

VISITING THE INDUSTRY'S WINTER SHOWS



We spent the better part of January traveling from show to show. Here are some highlights from three shows we visited.

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January is a busy month for all of us. All of the gift markets, industry trade shows, related trade shows from outside of the industry and so much more. We were able to take the month by storm and visit a few of the shows around the country to see what they had to offer. We know there are a lot out there and many of you probably went to some others on top of what we were able to visit. We'd love to learn about your show experiences: Send your recaps to cevans@sgcmail.com. Here is our recap of AmericasMart, the Mid-Am and TPIE.

Mid-Am

We visited the 2007 Mid-Am Trade Show, held Jan. 17-19 in Chicago, Ill., and encountered bustling crowds, who no doubt came to view the numerous products and innovations at the show. Creativity was the name of the game, with many companies featuring inventive products in their booths. There were interesting products everywhere we looked: A watering can that oxygenates water and a container with its own subirrigation system are just two of the products that caught our attention.

The watering can, called Enki, from Ovation Science, Inc., is intended to saturate tap water with oxygen to stimulate plant growth and health.

Intended for consumers, Enki plugs into an outlet to start the oxygenating process. The booth displayed pictures of plants grown both with regular and oxygenated water, and the results were interesting to see. Consumers may be interested in using oxygenated water as a natural form of fertilizer, especially with the recent consumer enthusiasm for all things organic and natural.

Another interesting product shown at Mid-Am is a series of containers that feature optional subirrigation from Lechuza. According to the company, plants' needs can be met for up to 12 weeks depending on container size. The subirrigation system is placed directly into a planter and then the container can be planted as usual. A water supply shaft is visible above the container line and indicates the level of water in the system. Imagine the possibilities of this product for consumers who travel frequently or who may be forgetful when it comes to caring for plants.

The wide assortment of products — from varieties to hard goods to equipment — kept attendees interested and on the show floor, as many exhibitors commented that they had run out of catalogues and handouts more quickly than expected. See the next Mid-Am Trade Show for yourself: Jan. 16-18, 2008. For more information on the event, visit www.midam.org.

AmericasMart

Atlanta in January is so unpredictable. Are there going to be tons of trends, how many people are going to attend this year, what is going to be the hottest thing to take home this year? As a whole, AmericasMart, held January 9-17, 2007, in Atlanta, Ga., offered a variety of that information and more.

Walking around the show, the one major trend that we noticed was the lack of new trends. The merchandise was all very interesting, but it seemed like manufacturers went a little on the safe side this year and did some more expansion on some emerging trends from last year as opposed to a bunch of new ones (more nautical, colorful, etc.). As many of you already know, the one really new trend that we saw was all about being funky (see the January issue's Market Watch for more information). Neat, different, unique and



Top: AmericasMart made history with the amount of people that came to the show in January 2007. (Photo: AmericasMart) **Bottom:** The TPIE show floor offers a plethora of green goods and products. (Photo: TPIE)

interesting merchandising filled the shelves, and buyers were eating it up.

Even though the product trends were a little lower than normal this year, the numbers of attendees at the Mart were up; in fact, AmericasMart made history this past January. AmericasMart Atlanta hosted its largest market in its half-century, with more than 100,000 retailer and exhibitor customers at the event.

Another first for the Mart was the largest number of temporary booths in AmericasMart history, with the debut of more than 500 new exhibiting companies.

Here were some of the new things featured at the Mart:

- The January Market debut of Coastal Lifestyles Collection and AmericasMart's Children's World.
- The rebranding of The Gardens to its new moniker...The Gardens — Casual Living & Home Décor.
- The expansion and relocation of Pampered Pets and the Collegiate Product Licensee Pavilion.

For more information on AmericasMart and its annual markets, visit www.americasmart.com.

TIPIE

"Fresh Attitude and Ideas" was the theme for this year's Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition (TIPIE). The trade show and conference took place Jan. 18-20 in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. More than 8,000 attendees made the trek to southern Florida to see the latest in tropical plants and foliage.

TIPIE is a great venue to see what many foliage growers have to offer, as well as a plethora of other green goods and products for your garden center. Show organizers gave the show a fresh look this year by creating a new layout with larger exhibits in the Broward County Convention Center. This allowed more than 500 exhibitors the opportunity to really put their products on display!

The booth for Kerry's Bromeliad Nursery in Homestead, Fla., was recognized as the Best of Show, while alocasia 'Stingray' from Excelsa Gardens, Inc., Loxahatchee, Fla., received honors for Most Unusual Single Plant Specimen.

Attendees also had the chance to participate in two different road shows this year: An Interiorscape Road Show took place in Homestead, while the Garden Center Road Show went to Florida's West Coast to tour an independent garden center, as well as a floriculture and a topiary nursery.

For the first time, TIPIE offered how-to demonstrations on growing tropical container gardens, using

tropicals in floral arrangements and new pest management technology.

TIPIE also debuted Tropical Plant Shirt Day on opening day of this year's show. Hundreds of attendees were roaming around the convention clad in their favorite tropical shirts vying for all kinds of prizes. It was quite the sight.

To find out more information or to see photos of this year's event, go to www.tpie.org.

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