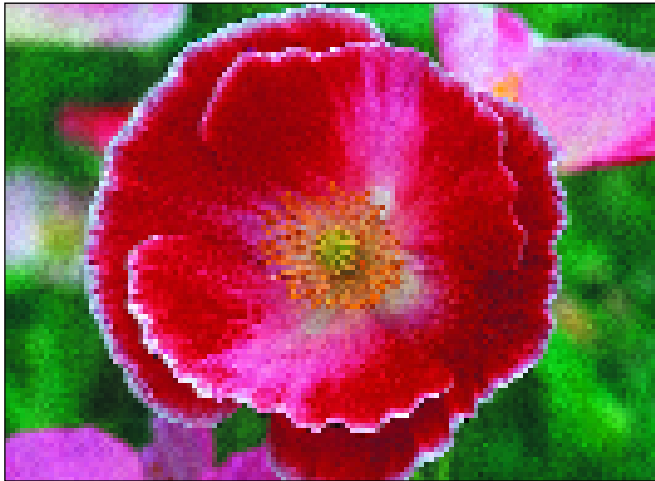


HEADLINES

Compiled by Catherine Evans



THE YEAR OF THE POPPY AND BEAN EMERGES IN 2003

The National Garden Bureau (NGB) is making 2003 the "Year of the Poppy and Bean" to bring more people into gardening. According to the NGB, poppies and beans are recommended for beginning growers, and are thus the main focus to encourage new interest. This year the NGB is sponsoring a spring exhibition called, "A Passion for Plants: Contemporary Art from the Shirley

Sherwood Collection," at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History on May 17. In addition to the exhibition, the NGB is also working with the National Gardening Association to offer a "Year of the Bean" educational kit to teachers. For more information on the "Year of the Poppy and Bean," visit www.ngb.org, and for the educational kits go to www.kidsgardening.com.

Burley Clay adds new collection

There is a new product line by Burley Clay Products called The Pam Ballard Collection, a group of decorated birdbaths and planters. Consumers who purchase an item from the collection will now receive a gift card designed by Pam Ballard. The card includes a history of the design on the product as well as a detailed garden layout and plant material list designed with the birdbath and planter as a focal point. According to Bobbi Bennett, director of sales and marketing for Burley, "These unique and very informative cards reflect Pam's life-long dedication to the beauty of nature and her love of gardening. It shows in her artwork and the series of birdbaths and planters she has designed for Burley."



SAF launches new marketing program

In a new attempt to inform people of the benefits of floral gifts and professional florists, The Society of American Florists (SAF) is focusing on public relations by working with the media to get the floral message out to the public. The efforts include continuous promotions of the research done in a partnership with Rutgers University, which, according to the study, proves that flowers increase happiness and life satisfaction, alleviate depression, inspire social networking and refresh recent memory. With all of these findings, SAF has had more than 152-million consumer impressions from media spots including television, newspapers and national magazines.

Some of the new sections of the marketing program include a partnership with Texas A & M University to research the effects flowers have in the workplace. Do they promote creative problem-solving, more effective thinking or workplace performance? Another method SAF will be using is its consumer Web site, www.aboutflowers.com, to educate the public on floral information. SAF is also developing a new marketing kit that has full-color display posters, radio scripts, camera-ready ads and promotional ideas for the media. This volunteer program is funded by the SAF Fund for National Public Relations. For



ANLA GETS NEW CONSULTANT TO HELP WITH LABOR ISSUES

The American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) recently developed a new relationship with the Washington, D.C.-based firm McGuinness, Norris & Williams when the firm's partner, Monte Lake, came on as an ANLA certified consultant. Lake is expected to provide ANLA members with assistance on labor issues such as wage issues, social security administration reporting, the Fair Labor Standards Act, immigration and H2A and H2B temporary seasonal worker programs. Lake has also helped ANLA in the past with government green industry issues and OSHA compliance issues.

OHIO STATE STUDY GIVES AN A+ TO HERBICIDE MULCHES

In a study conducted by Ohio State University, herbicide-treated mulches are showing to be a new way to improve weed control for nurserymen and landscapers. So far the weeds have been controlled for 300 days with only a single application of the herbicide-treated mulch. The researchers are still unsure as to the cause of the successful weed control; however, if it continues to work, the product may lead to a commercial version.

IRS HELPS SMALL BUSINESSES

The IRS has come up with a way to make answers to tax questions more accessible for small businesses. The new Business and Specialty Tax line at (800) 829-4933 allows callers to apply for a new Employer Identification Number (EIN) or receive help on employment, partnership, corporation, estate, gift, trust and excise taxes along with other small-business questions.

LAWN & GARDEN RETAILER
HEADLINES

STEPABLES STEP UP TO TELEVISION

HGTV will be featuring Stepables by Under a Foot Plant Company in two television shows this spring. The first show, "The Seasoned Gardener," which features a Stepables segment that will focus on a rock wall and pathway that were built with Stepables, will air in early spring. The second show, "Gardening By the Yard," with host Paul James, will be focused completely on the Under a Foot Plant Company. There will be interviews with the president of the company and creator of Stepables, Frances Hopkins, and a segment on the uses, durability and spacing of Stepables. To promote the television shows, Under a Foot Plant Company has developed a brand new look to the Stepables program for easy consumer identification.



Floragem expands to 30 more growers

Floragem Inc., a marketing company representing a network of select wholesale growers for the retail market, announces an expansion of its nationwide network to 30 growers. This expansion is the first step in a new nationwide retail effort that will be announced in early 2003. Floragem's growers will become the exclusive suppliers of a branded line of plants for one of the United States' largest gardening retailers.

Growers in the network are hand-chosen by Floragem. They were selected based on their proven record of producing a quality product with consistent supply in their relationships with retailers.

Christmas Internet sales soar

The numbers are in and it seems that last-minute Christmas shoppers spent a record \$1.9 billion through Internet sales the week before Christmas, a 19-percent increase over 2001. Online non-travel goods sales increased 18 percent, while travel-related sales increased 21 percent.

Wal-Mart announces lower estimates

Wal-Mart recently announced it is lowering its retail sales estimates for December in stores open at least a year, according to *The New York Times*. The company said its sales would increase by just 2-3 percent this month instead of the 3-5 percent it had originally thought. Last year, Wal-Mart had a December sales growth of 8.1 percent. Even the late-December days were not enough to reverse the poor holiday shopping numbers. "We had two days, Saturday the 21st and Monday the 23rd, with over a billion dollars," said Wal-Mart spokesman Tom Williams, "but the increase was too late and too little for us to reach our sales plan."

"Spending is more subdued because for three years, economists have been telling people that the situation would get better," said Burt Flickinger III, a partner in Strategic Resource Group, a retail consulting firm. "And instead, it got worse." ▀

FEBRUARY

15-19: San Francisco International Gift Fair
 San Francisco, Calif.
 T: (914) 421-3200
www.glmshows.com

26-29: Southern California Plant Tour Days
 Throughout Southern Calif.
 T: (760) 431-2572
www.planttourdays.org

MARCH

5-6: Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Expo
 Nashville, Tenn.
 T: (703) 522-0086

9-11: Vancouver Gift Show
 BC, Canada
 T: (914) 421-3200
www.glmshows.com

14-18: Columbus Marketplace March Market
 Columbus, Ohio
 T: (800) 686-6278
www.thecolumbusmarketplace.com

15-18: Atlanta Spring Gift Accessories & Holiday Market
 Atlanta, Ga.
 T: (800) ATL-MART
www.americasmart.com

16-18: Dallas International Gift & Home Accessories Market
 Dallas, Texas
 T: (914) 421-3200
www.glmshows.com

16-18: GlobalShop
 Chicago, Ill.
 T: (866) 933-1001
www.globalshop.org

17-18: SAF Congressional Action Days
 Washington, D.C.
 T: (703) 836-8700
www.safnow.org

APRIL

3-10: High Point International Furniture Show
 High Point, N.C.
 T: (336) 888-3700
www.ihfc.com

6-8: Spring Gift & Home Furnishings Market
 Los Angeles, Calif.
 T: (213) 763-5800
www.lamart.com

JUNE

11-13: National Lawn and Garden Show & Controlled Marketing Conference
 Chicago, Ill.
 T: (888) 316-0226
www.nlgshow.com

12-14: Super Floral Show
 Salt Lake City, Utah
 T: (480) 998-3992
www.superfloralshow.com

20-24: Dallas International Gift & Home Accessories Market
 Dallas, Texas
 T: (914) 421-3200
www.glmshows.com

JULY

7-18: Atlanta International Gift & Home Furnishings Market
 Atlanta, Ga.
 T: (800) ATL-MART
www.americasmart.com

12-16: OFA Short Course
 Columbus, Ohio
 T: (614) 487-1117
www.ofa.org

15-20: ANLA Convention and Executive Learning Retreat
 Boston, Mass.
 T: (202) 789-2900
www.anla.org

15-22: Gift and Home Furnishings Market
 Los Angeles, Calif.
 T: (213) 763-5800
www.lamart.com

21-23: Lawn and Garden Marketing & Distribution Association Annual Convention
 Las Vegas, Nev.
 T: (215) 564-3484

24: North American Lawn and Garden Trade Show
 Las Vegas, Nev.
 T: (215) 564-3484

24-25: Emerald Expo
 Seattle, Wash.
www.emeraldexpo.com

31-Aug. 2: Southern Nursery Association World's Showcase of Horticulture
 Atlanta, Ga.
 T: (770) 953-4411
www.sna.org

More funding may be trimmed

Additional funding for the Nursery/Floral Research Initiative may be in some trouble while Senate appropriators try to cut down the federal budget by more than \$15 billion from appropriations bills, to stay within President Bush's \$750.4-billion budget. The House of Representatives' revision of the new agriculture budget maintained funding at \$5.5 million per year, but the Senate added \$750,000.

AIB deadline approaching

The deadline for cities to register for the 2003 America in Bloom (AIB) program is March 31, 2003. AIB promotes gardening projects through a nationwide competition held annually across the country. The 2002 winners were Chicago, Ill.; Kalamazoo County, Mich.; Fayetteville, Ark.; Westlake, Ohio; Fairhope, Ala.; and Camp Hill, Pa. Almost 40 cities participated in 2002 and ANLA plans to donate \$5,000 to AIB in 2003. For more information, call (614) 487-1117 or E-mail lkunkle@ofa.org.

Christmas selling season not so good

Expert economists are saying that the 2002 Christmas selling season was the lowest-selling season in over 30 years, reports *The New York Times*. In the months of November and December, there was only a 1.5-percent increase in retail sales. A spokesman for the National Retail Federation said its original estimate of a 4-percent growth for December would probably decrease to 3.5 percent. The Federated Department Stores said its sales in the third week of December fell below expectations, and it warned that sales for November and December would be less than anticipated. "People worry about the economy and about an impending war with Iraq, and the threat of new terrorist attacks kept many shoppers from buying, even with deep discounts on many items. Indeed, inventories actually crept up this month," said Scott Krugman, a spokesman for the National Retail Federation. "We might be seeing unplanned markdowns" as retailers try to entice people to shop, he said.

Birding industry pecking over bird feeder article

The Wall St. Journal recently printed a bird feeding article that is causing problems with members of the birding industry. In a December 27, 2002, article, reporter James Sterba said backyard feeders may do more harm than good to wild birds. Feeders help spread disease, give a boost to predatory cats and other mammals, and place birds too close to windows, he said. The National Bird-Feeding Society wrote a letter to the editor pointing out that pet food and poorly secured trashcans lure more predatory mammals than bird feeders. According to Kermit Wilfon, director of marketing at Wild Birds Unlimited, "The author's statements are not untrue, but our position is that this is a wonderful hobby. At our stores, we tell customers how to feed birds responsibly. Multiple birdfeeders help avoid spreading disease. If you feed birds off the ground, that keeps predators away along with cleaning feeders and baths on a regular basis."

Cats and lilies don't mix

The National Animal Poison Control Center reports that several types of lilies can cause renal failure and sometimes death in cats that have ingested any part of the lily. A study was done in the 1990s that showed a toxic connection between cats and members of the lily family, including Easter lilies, tiger lilies, Japanese show lilies, rubrum lilies, lily hybrids and daylilies. This information is causing many florists and garden centers to post alerts for their customers so their pets will be safe. For more information, go to www.napcc.asPCA.org.

Frank's loses a CEO

Frank's Nursery & Crafts Inc. announced that Steven S. Fishman, chairman and chief executive officer, has resigned to pursue other endeavors. Adam Szopinski, currently president and chief operating officer of the company, will assume the duties of Fishman. Fishman will continue with the company in a consulting role through April 30, 2003.

"I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished at Frank's in the past 14 months," stated Fishman.

"We successfully emerged from bankruptcy and again have become a leader in the indoor and outdoor gardening, seasonal and home décor business. Most importantly, we

have built a strong management group. I have great confidence in the entire management team at Frank's, and I look forward to watching the company continue to grow

under their leadership. I feel that I've accomplished what I intended to do here at Frank's, which was to refocus the company and put it back on sound footing." ❧