

## HEADLINES

Compiled by Catherine Evans

## DIY introduces new programming for gardeners

The Do It Yourself Network (DIY), sister station of HGTV, will be heading up a new television program in January entitled "Weekend Gardening." Writer and designer Maureen Gilmer has created weekend projects for the intermediate gardener that make gardens thrive.

The show is one of a seven-show programming block called "Weekends on Weekdays." Each series includes information about the prep work and the how-to that people can complete during the week, as well as practical ideas, useful time-management tips, step-by-step instructions, budget estimates and materials lists for weekend projects such as gardening, creating closets and garage spaces, and throwing elaborate parties.

Want to know what projects your customers will be working on next weekend? The following is a brief summary of the first season.

Episode WG101 "Creating an Outdoor Room": Use of plants and garden accents turns a simple outdoor space into a warm outdoor room.

Episode WG102 "Spring Cleaning Your Pond": Make a dormant, algae-infested pond into a thriving water garden.

Episode WG104 "Renter's Dilemma": Take a soilless area and transform it into a potted garden.

Episode WG105 "Planting a Blast of Seasonal Color": Use colorful annuals and a tight space to give a yard a spring makeover.

Episode WG106 "Dry Ain't Dull": Take a bare garden plot, contrast foliage, colorful flowers, stone-steppers and a drip-irrigation system, and a successful garden falls into place with a fail-safe watering system.

Episode WG107 "Rosa Antigua" Part 1: The first of a 2-part series on roses. How to use roses in a garden with garden décor and how well they bloom.

Episode WG108 "Rose Antigua" Part 2: The second of a 2-part series. Roses suitable for cutting, rose trees and hybrid roses are used to make a bare plot into a formal rose garden.

Episode WG109 "Enchanted Forest": Turn a shady area into a thriving forest understory with shade plants and garden décor.

Episode WG110 "Edible Ornamentals": Take a space next to the driveway, build a bamboo trellis and start cooking the fresh greens that come from home.

Episode WG111 "Going Native": Import plants from different regions and climates to see how the

contrast draws in wildlife.

Episode WG112 "Propagation Station — Growing from Seed" Part 1: The first in a 2-part series. How to start a garden from seed.

Episode WG113 "Propagation Station — Growing from Seed" Part 2: The second in a 2-part series. How to start a garden from cuttings.

After every episode has aired, the information will be posted on [www.diy.net.com](http://www.diy.net.com).

In October, DIY launched a similar show to "Weekend Gardening" called Weekend Landscaping, also a part of

"Weekends on Weekdays." The show features landscape designer Mayita Dinos who will be doing projects that can be executed by intermediate gardeners in one weekend. Some of the projects include a water garden, a kitchen potager garden, a dry river bed garden, a romantic entryway, a garden with less water maintenance, and much more. All of this information can also be found on the



"Weekend Gardening" host Maureen Gilmer

## Online Sales Skyrocket

In a study done by comScore Networks Inc., an online market research firm, consumers spent \$2 billion in online sales during the week after Thanksgiving. The survey says that online spending is on the way to reaching a fourth-quarter record.

In 2001, online spending was at \$1.5 billion during the week after Thanksgiving, which did add to the online sales record; however, this year's totals are hitting the cash register with the click of a mouse.

According to Reuters, Michelle David Adams, vice president of comScore said, "While travel spending was the dominant force pushing e-commerce trends higher in the off-season, non-travel sales have now become the growth engine, as consumers come online in droves to take advantage of the Internet's convenience, competitive pricing and wide product selection."

According to comScore Networks, people are becoming more comfortable with buying over the Internet, and instead of buying books, CDs and DVDs, they are purchasing clothes, jewelry, accessories and more, causing the amount of money spent to soar.

## Horti Fair Holds Top Position

The International Horti Fair, which was held November 6-9 in Amsterdam, provided visitors with a complete overview of the horticultural sector. Exhibitors and visitors included well-known flower breeders, innovative wholesale equipment manufacturers and the latest in retail and florist supplies.

The Horti Fair, which consists of the NTV International Horticultural Trade Fair and the International Flower Trade Show, attracted approximately 55,000 visitors this year, of which approximately 40 percent came from abroad, and 920 exhibitors, of whom over 40 percent came from abroad. With an excellent overall rating of 7.7 out of 10, the HortiFair is firmly established as one of the leading international horticulture trade shows.

The number of registrations for the HortiFair was down slightly from last year, but the caliber of the fair was at the same high level as previous years. As a result of mergers

and scale enlargement in the horticultural industry, there has been a decline in the number of potential exhibitors; however, the quality of attendees continues to climb. More than 80 percent of attendees had purchasing power and were shopping the HortiFair to keep abreast of current industry trends.

The next Horti Fair will be held November 5-8, 2003, in Amsterdam.



## HEADLINES

## Frank's Announces Third Quarter Results

A recent report published by Frank's Nursery and Crafts states that its 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter sales were down 8.4 percent from 2001. The report said that a main reason for the decrease was the heavy promotional activity last year when the company exited certain lines of business. Another decrease came from net sales of 2002, which were \$39.6 million, 13.3 percent less than the 2001 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter totals. However, Frank's operated 13 less stores than in 2001. The 2002 net loss was \$15.9 million compared to the 2001 totals, which were \$33.1 million. As far as a year-to-date total, net sales through November 3, 2002, were \$239.7 million, a 4-percent decrease in comparable store sales

from 2001 and a 16.1-percent decrease from the 2001 year-to-date totals.

Showing a large improvement in stock turns, merchandising inventory was \$62.1 million, 17-percent lower than the comparable 170-store base at the end of 2001. Under the company's two revolving credit facilities, the total excess availability was \$23.5 million. The Earnings Before Income Taxes Depreciation and Amortization (EBIDA) for the third quarter was \$10.6 million, 52-percent higher than 2001. According to Adam Szopinski, president and chief operating officer of Frank's, the third quarter has also been the most challenging and brings in the lowest volume; however, they are looking forward to the totals from the holiday season.

## FPO TAKES CHICAGO

Following two successful years of billboard, print, radio and TV advertising, the Flower Promotion Organization (FPO) sponsored its first media drive in the Chicago market over the

Thanksgiving holiday.

In an effort to stimulate free media coverage of holiday flower "possibilities," the FPO hosted a design school on November 20 for area newspapers and magazine editors. Home editors from publications such as *The*

piece for the Thanksgiving table or a tabletop arrangement to brighten a winter day. That's why we invited home editors instead of garden editors. Garden editors and their readers already know how great flowers are; we saw the home market as an untapped resource for potentially high sales. Chicago is our first market for implementation of this message through a media drive."

Though the media drive's long-term influence is yet to be seen, the short-term coverage has been substantial. This fall, the FPO has had two morning news segments with WBBM, the CBS affiliate; one morning news segment with WMAQ channel 5, the NBC affiliate; and the crowning jewel, two segments on WGN

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*Chicago Tribune*, *The Sun Times* and *The Kankakee Daily Journal* were not only shown how to incorporate arrangements into a home environment, they were also shown how simple each arrangement was to create during a hands-on workshop with one of the featured designers (the design recipes are available on the FPO consumer Web site, [www.flowerpossibilities.com](http://www.flowerpossibilities.com)).

"People are not in their gardens much this time of year," explained FPO Executive Director Will Carlson, Jr., "but this is great time to incorporate flowers into the home, whether that's a center-



From left to right, FPO Executive Vice-President Stan Pohmer, FPO Spokesperson Jill Slater, LGR Assistant editor Catherine Evans, and a representative of the *Kankakee Daily Journal*.

## JANUARY

**7-16: Atlanta International Gift and Home Furnishings Market**  
Atlanta, Ga.  
T: (800) ATL-MART  
[www.americasmart.com](http://www.americasmart.com)

**12-13: Birdwatch America**  
Atlanta, Ga.  
T: (813) 995-2804

**12-15: National Retail Federation Convention & Expo**  
New York, N.Y.  
T: (202) 783-7971

**13-17: ProGreen Expo**  
Denver, Colo.  
T: (800) 397-6665  
[www.progreenexpo.com](http://www.progreenexpo.com)

**14-21: Gift and Home Furnishings Market**  
Los Angeles, Calif.  
T: (213) 763-5800  
[www.lamart.com](http://www.lamart.com)

**15-17: Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show**  
Chicago, Ill.  
T: (847) 562-2010  
[www.midam.org](http://www.midam.org)

**15-18: Garden Centers of America CEO/Senior Management Conference and Annual Meeting**  
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.  
T: (888) 648-6463

**17-21: Dallas International Gift and Home Accessories Market**  
Dallas, Texas  
T: (914) 421-3200  
[www.glmshows.com](http://www.glmshows.com)

**18-21: California Gift Show**  
Los Angeles, Calif.  
T: (914) 421-3200  
[www.glmshows.com](http://www.glmshows.com)

**20-22: Central Environmental Nursery Trade Show (CENTS)**  
Columbus, Ohio  
T: (800) 825-5062

**30-Feb. 1: Gulf States Horticulture Expo**  
Mobile, Ala.  
[alna@prodigy.net](mailto:alna@prodigy.net)

**30-Feb. 2: American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA)**

**Management Clinic**  
Louisville, Ky.  
T: (202) 789-2900  
[www.anla.org](http://www.anla.org)

## FEBRUARY

**1-6: New York International Gift Fair**  
New York, N.Y.  
T: (914) 421-3200  
[www.glmshows.com](http://www.glmshows.com)

**2-6: Spring Fair Birmingham**  
Birmingham, England  
T: (609) 921-0222  
[www.springfair.com](http://www.springfair.com)

**6-8: New England Grows**  
Boston, Mass.  
T: (508) 653-3009  
[www.negrows.org](http://www.negrows.org)

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

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

## MARCH

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

**9-11: Vancouver Gift Show**  
British Columbia, Canada  
T: (914) 421-3200  
[www.glmshows.com](http://www.glmshows.com)

**15-18: Atlanta Spring Gift Accessories and Holiday Market**  
Atlanta, Ga.  
T: (800) ATL-MART  
[www.americasmart.com](http://www.americasmart.com)

**16-18: Dallas International Gift and Home Accessories Market**  
Dallas, Texas  
T: (914) 421-3200  
[www.glmshows.com](http://www.glmshows.com)

**16-18: GlobalShop**  
Chicago, Ill.  
T: (866) 933-1001  
[www.globalshop.org](http://www.globalshop.org)



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TV with FPO spokesperson Jill Slater for a behind-the-scenes look at a flower wholesale warehouse, with a focus on Thanksgiving tabletop decorating.

The FPO, an alliance between Columbian and U.S. flower growers, was created to expand the U.S. market for all cut flowers. Aimed at women aged 25-54 who

already purchase flowers, the "Flowers. Alive With Possibilities" campaign entices them to purchase more frequently by giving them new "possibilities" for using cut flowers around the home.

FPO's campaign and related materials are available for use by industry businesses, groups and associations. FPO has worked successfully with a number of groups to leverage and expand the campaign in their markets. The Allied Florists of Houston, for example, adapted the FPO's print ads to use in billboards throughout their metro area.

Results after just two waves of advertising have shown a considerable impact on consumer behavior, exceeding initial expectations. Targeted consumers in the initial five markets purchased flowers 26 percent more frequently than in the control markets due to the FPO promotion. The impact was most pronounced among those females who bought for themselves. They increased their purchase frequency by 58 percent during the height of the campaign.

The FPO's advertising campaign, "Flowers. Alive with

Possibilities," has been airing in the Chicago media market since September 2000. For more information about FPO or the marketing campaign, visit [www.flowerpossibilities.com](http://www.flowerpossibilities.com) or call Will Carlson at (989) 834-1322.

### **New Trade Show Hits Sin City**

There is a new trade show for the lawn and garden market in 2003. The Lawn and Garden Marketing and Distribution Association (LGMMDA) opens the North American Lawn & Garden Trade Show to retailers and LGMMDA distributor and manufacturer members July 24, 2003, at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, Nev. Forty retailers will win a round-trip airfare and 2-night hotel stay from the LGMMDA. The show follows the LGMMDA annual convention held July 21-23, 2003 at the same location. For more information call (215) 564-3484.

### **Proven Winners Sponsors Fine Gardening Conference Series**

Proven Winners is set to sponsor the 2003 *Fine Gardening Conference Series*. The event will be held at several locations across the country from May through October. The conference series will include design ideas, useful gardening techniques and plant information for gardeners.

### **Household Net Worth is Declining**

According to the *Wall Street Journal* the U.S. household net worth has declined by 4.5 percent from the second quarter to the third quarter, reaching the lowest level since 1995. According to the Federal Reserve, the net worth fell to \$38 trillion recently. The ratio of net worth to disposable personal income was down to 4.9 percent from 5.2 percent in the second quarter. This is a big change from the 6.3 percent at the end of 1999.

Due to shrinking assets and rising debt, the 4.5 percent has become the lowest in seven years. Because of the problems in the stock market this past year (17-percent decrease), assets fell

3.4 percent to \$47 trillion. Liabilities have risen 2.2 percent to \$8.5 trillion because of mortgage debt, which increased 3.3 percent to \$5.8 trillion, the highest since 1989.

### Home Depot Reaches for the Stars

In a new ad campaign for Home Depot, the do-it-yourself dream takes center stage. The campaigns are targeted to be more on the personal side of home repair, taking an emotional turn on the subject. One ad focuses on a young woman who re-tiles her floor without her doubting father's help, while another features a college student calling home for a weekend visit but is told his room is now a bathroom.

According to *USA Today*, John Costello, chief marketing officer for Home Depot, said, "The ads show the power of the brand and how 280,000 associates can help regular people accomplish extraordinary results in their home...Going forward, our opportunity is to develop advertising that showcases the advan-

tages of the Home Depot in even more ways."

Because of the tough competition with the Lowe's chain, Home Depot wants to distinguish itself from competitors. Currently Home Depot is the number-one home-improvement chain with Lowe's coming in a close second. In the third quarter, Lowe's rose four percent and expects a 2-percent increase in the fourth quarter. Home Depot stores had a 2-percent decrease in the third quarter and are looking at a 3- to 5-percent decrease in the fourth quarter. However, Home Depot has more stores and had \$54 billion in sales in 2001.

### Siemens and AmericasMart Race to Expand a Partnership

Siemens Building Technologies Inc. and AmericasMart Atlanta take their brand marks to the racetrack in a new NASCAR program that expands the companies' long-running business partnership. AmericasMart Atlanta and Siemens took the national NASCAR stage on November 10 at the Checker's Auto Parts 500 in Phoenix, Ariz., where

driver Kenny Wallace and his #23 Hills Bros. Coffee/Siemens Dodge placed 11th among a field of 43 NASCAR racers. Displayed on the car's TV panel was the AmericasMart logo. This marketing opportunity adds a new chapter to the 12-year relationship between the nation's number-one wholesale marketplace and the world's leading provider of building technology systems.

### Discount Retailers Benefit from the Weak Economy

Wal-Mart and Target are jumping ahead despite the weak economy in the United States. In the third quarter, Wal-Mart increased profits by 23 percent to \$1.82 billion and Target increased 50 percent to \$277 million. Sales for both are up an average of 11 percent from 2001, and that is including the September 11 impact on the economy.

### Four Major Companies Partner Up for Program

Sunrise Marketing, Novalis network of nurseries, The Flower Fields and P. Allen Smith have teamed up to offer a new retail

program entitled, "P. Allen Smith's Garden Home Collection." This program, based on Smith's new book, plus a series and a PBS show on the same topic, will be launched in spring 2003 and offered solely to independent garden centers. It will give consumers the opportunity to find the varieties on Smith's show locally.

Smith's success comes from his show on PBS, media stops on CBS's "Early Show," the Weather Channel, *Woman's Day Magazine* and his Web site, [www.pallensmith.com](http://www.pallensmith.com). Smith's presence falls into more than 80 million homes with 3-5 million of that from his Web site monthly.

The programs will include sun and shade selections for early spring, spring, summer and fall. While Smith will be referencing the plant and design principles, Novalis growers, Carolina, Conard-Pyle, Imperial and Willoway Nurseries will deliver bud and bloom, retail-ready plant material to participating retailers, determining fixture needs and delivery frequency. Novalis has also designed a benching system to feature graphics that echo Smith's design concepts. ♦

### Perennial Plant Association Names Plant of the Year

The Perennial Plant Association has named its 2004 Perennial Plant of the Year. The winner is *Athyrium*

*nipponicum* 'Pictum', Japanese painted fern. The fern has a moderate growth rate reaching 12-18 inches tall and wide. It prefers partial to full shade and moist, organic

soil. Its finely divided fronds radiate from a central crown and are grayish-green with hues of red, blue and purple. The plant is in the USDA Hardiness Zones 4-9.

### AIB Winners Announced

The recent America in Bloom (AIB) Educational Symposium held in Reston, Va., from October 10-12, concluded with a gala awards dinner and ceremony, where awards were given to communities that participated in the AIB contest. Efforts in the AIB program are recognized and rewarded by qualified judges for community involvement, heritage preservation, environmental awareness, tidiness, floral displays, turf and open spaces, landscapes and urban forestry. The program encourages volunteerism and involves municipal governments, businesses, organizations and citizens in improving their community's quality of life.

Winning cities were announced in the following population categories. For under 10,000, Camp Hill, Pa., was recognized as winner with a special mention for landscaped areas. The judges said, "Camp Hill is a beautiful burrough where beautiful landscapes are visual in all sectors of the municipality. The parks, private residences and Market Street Business streetscapes are well-designed and maintained. The arboretum built back in 1938 is a beautifully maintained landscape containing rare, unusual trees, retreat facilities and a natural, creek-side woodland."

For the 10,000-25,000 category, Fairhope, Ala., was recognized as winner with a special mention for floral displays. The judges said, "This town has flowers!" Hanging baskets and huge plant boxes splash color everywhere, with



Camp Hill, Pa.



municipal institutions, and the community at large. The judges thought their efforts were fundamental toward fostering greater community pride while also honoring pride in their local horticultural history.”

Chicago, Ill., was recognized in the over 500,000 category, with a special mention for floral displays. “Chicago might well be called ‘Flower City,’” the judges commented. “There are flowers everywhere — in parks, in

planters in the median strips of major thoroughfares, in hanging baskets on lamp poles, on bridges, and throughout the Loop business district. A great deal of innovation has gone into the selection of species with

boxes changed seasonally. The judges especially recognized the changing of the flower boxes four times a year in the downtown area.

Westlake, Ohio, was recognized as winner in the 25,001-50,000 category, with a special mention for urban forestry. The judges called it “a role model for innovative urban forestry practices.” The city employs a certified arborist, and the planning staff works to protect and perpetuate the city’s forest feeling. Land-use policies are in place and enforced to ensure that with all new developments, new trees are planted at equal to or exceeding the forest stand removed.

Fayetteville, Ark., was recognized as winner in the 50,001-100,000 category, with a special mention for heritage conservation. “Fayetteville, Ark., is a vibrant city situated on the edge of the Ozarks,” the judges said. “It is a place rich in history from the Civil War, corporations, and its famous University of Arkansas Razorbacks. Endowed with natural beauty, it is blessed with beautiful landscapes, natural areas and vibrant community spirit.”

For the 100,001-300,000 category, Kalamazoo County, Mich., was recognized as winner with a special mention for community involvement. The judges commended this county on many collaborative efforts, including the development of regional parks, cycling pathways, restoration of waterways, environmental education, and heritage protection and interpretation. They said, “FlowerFest should be recognized for its significant efforts to bring communities together through its many accomplishments, but most importantly how it is bridging local industries, the various regional and

many unusual, but attractive, combinations evident. These plants go beyond the usual eight or 10 types planted by most cities. All plantings were well-maintained and were in picture-perfect condition at the time of the judges' visit. In cases where the planting and maintenance are contracted out, strict requirements are enforced for soil mixtures, fertilization practices and watering. If a hanging basket is substandard, for example, the contractor must replace it."

For resources to help you get your community involved, visit [www.americainbloom.org](http://www.americainbloom.org).

### **Ecoroofs Bring Support to Commercial Buildings**

Atlanta is currently under a \$3-billion sewer-improvement court order to help better handle storm water runoff from roofs, according to *USA Today*. Many of the residents are presenting the ideas of using Ecoroofs, turning commercial building rooftops into gardens.

Ecoroofs help a number of urban communities by acting as a natural sponge during rainstorms, stopping at least 90 percent of the rainwater runoff. The green goods also help filter out many of the pollutants the rainwater brings. The ecoroofs also raise temperatures in heavily populated areas, fighting the "heat-island effect."

A number of cities have found success in the roof solution. Portland (the leader in ecoroofs), Pittsburgh, Chicago, Toronto and Seattle are just some of the cities that have over half their commercial buildings covered with gardens. Currently, Ford Motor in Dearborn, Mich., is building a 10-acre rooftop garden on its truck plant.

Another perk of the plan is that a number of cities are offering grants and tax breaks to places that are willing to turn their buildings into ecoroofs. The concept first came about in Germany over 30 years ago.

However, Americans are wor-

ried about the cost more than the actual sewage problem. Many people fear that the cost of the supplies and the upkeep are going to cost twice as much money as fixing the actual drainage system. Another worry is the weight of the materials and if they will be too heavy for the roof tops.

In cities like Atlanta, there is so much pavement on the ground that it is hard for the water to go anywhere, causing an overall water drainage problem. Many experts all across the country are saying that ecoroofs are becoming a growing trend, and that they are there for a good reason — helping the environment. In the summer, temperatures can be reduced as much as 70° F, and less bacteria will be running down public streets and into household water systems.

Atlanta officials hope to start building ecoroofs as early as January, so when the rainy season hits, they will be a little more prepared.

### **Retail Sales Highest in Three Months**

The figures are in and the shoppers are out making the Christmas season the largest sales hike in three months. After a 1.5 percent decrease in September and a .01 percent decrease in October, retailers were looking a little weary during the holiday season. However, that scare has been overcome, and more people are buying.

According to the Associated Press (AP), economists are reinforcing their beliefs that the economy is on its way to being solid again and are not looking at a recession in the future.

The AP also says that the reason more money is being spent is because of the low interest rates, tax cuts and very low mortgage financing. Even stocks are on the upside, causing more people to realize that there is more money that can be spent. Economists are even saying that rate may stay low until at least spring to give the economy that extra boost it needs. ❧