

# GROWERTALKS

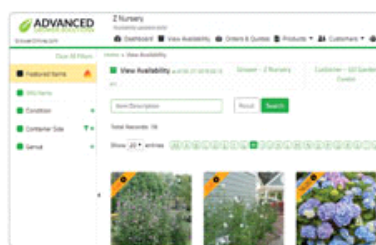
## Features

3/1/2021

## Virtual Finds

*Jennifer Zurko, Chris Beytes & Ellen C. Wells*

## Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show (MANTS)



*Pictured: GrowerOnline, Jade Parade Sand Cherry, French Cabernet Purple Hibiscus and Electric Lights Red Azalea*

### GrowerOnline (Advanced Grower Solutions)

GrowerOnline, the new online inventory availability and ordering platform for growers and their customers, enables growers to easily publish and distribute their availability information in an online and automated format. Key features include multiple availability views, and the ability to configure and publish availability of plants online, customize pricing, provide ordering capability, manage images, and much more. GrowerOnline reduces the amount of time and labor it takes to create and distribute your availability, and provides up-to-date availability to all your customers without publishing overhead. [advancedgrowersolutions.com](https://advancedgrowersolutions.com)

### New First Editions varieties from Bailey

Bailey had quite a few new introductions that would have been nice to see in person ... but, alas, we have to look at them through high-resolution pictures.

All of them are in the First Editions collection, meaning they're all improvements to what's currently offered in the marketplace, whether it's better cold or heat tolerance, more disease resistance or other attributes.

**Jade Parade Sand Cherry**—A fresh perspective on mass planting groundcovers and an alternative to Gro-Low sumac, the foliage of this sand cherry is an attractive, glossy, blueish-green that turns shades of yellow, orange and red in the fall. Jade Parade has a spreading habit, but rather than just creeping along the ground, the branches arch upwards. The bonus in spring is the small, half-inch white blooms that flower profusely along the stems and are

followed by small black cherries in late summer. Very tolerant of full sun and dry conditions once established.



*Pictured: Spot On Spirea, Little Spark Spirea, Bloomin' Easy Pearl Potion Lilac and Schizachyrium scoparium Chameleon Little Bluestem*

*French Cabernet Purple Hibiscus*—The latest double hibiscus in the series, this purple variety has clusters of large, sterile lavender-purple flowers that resemble pompoms for up to eight weeks throughout the summer. Like its cousins from Minier Nursery in France, it has an upright, vase-shaped habit that's covered with flowers along the stems and is a vigorous grower. Appears to set very little viable seed.

*Electric Lights Red Azalea*—A true fire engine-red flower on a hardy azalea for northern gardens in early spring, blooming just after the fresh new foliage emerges. Forms an upright mound in the landscape and will tolerate both full sun and part shade. Flower buds are hardy to -30F.

*Spot On Spirea*—Trialed for many years in Bailey's Minnesota trial block, the blazing shades of red, orange and yellow make this the prettiest fall color spirea. It blooms in early June with sporadic summer rebloom and has a mounded habit that needs little pruning.

*Little Spark Spirea*—With all the problems with Spirea Goldflame reverting, Little Spark is an ideal substitution with an even more compact habit. This little spirea has orange new growth and holds its yellow foliage color throughout the summer, even in full-sun situations. A summer bloomer, the pink flowers arise just above the foliage, and if you give them a quick shear when they're done, it will bloom again in late summer. Fall color includes shades of pink, creating a multi-toned effect. [baileynurseries.com](http://baileynurseries.com)

## **Bloomin' Easy Pearl Potion Lilac (Van Belle Nursery)**

An improved compact and fragrant white lilac bred in North America, it blooms in late spring and its low-maintenance habit grows to about 4- to 5-ft. tall and 5- to 7-ft. wide. Hardy to Zones 3 to 7. [vanbelle.com](http://vanbelle.com)

## **Schizachyrium scoparium Chameleon Little Bluestem (Hoffman Nursery)**

A unique cultivar discovered in Hantay, France, as a chance seedling in a trial field planted with seeds of *S. scoparium* The Blues, Chameleon Little Bluestem is available for the first time in the U.S. through Hoffman Nursery. It starts with eye-catching, white and green variegation in early spring and summer. Then in late summer and fall, blades develop a flush of pink and light purple for a rich, lush look. It has a compact habit (2-ft. tall) that fits in any garden. [hoffmannurseries.com](http://hoffmannurseries.com)



*Pictured: Sitting Pretty, Enchanted Peace, Sunset Horizon and Brindabella Crimson Knight Rose*

## New roses from Star Roses and Plants

*Sitting Pretty* exhibits good disease resistance and an attractive habit, and is hardy to Zone 4. It performs exceptionally well in a container and can be used either as a shrub or a traditional rose in the landscape. The large, beautiful, pink blooms have a medium, damask scent that entices gardeners.

*Enchanted Peace* is a compact, disease-resistant, bi-colored hybrid tea rose. It's a seedling of Love and Peace with fragrance and better performance. It presents beautifully in a container, and its yellow, orange and pink blooms contrast nicely against its dark green, glossy foliage.

*Sunset Horizon* is a highly attractive floribunda rose with flower color that starts bright yellow and fades to deep pink/cherry red. Its flower size is quite large when fully open. It has excellent disease resistance and grows well on its own roots, making it a very reliable rose. [starrosesandplants.com](http://starrosesandplants.com)

## Brindabella Crimson Knight Rose (Suntory)

This modern shrub rose features deep red blooms with lots of petals and a classic heirloom rose fragrance. Brindabella Roses are resistant to black spot and powdery mildew, and combine the best traits of old-fashioned roses with modern disease resistance. Crimson Knight is a better option for those who want a true red rose—while Brindabella Red Empress will turn more fuchsia in warm temperatures, Crimson Knight remains a true dark red. Blooms are almost blackish red in the bud stage. [suntoryflowers.com](http://suntoryflowers.com)



*Pictured: Amazing Daisies Banana Cream II Leucanthemum, Back in Black, Summerific Edge of Night and Fire Light Tidbit*

## New varieties from Walters Gardens

*Amazing Daisies Banana Cream II Leucanthemum* is an improvement on the classic Banana Cream. Just like the original, flower buds are lemon yellow and eventually brighten to creamy white. But the new improvements include being more floriferous, holding the yellow color longer, a more appealing habit, and earlier-to-start flowering. Vernalization week requirements are much shorter—Walters recommend four to six weeks for best performance, although they have observed flowering without vernalization.

New to the Rock 'N Grow collection is an upright sedum with near-black leaves. *Back in Black* has dark leaf foliage



throughout the summer, and when late summer rolls around, flowers with deep garnet-red centers and cream petals will appear.

At only 3- to 3.5-ft. tall, *Summerific Edge of Night* is Walters' most compact hibiscus. The 7- to 8-in. bubblegum-pink flowers have overlapping petals and darker pink veining for a dramatic 3D effect. Jet black foliage contrasts nicely with the green flower calyxes and red veining and petioles. Compared to Evening Rose, Edge of Night has darker foliage, a more compact habit and brighter pink flowers. Best color and performance will be in full sun.

[waltersgardens.com](http://waltersgardens.com)



*Pictured: Quick Fire Fab, Limelight Prime, Mayer's RM 2120 Topper shown in a production line with a Mayer pot filler, and The Urbinati TP2800 Topper Machine*

## New hydrangeas from Spring Meadow Nursery

*Fire Light Tidbit* is a dwarf hydrangea similar in size to the popular *H. paniculata* Bobo. Appropriately sized for the front of the border, this hydrangea has a bun-shaped habit and large, rounded late-season blooms that emerge creamy, light green-white and quickly begin to turn raspberry pink.

*Quick Fire Fab* is an early blooming hydrangea with large, football size-shaped blooms of densely packed cruciform flowers in a creamy green color with watermelon hues that appear at the base of the bloom and work their way up toward the tip.

*Limelight Prime* is an improved, more refined version of its namesake, Limelight, but with darker leaves, stronger stems, a more compact habit and strong, upright growth. The blooms emerge a vivid lime-green and maintain that color until they transition into bubblegum pink and then a deep punch pink. [springmeadownursery.com](http://springmeadownursery.com)

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## IPM Essen

### RM2120 Bark Topper (Mayer)

German equipment company Mayer makes some very slick soil-handling equipment, and pot- and tray-filling lines. They've added to their offerings a Bark Topper intended for nursery production where a top-dressing of bark, rice hulls or other material is used to prevent weed growth and to reduce evaporation. The RM2120 is based on the soil-filling module used on several of their other machines, so it's been well field-tested.

Motors are frequency-driven and the mulch chute is stainless steel. This mobile unit handles pots up to 40 cm (16 in.) round and 27 cm

(10.5 in.) square, and can top-dress them with any common mulch material. Pots rotate as they pass through the machine to ensure even coverage and it will accommodate tall plants. Mayer equipment is distributed by Bellpark Horticulture in North America.

### New Toppers (Urbinati Nursery Technology)

Mulching machines seem to be a thing for 2021, as Italy's Urbinati Nursery Technology is offering up two "Topper Machines"—the TP2400 and TP2800 (pictured). Like the Mayer machine, the TPs will handle any common mulch, including soil, bark, miscanthus, rice hulls and so on. A PLC (programmable logic controller) and remote control panel makes switching pot sizes a breeze. The adjustable speed control allows easy integration into any potting line. It comes in right-hand and left-hand versions (meaning which side the infeed is on, so if your line is against a wall and runs left to right, they have a machine that works). Pot capacity is rounds and squares from 8 to 30 cm (3 to 12 in.) and up to 25 cm. (10 in.) tall. Transport wheels are optional.

The difference between the two machines is speed and hopper capacity—6,000 pots per hour for the TP2800 and 5,000 for the TP2400. The hopper on the TP2800 holds 1,600 L (2 yards) and the TP2400 holds 700 to 1,000 L (0.9 to 1.3 yards). Urbinati is distributed by AgriNomix in North America.

## Auto Seeder Roulette (Visser)

Touted as the "fastest seeder on the market," the Auto Seeder Roulette is a fully automatic drum seeder with a high capacity of up to 1,300 trays per hour. With a special drum that can be provided in this machine, even the most difficult seeds, such as marigold, can be sown at a high accuracy of 99%.

The next step in seeding that Visser has implemented is called "menu-controlled seeding." This drum seeder lets you use a touchscreen to pre-program the settings, including vacuum pressure, for any specific seed and/or tray size. You can get back to your settings in just one touch, which makes this drum seeder more user-friendly than ever. The number of programs that can be saved in the computer is unlimited. Smith Gardens in Bellingham, Washington, has just installed one.

Another new tool from Visser is the Pic-O-Mat Multi Planter, which was designed to transplant directly into pots on the carousel of a Mayer 2400 pot filler. Said Visser's Stijn de Hoon, "We are convinced that this new combination will take over the potted plant market!"

Equipped with six to 12 wirelessly controlled grippers, the Multi Planter can plant up to 4,000 pots per hour when transplanting three plants per pot. The grippers can move independently from each other, allowing unique multi-variety combination planter options. Visser machines are distributed by Bellpark in North America.



*Pictured: The Visser Auto Roulette, said to be the fastest drum seeder on the market today. Visser's new Multi Planter is designed to attach to a Mayer pot filler for integrated, but flexible, filling and planting. Ellepot's new AIRtray is said to improve air circulation and water drainage, cutting production time and improving the plant's roots. Add their special racks to the system for increased labor efficiency by moving multiple trays at once.*

## Air Tray Technology (Ellepot)

At the Ellepot stand in Hall 3, we would have seen not just a machine, but a whole production system for propagation and growing called Air Tray Technology. Ellepot says it will reduce labor and plastic waste while producing healthier plants with improved root architecture compared to traditional rooting and growing methods.

The system starts with a new loose-fill Ellepot machine called FlexAIR that produces a looser, softer Ellepot than the standard machine, which results in 10% to 20% more air in the root zone. Plants grow better, you save on soil and

it's easier to stick cuttings in the loose mix. It can produce up to 48,000 Ellepots per hour.

The filled Ellepots (made from 12 different papers in sizes from 20 mm to 120 mm [3/4 to 4 3/4 in.]) go into special "AIRtrays" that are designed for consistent air circulation and water drainage throughout the production cycle. Both thermoform and injection-molded trays are available to accommodate any Ellepot. Lastly, you can take advantage of special moveable racks for the trays that maximize your labor efficiency.

Ellepot says the system is good for almost any segment of agriculture, from flowering shrubs and trees to vegetables, fruits and nuts. They say it maximizes air root pruning so plants produce more secondary roots, increasing nutrient uptake and speeding plant growth. It also saves on plastic and labor, cutting your input and production costs. And in the U.S., a recycling program is available to growers. Ellepot is distributed by Blackmore in North America.

## Smart Plug Handling technology (Flier Systems)

Flier, long an innovator in plug and liner sorting and planting technology, was set to display two new machines for these tasks: The Smart Plug Handling (SPH) Sorter and SPH Transplanter. What differentiates these new machines from others is the use of deep learning technology from software company Aris BV (not to be confused with Aris Horticulture in the U.S.). The deep learning technology captures and analyzes image data such as chlorophyll fluorescence to capture a clear view of the plant for grading. They can even grade the root system. Deep learning uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to allow the software to more accurately classify the more complex aspects of a young plant's shoots and roots. The result is more accurate grading for high-quality, more profitable finished plants. Flier machines are distributed by AgriNomix in North America.

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## Tropical Plant International Expo (TPIE)



*Pictured: Growbags, Plant Thrive and Earth Angel Hibiscus*

## Growbags (Jiffy)

All Jiffy Growbags contain 100% eco-friendly coco substrate, but what's new is the Growbags are now available in Jiffy Essence and Jiffy Finesse configurations. Jiffy Essence is now Jiffy's standard range of Growbags and contain their signature coco substrate that's ready to be rinsed and treated by the end user. This saves you some costs and helps you meet your own exact needs for crops such as tomatoes, cut flowers, hemp and the like. Jiffy Finesse Growbags are a ready-to-use product line with no rinsing or treatment required. Best for demanding crops. Jiffy Finesse is the same ready-to-use product, just with a new name. [jiffygroup.com](http://jiffygroup.com)

## Earth Angel Hibiscus (J. Berry Nursery)

Earth Angel is the latest cast member of J. Berry's Hollywood Hibiscus line. It has brilliantly white blooms that shine against the dark green, strong and leathery foliage. It has a high bud and bloom count with blooms lasting for multiple days. Earth Angel is also resistant to bacterial leaf spot and white fly—great news for growers.

## **Plant Thrive (JRM Chemical)**

Plant Thrive is an OMRI-listed microbial amendment formulated to improve soil conditions for plant growth and establishment. With 18 strains of active beneficial bacteria, four species of fungi and several different organic inputs, Plant Thrive is versatile in its use and the types of plants that it benefits. Available in commercial and retail sizes.

[soilmoist.com](http://soilmoist.com) **GT**