

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Outback Plants, Ball Horticultural Join Forces

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Outback Plants of Melbourne, Australia, which you may know from some of the unique “down-under” genetics you’ve seen from them over the years, like brachy-scome, scaevola and lomandra, has joined forces with Ball Horticultural Company, based in West Chicago, Illinois (but with divisions and partners all around the globe—including Australia).

The merger will “support important global initiatives in tissue culture supply management and continue to build additional licensing opportunities for the horticulture industry,” said Ball in the press release. In plain English, Ball says it wants to expand its capabilities in tissue culture—one of Outback Plants’ key strengths. Already heavily into seed and cutting production, Ball sees TC as a future growth area.

In addition, the partnership will give Ball greater access to the wide array of genetics from the many global breeders that Outback represents and licenses to Ball and other third-party distributors. However, Outback’s relationships with third-party distributors will continue, we’re told. The deal also includes Australian Horticultural Services, which does consulting, plant breeder’s rights and plant patent applications.

Outback Plants and Australian Horticultural Services have been operated by Managing Director Mark Lunghusen for some 33 years, according to LinkedIn. Mark will join Ball Horticultural Company in a licensing and supply management position. The existing Outback Plants team will continue their work on sourcing new plant specimens from independent breeders and building global laboratory relationships.

“For years, Outback Plants has been passionate about refining pathways for tissue culture into both the local and global markets,” said Mark. “Merging these services with Ball Horticultural Company is a natural next step to pursuing even wider assortments of specimens into tissue culture.”

Added Al Davidson, president of Ball Horticultural Company, “Mark and his team have built a strong foundation in tissue culture supply management and have found new avenues to bring new and exciting plants to market. Their close relationships with designated labs across all stages of TC development places them in the center of this growing segment. We look forward to combining forces and opening new channels for breeding and supply management in this area.” **GT**