane ride home really tied it all together.)

Amsterdam: If you’ve been to the big museums with all the crowds and want something a little more off the beaten path, do visit the Our Lord of the Attic Museum (previously called Amstelkring Museum). It’s a peek into what non-Protestants had to create for themselves, hidden away, in order to practice their religions; in this case, Catholicism.

If you go to any of those cities and do any of those things, let me know about it.

Finally II …

It’s California Spring Trials time! My bags are all packed and I’m heading out to LAX tomorrow to meet up with my fellow Bobbleheads, Chris Beytes and videographer extraordinaire Jen Zurko. Starting Saturday, expect to find all the news about what we are seeing on our six-day tour in the form of *Acres of Buzz* dropping into your inbox each morning. I do horribly with jetlag when flying west and am still recovering from the time difference between Amsterdam and the East Coast. If you see me, bring me a coffee.

Comments? Questions? Let me have 'em at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



Ellen Wells

Editor-at-Large
Green Profit

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