

# GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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## All-America Selections Honors Barry Ruta

*Jennifer Zurko*



All-America Selections recently honored a well-respected industry icon during the 2021 AAS Virtual Summer Summit and Judge's Meeting—Barry Ruta. Former colleague and good friend Vicky Rupley of Harris Seeds created and presented the heart-warming presentation that highlighted Barry's 56-year career in horticulture.

Barry began his career while in high school by working for Chicagoland garden retailer Amlings. After graduating from Illinois Benedictine College in 1971 with a BS degree in Biology, Barry moved to Florida and began working at Speedling, Inc. Then an opportunity arose and he joined the Sluis & Groot team from 1989-1995. Barry rejoined Speedling again in 1995 where he worked for six years until 2001, when he took on a role with

American Takii, where he stayed until his retirement in 2010.

But no one can keep Barry from continuing to contribute to the industry, so he joined Hem Genetics in 2012 where he remains a vital component of Hem's North American marketing team. Throughout his career, Barry has always been a strong and positive advocate for AAS and the winning varieties that he helped promote. Barry also served on the AAS Board of Directors for two terms, from 2004 until his retirement in 2010.

The AAS/NGB Summer Summit is a time-honored celebration where industry representatives, judges, breeders, growers, retailers and resellers gather to network, review trials and honor individuals. This year's event was held virtually due to ongoing pandemic travel concerns.

The prestigious AAS Medallion of Honor is typically presented to one individual who's given a career of dedication to the advancement of horticulture and contribution in raising the visibility of AAS and the varieties that become AAS Winners. **GT**