

HEADLINES

Compiled by Catherine Evans



FROM OFA TO YOU

OFA reports the latest in the industry.

By Joe Boarini and John Holmes



Joe Boarini OFA President and John Holmes OFA Executive Director

Greetings. In the next year, you'll see this column published monthly in *Lawn & Garden Retailer* to bring you news about the Ohio Florists Association's (OFA) efforts to provide the best in floriculture education. Many thanks to Scranton-Gillette Communications for this opportunity to update readers about OFA.

WHAT IS OFA?

Simply put, OFA is an association of floriculture professionals. Our mission is to support and promote floriculture professionals through life-long learning, career enhancement and public awareness.

We do that in a variety of ways: with our "Tips on Growing..." OFA Bulletin and other publications; through hands-on workshops for regional audiences; and in the OFA Short Course held each July. The Short Course has grown over the past 75 years to become U.S. floriculture's premier educational and trade show event.

A LITTLE HISTORY

Our long-standing name, Ohio Florists' Association, has paid tribute to the visionary Ohioans who saw the need for continuing education and began meeting on a regular basis to exchange ideas. This was back in the days when "florist" meant practically anyone working with flowers. However, things change.

OFA's membership, having grown well beyond the borders of Ohio, encompasses a spectrum of professionals. In fact, 77 percent of OFA's membership is from outside the state of Ohio. With a vote of confidence by the Board of Directors in July 2002, OFA has been working to update and re-package our identity. The rebranding to OFA more accurately reflects the scope of our membership, while paying homage and respect to our 75 years of success.

The rebranding decision has also given OFA an opportunity to recommit itself to the mission of providing the best in continuing education and professional development for those dedicated to a career in floriculture. To meet your educational and professional needs, we are updating some of OFA's programs and member benefits to address the current needs of all floriculture professionals.

MAKING PROGRESS

OFA continues to grow on all fronts. Our board and committee members represent all segments of floriculture from all over the United States, and they provide valuable input and direction about issues, current events and industry needs.

During the past year, OFA leadership has been assessing operations and resources to be more efficient and effective. Some of those plans include new methods of communication through our Web site, enhanced E-mail and electronic newsletters.

OFA's Web site (www.ofa.org) will continue as a user-friendly resource for floriculture information, along with the OFA Bulletin, a bimonthly periodical for all members. The Bulletin includes articles from industry scholars and other experts on all segments of floriculture, as well as updates on OFA and other relevant news.

John Holmes is the executive director and Joe Boarini is the president of OFA. They can be reached by phone at (614) 487-1117 or (317) 271-4446 or E-mail at jholmes@ofa.org or jboarini@aol.com.

SUSAN WARD COMES OUT

Long before Martha Stewart, there was Betty Crocker.

Betty was created in 1921 after a promotion for Gold Medal flour flooded Washburn Crosby Co. with questions about baking. To answer customers in a more personal manner, the company created a fictitious kitchen expert, pulling the name "Crocker" from a recently retired director of the company and adding the first name "Betty" because it sounded friendly.

Now imagine what that concept could do for gardening.

MasterTag did just that when they created and *GPN/Lawn & Garden Retailer* promoted Susan Ward. Many of you will remember Susan Ward from last year's issues. She wrote a monthly column about her garden center experiences as an avid gardener.

Susan Ward is a "personality" that

was introduced to the horticultural trade by MasterTag. She is not a celebrity, expert gardener. She is not a household name with regular appearances on cable television or in women's home and garden magazines. She is not even real, yet Susan has a personality that female gardeners can identify with.

Susan's age, home life, career, family income and lifestyle closely match that of the primary consumer of lawn and garden live goods. In other words, she is an identifiable trust-worthy personality in an otherwise bland and generic display of flowering plant material.



What do Betty Crocker and Susan Ward have in common?

- Both provide information, with personality, on topics of great interest — cooking and gardening.
- Both provide a name and a face that their core audience can trust.

continued on page 64

THE NATIONAL HARDWARE SHOW SPLITS WITH PARTNER

The National Hardware Show has decided to split from the American Hardware Manufacturers Association (AHMA) because the organizations could not agree on the location for the 2004 show. AHMA will stay in Chicago for 2004 but has moved the date from August to April. However, Reed Exhibits will hold the National Hardware Show in Las Vegas in May 2004.

Telltale Plants Emerge in Times of War

Researchers at Colorado State University are attempting to genetically engineer plants that would change color in response to biological, chemical or viral agents. According to the university, if successful, the plants would provide the public an almost immediate warning that deadly agents have been released. The project is funded by Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency; phase one is scheduled to take 18 months to complete.

LAWN & GARDEN RETAILER
HEADLINES

GLOBALSHOP DISPLAYS NEW DESIGN IDEAS

The Eleventh Annual GlobalShop, a retail design trade show, was held at McCormick Place, Chicago, Ill., March 16-18. The show brought nearly 900 exhibitors with more than 200 newcomers. According to GlobalShop's initial pre-registration data, there was a 13-percent increase from last year's more than 15,000 retail attendees.

The three-day event offered retailers new ideas about trends and strategies in retail. "GlobalShop brings together leaders in store fixturing, visual merchandising, retail construction, in-store technology and point-of-purchase suppliers, all under one roof," said Doug Hope, group vice president, VNU Expositions, which manages the show.

GlobalShop also presented a full line of seminars featuring retail market experts. Speakers provided forecasts about the future of retail and brand marketing that will help bring consumers into stores and encourage purchases. Other topics included a closer look at consumer shopping behavior, demographic shifts and new retail formats. "Conference attendees benefited from direct interaction with top industry specialists and the opportunity to build a professional network to expand resources," Hope said. "The 2003 retail construction investment forecast is up 3.5 percent, the first increase in two years. Store openings are also on the upswing," Hope said and added that GlobalShop will help attendees learn the latest in how to properly merchandise their stores.

New this year at Globalshop 2003 was a set of seminars, Day of Design, presented the day before GlobalShop on March 15. The program featured experts who discussed the design challenges and opportunities facing today's retailer. GlobalShop 2003 also offered attendees a new, "fast access" pavilion floor design and a less hectic conference schedule that made the show easier to navigate.

This year, GlobalShop officially announced its move in 2004 to Las Vegas. The show will be held at the Sands Expo and Convention Center at The Venetian Resort-Hotel-Casino, from March 22-24, 2004. "We're delighted to be bringing GlobalShop to a city that showcases what retail can be and also provides tremendous amenities for our exhibitors and attendees," Hope said. He explained the move by saying that Las Vegas boasts retail facilities with the highest sales per square foot in the country and the average retail sales per square foot in the United States is \$336, while Vegas is home to shopping centers that net \$500 or even \$1,200. According to Hope, that would allow retailers to create store environments that are innovative and unique to Las Vegas.

— *Neda Simeonova*



NEW PLANS FOR PINK RIBBON PLANTS

New details have emerged on the Pink Ribbon Plants program, which was designed to help growers and retailers fight breast cancer after the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation decided not to renew the garden industry's Plant for A Cure program.

Pink Ribbon Plants will continue promoting Accent Miracle impatiens and 'Miracle Pink Splash II' geraniums from Goldsmith Seeds and Goldsmith Plants, as well as introducing floribunda rose

'Enduring Spirit' from Poulsen Rosen and rhododendron 'Rosy Miracles', both distributed by Pride's Corner Farms. Retailers contribute \$100 per color program, while contributions from the rose and rhododendron are built into the purchase price from Pride's Corner. Funds will be donated to a designated national charity at the end of the promotional period in October 2003. Retailers can also contribute additional proceeds to local charities. For more information call (888) 393-4443 or visit www.pinkribbonplants.com.

JUNE

11-13: National Lawn & Garden Show and 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 and Home Accessories Market
 Dallas, Texas
 T: (914) 421-3200
www.glmshows.com

JULY

7-18: Atlanta International Gift and 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

13-14: 2003 Birdwatch Backyard Show
 Columbus, Ohio
 T: (813) 995-2804
www.birdwatchamerica.com

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

24: North American Lawn & 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

AUGUST

9-14: New York International Fair
 New York, N.Y.
 T: (914) 421-3200
www.glmshows.com

10-12: National Hardware Show
 Chicago, Ill.
www.reedexpo.com

15-17: Nursery/Landscape Expo
 Dallas, Texas
 T: (800) 880-0343
www.txnla.org

21-23: Farwest Show
 Portland, Ore.
 T: (503) 653-8733
ghorning@oan.org

31-Sept. 2: SPOGA International Trade Fair for Sporting Goods, Camping Equipment and Garden Furniture
 Cologne, Germany
www.spoga-cologne.de

SEPTEMBER

7-9: Vancouver Gift Show
 Vancouver, BC, Canada
 T: (914) 421-3200
www.glmshows.com

7-10: Autumn Fair Birmingham
 Birmingham, England
www.autumnfair.com

13-16: Atlanta Fall Gift and Accessories Market
 Atlanta, Ga.
 T: (800) ATL-MART
www.americasmart.com

21-23: GLEE International Garden and Leisure Exhibition
 Birmingham, England
www.gleebirmingham.com

24-27: SAF Annual Convention
 Boca Raton, Fla.
 T: (703) 836-8700
www.safnow.org

28-30: Fall Gift and Home Furnishings Market
 Los Angeles, Calif.
 T: (213) 763-5800
www.lamart.com

OCTOBER

18-20: International Lawn & Garden Power Equipment Exposition
 Louisville, Ky.
 T: (502) 562-1969
www.expo.mow.org

- Both deliver tips and help based on experience and preference.

- Both have a group of experts behind them providing sound advice and recommendations.

USING SUSAN

Articles from Susan Ward appeared in Scranton Gillette Communications' publications this past year. Both *GPN* and *Lawn & Garden Retailer* featured some of Susan's articles. These

articles included "Susan's" preferences and suggestions and were written from the consumer's point of view.

Each of these articles was based on the results of consumer surveys conducted by

MasterTag, but instead of showing dry charts and lists of dull summary research statements, Susan Ward talked as a consumer about the things that she (and others) wanted from growers and retailers.

Given that better information is the hallmark of the Susan Ward program, MasterTag will introduce this as an exclusive program to independent garden centers. Better information and a unique, personal presentation are what consumers expect from an independent retailer, and by using a program such as Susan Ward, or one that you design for yourself, you can give it to them.

MasterTag and Scranton Gillette wish to thank you for your good-natured participation in presenting solid consumer information in an easy to understand way and encourage you to explore marketing ideas that incorporate people, sensations, destinations or anything else that might increase sales.

—Bridget White

MONROVIA DEVELOPS NEW POP PROGRAM

The POP 1-2-3 program from Monrovia Growers and Horticultural Printers is an online program for retailers to customize and co-brand point-of-purchase materials. The program is accessed online at www.monrovia.com where retailers log on to a password-protected section of the Web site to gain access to a plant and photo library and the ability to customize details such as price, container size and plant features. Retailers can add their names and logos to the POP. The materials are shipped within seven working days and can be tracked online.

"While Monrovia is known for producing compelling POP materials, our challenge has always been that it wasn't feasible to print four-color materials for every one of our 2,200 plant varieties," said Pam Wasson, vice president of marketing for Monrovia, "Now we can. Retailers have the option to fea-

ture plants that do well in their region and brand their own garden center along with Monrovia.”

THREE ASSOCIATIONS PARTNER FOR TRADE SHOW

The World Wide Pet Supply Association (WWPSA) has approved a plan to co-locate its trade show with the Southern Nursery Association (SNA) and California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers (CANGC).

During months of meetings, the WWPSA, producers of SuperZoo; SNA, producers of SNA...The World's Showcase of Horticulture; and the CANGC, producers of the Western Expo, developed a plan to present their trade shows together merging the two industries of garden and pet supplies.

In 2004, the Western Expo and SuperZoo West have tentative show dates of September 22 and 23 at the Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nevada. The two shows will be housed in the same exhibit hall with twice as many booths.

In September 2005, SuperZoo West will once again be held in Las Vegas in combination with Western Expo. In August of that same year, SuperZoo East and SNA will be held in Atlanta

MAILORDER GARDENING HITS BIG

A new survey commissioned by the Mailorder Gardening Association (MGA) reveals that consumers who shop for gardening products by mail and online are very happy.

The survey states that 97 percent of mailorder gardening shoppers said their merchandise arrived on time, and 96 percent said it arrived in good condition. Furthermore, 95 percent of the shoppers were very or somewhat satisfied with the way the seeds, bulbs and plants they ordered grew in their gardens, and an equal amount said they were very or somewhat satisfied with the way their gardening products and supplies performed.

Members also gave the top reasons shoppers order gardening

products by mail and online. The members said 59 percent was unique merchandise that is not available elsewhere, 51 percent said high quality of the merchandise, 50 percent was convenience, 45 percent said the prices were

reasonable, and 41 percent said they have purchased products from the company in the past.

The survey was conducted in November and December 2002 by the National Gardening Association and commissioned by

the MGA. More than 6,000 customers who had bought products from MGA-member catalogs and Web sites responded to the survey, making it the largest survey of mailorder gardening customers ever conducted. 