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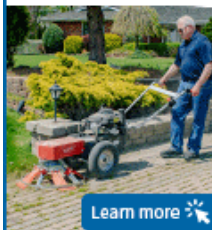
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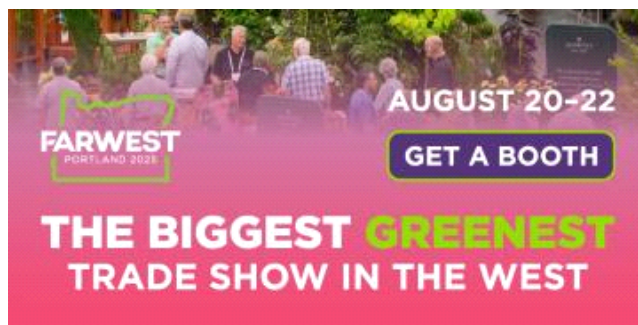


Nursery & LANDSCAPE INSIDER

News and Commentary for the landscape and nursery market

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Cultivate'21—Game On!
Tuxedo Hydrangeas
Cicada Killer Correction
2021 Michigan Garden Tour
Cherry on Top Sorbaria
Notes from the Edge of Sanity



Cultivate'21—Game On!

I am so ready to see friends from the industry and academia, and make some new friends! That's why Cultivate'21 has been circled on my calendar since I found out I would get my first vaccine dose on April 1. Now upon setting a vaccination date, most folks probably thought about where to go on vacation or going out to eat with friends. First thing I did was likewise make a list of places to go and people to see because I haven't left Georgia but once since March of 2020 (how depressing).



General Registration is OPEN

Now, the question was, where to go where I can see everyone? Ahhhhh, Cultivate'21 was the answer to that silly question. And so I'm almost completely booked to go and I hope to see everyone there! And yes—Cultivate'21 is happening. Now of course it won't have quite the international twinge that it usually does due to travel restrictions and uneven vaccine rollout among different nations, but still, it will be SO – MUCH – FUN!

So get yourself all vaccinated up (if you haven't) and line up your trip to the show. From what I've heard, hotels are just about booked so don't waste time on that one. Flights are cheap these days, but do remember there's a rental car shortage, so you may want to rely on local ground transportation to get around. Other than that, in typical form, the AmericanHort staff hasn't cut corners on entertainment and education, despite having to figure out some new ways to do

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things. The show starts on July 10 and runs to July 13, and [you can find out all the details here](#).

Oh, and if you really want to be an overachiever, don't forget about [Farwest coming up on August 18-20](#). I'll be out there, too, seeking out new plants and gardens to visit.



Tesselaar Plants' new Tuxedo Hydrangeas

Alright, in the land of hydrangeas, I'm always first to ask the question, "Do we really need another hydrangea?" Well, despite my overt sarcasm, the answer is usually, yes, we can and do need another wicked cool hydrangea. Such is the case with Tesselaar Plants' new Tuxedo Hydrangeas that certainly raise the bar on the genus.

The flowers are big, lushly bold and cover most of the plant, but it's Tuxedo's deep purple-black flushed leaves that make anyone do a double take. Unlike other hydrangeas, even when not in bloom, Tuxedo Hydrangeas add color and interest to any garden bed, container or landscape. And it's a color that consumers like and that offers nice contrast in a garden of green foliage.



Flowers appear in early spring on mounded, compact plants, growing to just under 3-ft. high and wide. Currently available colors are Red and Pink (as in those are the cultivar names—keep it simple, folks). Like most mophead hydrangeas, the available cultivars are hardy to Zone 6 and you would use them in the landscape like any other hydrangea (more sun into Zones 6 to 7, but certainly afternoon shade farther south).

I'll be interested to see if they suffer from the flagging affliction so many *Hydrangea macrophylla* suffer from, as they do look like they favor *H. macrophylla* over the less flag-prone *H. serrata* (smaller foliage) cultivars. If anyone can shed some light on this before I torment plants here in Georgia, [shoot me a message](#) and let me know.

Now, if you're interested in determining availability, email ptownshend@tesselaar.com. For more information and photos, visit: tesselaar.com/plants/tuxedo-hydrangeas_



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Cicada Killer Correction

If there's one thing about having a lot of friends in academia, it's that there's no room to get something wrong because they always remind me when I screw up. This is a good thing for all of us and my buddy Dr. Janna Beckerman (Extension Plant Pathologist) at Purdue University pointed out an error in the last newsletter that I need to correct.



Cicada Killer

Photo courtesy of Purdue Cooperative Extension.

In the last newsletter, I incorrectly relayed a fact about cicada killers. As it turns out, cicada killers only kill annual cicadas, not the crazy periodical cicadas that are about to descend upon many of us in the eastern U.S. and Canada. Thankfully for us, Purdue entomology developed a great website (extension.entm.purdue.edu/cicadas) that clarifies a lot of this.

Cicada killers are a native species that serve an important function in many ecosystems and are large hornets. They're about 2-in. long, and have black-and-yellow striped bodies with transparent yellow wings. Not to be confused with the dreaded murder hornet of 2020, which is currently

confined to the western U.S., cicada killers generally aren't aggressive unless you roll up on a zero-turn acting like a fool.

So there ya go—now we all learned something useful today.



2021 Michigan Garden Plant Tour

If you're vaccinated and itching to travel like I am, then you'll be super excited to hear about the 18th annual Michigan Garden Plant Tour, which offers commercial growers, landscapers, public garden employees and other industry professionals the opportunity to learn about new and existing ornamental plant selections from the major breeding companies and to better understand how they perform in different outdoor settings.

The tour is a coordinated open house of leading ornamental young plant producers—Four Star Greenhouse, Mast Young Plants, Pell Greenhouses, Raker-Roberta's Young Plants, and Walters Gardens—and the Michigan State University (MSU) Horticulture Gardens. This year, the tour runs from July 26 to August 6. This is a terrific way to observe plant performance at multiple locations grown with different environmental and cultural conditions, both in the ground and in containers.



The Michigan State University Trial Garden will be a centerpiece of the tours.

The Michigan Garden Plant Tour is completely free, but please check the [tour website](#) for specific times, RSVP requirements and other information for each site. The tour's Facebook page ([@miplanttour](#)) features numerous photos and details about each of the gardens.



Cherry on Top Sorbaria

I must admit, I'm definitely a fan of Bloomin' Easy plants. They just seem to work as a brand because they fill a great garden niche. But what I really like is that as a brand, they don't mind flirting with plants that other bigger brands would likely ignore because of current market share or consumer name recognition.

Finally, their plants seem to work well in a really large range of environments/hardiness zones, which is great in a world of branded plants that seems to be getting more and more environmentally pigeonholed.



Anyway, that was a long-winded lead up to a new cultivar of *Sorbaria sorbifolia* (false spiraea) from Bloomin' Easy that I'm really liking. It's Cherry on Top and it's one of those new cultivars that adds a lot of interest to an old garden favorite that's tough as nails, while also adding a measure of refined presence in the garden for a species that can be rather obnoxious. By obnoxious, I mean the species tends to sucker and spread, which Cherry on Top does much less (it's more of a mounding/rounded 5- to 6-ft. meatball).

One great thing about the species (and this cultivar) is that it's hardy in Zones 2 to 10 and that's more than 90% of the U.S. It also tolerates a wide range of soils, from acidic clays to mildly alkaline clay/sands, and most certainly thrives in highly organic soils. It can also do damp sites or dry upland sites, and a decent amount of sun (although afternoon shade should be provided in Zone 8 south).



Now to the nifty new (compared to the species) things about this cultivar: First, the compound foliage emerges with a lighter tinge (compared to the species) that really pops for a week or two before darkening a little. Then, after flowering (white panicles like the species), the magic happens when the normally brown seeds are instead a deep red that persists for a few months (or until the birds get them). This red looks especially nice when the plant is used as a backdrop to white/pink blooming perennials (just my two cents).

Another great plant—now if I could only find about a dozen more Cherry on Top for my landscape ...



Our Wacky Wonderful World—Notes from the Edge of Sanity

There aren't too many years when everyone I ask says that they're having an insanely fantastic year, but this is one of those years. And while I congratulate everyone's success, I also remind folks that the good years are an outstanding opportunity to recognize the folks that make you successful—your employees.

So, as we approach the dog days of summer when (for many businesses) sales slow down and we get into the routine of maintenance, maybe it's time to consider showing your employees some appreciation for helping your business not only survive COVID-19, but come out pretty darn good in 2021. Now some of you may think I'm talking about bonuses ... but I'm not. Appreciation is so simple, yet so often ignored in the workplace to our own detriment.

With that being said, [I ran across this TedTalk that will surely make you re-evaluate how you interact with your employees](#). Have fun watching and I hope it helps you be a better owner/manager!

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An advertisement for NurseryGuide.com. On the left, the word 'FIND' is written in large, bold, red letters with a white outline, set against a background of various colorful flowers. A white mouse cursor arrow points to the letter 'D'. To the right of 'FIND' is a dark green rectangular box with the text 'WHOLESALE BUYERS GUIDE' in white. Below this box are two more boxes: a green one with 'Hundreds of Growers | Thousands of Listings' and a red one with 'Millions of Plants'. At the bottom right is a red box with 'NurseryGuide.com' in white, accompanied by a small leaf icon.