

an issue with edibles

After six years on the force, I finally got a chance to see what California Spring Trials is about. I spent six days traveling the Golden Coast (SFO to LAX) with my cohorts from our sister publication *GPN* magazine.

Cutting to the chase, the impetus behind Spring Trials is really the new variety introductions — many of which are a year out from landing on your retail benches and in the garden beds of consumers. I knew this well before I touched down on Californian soil.

The fun part for me — always looking for that retail angle — was observing how the breeders at each stop displayed these new varieties, especially when the rest of the plants from their catalogs were also on display.

looking for Waldo

From stand-alone pedestals to neatly rowed benches, many of the new varieties shared similar callouts at each Spring Trials stop. By far the most common technique used came in three red letters, N-E-W.

From one stop to the next, (as an editor needing to photograph every new variety) I found myself relying on this word. Of the thousands and thousands of plants we saw during Spring Trials week, seeking out plant tags with the word “new” on it became a whole lot easier than trying to find where’s Waldo.

For those stops without “new” labels, the find-and-photograph game grew increasingly more difficult. Which leads me to ask you this: How important are new varieties at your store? And what kind of effort are

you making to get these new varieties noticed?

easy advice

In this issue of *Lawn & Garden Retailer*, you’ll find the bulk of our content skewing toward the edible gardening category — pages 14-26.

It’s full of advice. Give unique varieties their own special sign. Introduce the easiest and fastest-to-grow

edibles to kids first. Ask your customers the right questions. Use the word “new” to grab attention. Keep an assortment of large containers in your vegetable department. Introduce the companion-planting concept to new gardeners. Keep reading for plenty more tips.

Some of it might be obvious to you and some of it might be the last-minute reminder you need as spring kicks into gear.

We both know how unintentionally easy it can be to overlook the simplest of details. What’s your Waldo? And how can you make it easier to find? **LGR**




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