

GROWERTALKS

Cover Story

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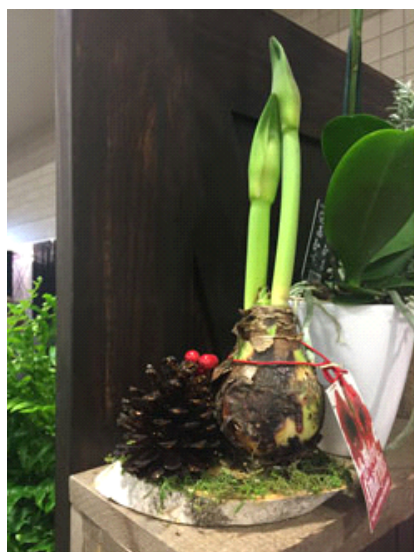
Ready for Delivery

Ellen C. Wells, Jennifer Zurko & Matthew Chappell

Tackling Trends at TPIE

by Ellen C. Wells

Most of us are ready for a getaway when January rolls along. There's no better excuse to leave the garden center than to travel to Florida and the Tropical Plant International Expo (TPIE) held at Ft. Lauderdale's Broward County Convention Center. Check out what we saw there.



Christmas Gifting

Christmas buyers hit the jackpot at TPIE. We spotted three holiday products that are garden center must-haves.

First, Bayview Flowers had a waterless amaryllis bulb attached to a slab of birch with moss, pine cone and a decorative berry. Waterless amaryllis grow without needing to be potted—or watered, for that matter—allowing the bulb to become part of the décor. Right now, these come in red flowers only, but I was told more colors are coming.

Coastal Nursery had two Christmas-appropriate products. Check out these “ugly sweater” trees—essentially, it's a Euro cypress with a small sweater attached. Anything “ugly sweater” sells nowadays, so why not get in on the action at the garden center? And hey, the sweaters are actually cute!

This “Whooville”-themed Lemon cypress sells itself with its whimsical look and its association with the Grinch. I

spotted two color themes—this red Santa sack with red decorations and a gold-trimmed purple deco wrap with purple decorations.



Trending with LiveTrends

The folks at LiveTrends always have an outstanding showing at TPIE. In fact, they won the 1st Place Award for their island-shaped booth filled with stylish products. LiveTrends has never been one for conventional plant containers, opting for fun, sophisticated, modern and ethnic designs. The company took the concept of “container” to a new level by creating the Mother’s Hands collection—a line that incorporates both nostalgia and neo-modern elements in the shape of plates, saucers and other non-vessel designs. Some have handcrafted lace surfaces, some are pure

porcelain with a touch of salmon-colored mini accents, plates, saucers and other bone-white, elegant-looking objects.

In addition to the booth award, LiveTrends also took home the Favorite New Product award for their sea-themed tillandsia and shell piece called Cousteau.

What’s New At MANTS

by Jennifer Zurko & Matthew Chappell



New Brindabella Shrub Roses

We had to stop by Suntory’s booth at MANTS (Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show) because we heard that they were showing something very exciting: shrub roses! Matthew was already familiar with them because they’ve been selling in Australia for several years, but this year is the first time that anyone in North America will be seeing them.

Called Brindabella, there are five varieties with very different colors and fragrances. But a few things they do have in common is they grow and spread about 3 to 4 ft. and, most importantly, are fully resistant to powdery mildew—so says breeder John Gray, who was in Suntory’s booth helping to promote Brindabella.

T. Jay Higgins, owner of Sun-fire Nurseries and a grower partner with Suntory, said that they’re still conducting trials in the U.S. John has been working on Brindabella since 2004, but they want to make sure they can hold up to the cold winters in the north and the humidity of the south in the States. So far, they think the series will be hardy to Zone 5 and have shown to hold up really well in the heat of Florida in July and August.

The reason it took so long to bring them to market here is because they’ve been in quarantine for two years, per U.S. law, since they were bred in Australia. The first five cultivars to hit the market on our side of the pond include Touch of Pink, Red Empress, Glow, Purple Prince and Fresh Powder.

Matthew said he can't wait to get his hands on them to trial in the Southeast, where they do their best to infect plants with every foliar pathogen known to the plant kingdom.



Dramm's New Fogger

Beytes called it "cute" so we had to see it for ourselves at MANTS. And we guess it is since it fits right over your shoulder. But the smallness of it also makes it super portable and ideal for grower-retailers.

The pulsFOG Turbo ULV coldfogger from Dramm uses air to create a targeted fog that will spread pesticides, fungicides and disinfectants up to 75 ft. Dramm's Kurt Becker said that it's great for large areas, but even better for spot treatments.

The Turbo ULV uses a high-performance turbine blower that atomizes and propels the fog. The unit includes a spray wand and different nozzles for various applications and flow rates. A 5-liter tank holds enough solution for up to 10,000 sq. ft. of coverage and it's powered by a 110v motor.



Two More for Date Night

We've always been fans of the gigantic weigelas of old that have been a staple in gardens across Zones 4 to 8 for nearly two centuries. But as with many ornamentals, the latest trend has been to shrink our beloved photosynthetic factories. That's exactly what the Date Night series offers under Van Belle Nursery's Bloomin' Easy brand that seems to have hit a home run in this regard. There are actually six cultivars in this series, with Crimson Kisses, Maroon Swoon, Strobe and Tuxedo introduced between

2015 and 2017.

New for 2018, Electric Love and Stunner (*pictured*) have been added to the series, and we're particularly impressed with Stunner, as it has slightly darker and reddish foliage to contrast pink flowers. Electric Love is also quite nice, though, with dark green foliage on red flowers. Both offer the same cold hardiness as the species (Zones 4 to 9), while allowing the plant's design flexibility to be opened wide up. Who ever thought weigela could be a border plant?

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