

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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In Memoriam: Kristian Madsen

Chris Beytes



The Danish greenhouse industry lost one of its beloved members earlier this month when Kristian Madsen, second-generation owner of Gartneriet PKM in Odense, died of pneumonia at age 70.

If you ever attended Horti Fair or visited the Danish hall at IPM Essen, you probably saw Kristian in his top hat and tails, which he wore in honor of his country's famous poet and fairy tale writer Hans Christian Andersen, who became Madsen's inspiration for Fairytale Flowers. Under this trademark, his company, Gartneriet PKM, currently markets four flagship products: campanula, lavandula, rhipsalidopsis and schlumbergera.

Ron Van Der Ploeg of *FloraCulture International* (FCI) was able to fill in the blanks of Kristian's life:

Pictured: Kristian and Chris Beytes at IPM Essen in 2014—possibly the only time Kristian gave up his trademark top hat to a visitor.

Kristian was in education at one of Denmark's horticultural schools, after which he briefly traveled the world, working at several horticultural

companies in Norway, Germany, New Zealand and the United States.

In 1983, he joined the nursery his parents, Poul and Marie Madsen, had founded in 1948. The company changed its name to Poul & Kristian Madsens Gartneri ApS—Gartneriet PKM—and six years later when Paul retired, Kristian took over the company's reins.

Kristian ran the nursery with great energy, ingenuity and enthusiasm, allowing it to grow by leaps and bounds over the years. He created one of the country's largest and most successful horticultural businesses and many good jobs on Funen, Denmark's central island.

The "Fairytale Grower" was constantly looking for ways to improve the industry. He was unorthodox as a grower and showed incredible courage. To solve industry issues, he thoroughly searched for information and feedback. No one else dug deeper than he did and had a keen eye for product handling and development from an early age. And he was happy to go to any lengths to optimize production methods and products using the latest technology. This led to many unique products that put Danish-grown schlumbergera, campanula and Christmas mini trees on the world map.

In 2011, Dansk Gartneri, the trade association for Danish horticulture, elected Kristian as its president, putting industry issues straightforwardly and relentlessly on the political agenda. **GT**