

GROWERTALKS

Features

8/1/2022

Plug & Cutting Conference Sneak Peek, Part 3

Jennifer Zurko & Kerstin Poehlmann



Other than the tour, workshops and slew of educational sessions, the Plug & Cutting Conference also includes a small trade show with exhibitors tailored to answer your young plant production questions.

Smaller conferences are the ideal places to network and build upon your professional contacts. We asked Kerstin Poehlmann, president of Pen & Petal—a marketing communications firm for the green industry—for some tips on how attendees can get the most out of their trade show experience:

Going to trade shows seems fun on the surface—and it is—but with a little planning, they can be both fun and productive. If you go to the grocery store hungry, you're going to end up with a cart full of impulse buys and a cabinet full of snacks and no meat. The same applies for trade shows—lists and plans are key to get the most of your experience.

1. Make a list and check it twice. Prioritize the products or services you're looking for before you go or you'll get overwhelmed once you hit the floor.

2. Pack light. It's tempting to grab samples, flyers and giveaways at every booth, but think of how you'll get them home, especially if you're flying. Consider using your phone to take photos of literature or labels, or asking the exhibitor to email you information. Don't forget the business cards!

3. Document. Don't rely on your memory to keep you in business. After hours on a trade show floor, you'll need a reminder. Carry a small notebook and jot down products and services you like, and take photos with your phone, both of products and company logos and information.



4. Ask about the deals. Often, companies will offer specials during the show only. You may be able to purchase booth items at the end of the show, or you may be able to order and arrange delayed delivery or invoicing. You never know until you ask!

5. Educate yourself. If you know there are specific companies you want to get to know, a small show provides a great opportunity for one-on-one conversation and networking. Do a little research and reconnaissance work ahead of time so you can be sure to ask the questions you want and get

the information you need.

6. Be kind to yourself. No matter how big or small a show is, it's work. Cardinal rule: Don't wear the same pair of shoes two days in a row—your feet will regret it and so will you. Pick a lightweight briefcase, backpack or shoulder bag to carry, and throw in a few high-protein snacks to munch on during the day. Include a water bottle to keep hydrated, and be sure to take a few breaks to conserve energy and collect your thoughts throughout the day.

There's still time to exhibit and there are plenty of sponsorship opportunities. Contact Cindy Lee at CindyL@AmericanHort.org or (614) 884-1145 for more information. **GT**