

LAWN & GARDEN RETAILER HEADLINES

Training Challenge Hits the AHMA Hardware Show

Jim Paluch, nationally recognized motivational speaker and founder of the highly acclaimed Training Challenge for Landscape companies, announces the launch of a new training program specifically designed for retailers called *The Lawn & Garden Retailer Training Challenge*.

Paluch will present a special half-day Training Jam for business owners at the AHMA Hardware Show on April 17th focused on the Psychology Of Training and will launch AHMA's first group of retailers into the system that has revolutionized training in the landscape industry.

The Training Challenge is a one-year program that provides the framework for retailers to train all employees on a weekly basis for 52 consecutive weeks on a variety of technical



and interpersonal skills. Since 1999, more than 400 companies have "Accepted the Challenge" and proven the system boosts morale, improves employee retention and increases company profits by synchronizing the entire team with the company's vision while developing the habit of training. To find out how to register for this event contact AHMA at (847) 605-1025 and for questions about the Training Challenge contact Brian at (877) 574-5267.



APRIL 17 TRAINING JAM AGENDA

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 12:00-12:45 | Networking Lunch |
| 12:45-1:00 | Certification Awards |
| 1:00-2:30 | The Psychology of Training |
| 2:30-3:45 | The Ultimate Training Opportunity |
| 3:45-4:15 | Accepting the Challenge |
| 4:15-5:15 | Training Challenge New Class Reception |
| 5:15 | Head for the Future! |



APRIL

18-20 AHMA Hardware Show
Chicago, Ill.
www.ahmahardwareshow.com

22-28 High Point Market
High Point, N.C.
(336) 888-3700
www.ihfc.com

MAY

10-12 National Hardware Show
Las Vegas, Nev.
www.nationalhardwareshow.com

16-19 National Stationery Show
New York, N.Y.
www.nationalstationeryshow.com

JUNE

14-16 National Lawn and Garden Show
Denver, Colo.
(888) 316-0226
www.nlgshow.com

16-19 ANLA Retail Roadshow
New York, N.Y.
(202) 789-2900
www.anla.org

16-19 Super Floral Show
Charlotte, N.C.
(312) 332-4650
www.superfloralshow.com

23-26 Southeast Greenhouse Conference
Greenville, S.C.
(877) 927-2775
www.sgcta.org

25-29 Dallas Int'l. Gift & Home Accessories Market
Dallas, Texas
(888) 231-7024
www.glmshows.com/dallas

27-30 GCA Summer Tour
Williamsburg, Va.
(888) 648-6463
www.gardensentersofamerica.org

JULY

5-8 Perennial Plant Symposium & Trade Show
New York, N.Y.
(614) 771-8431
www.perennialplant.org

10-14 OFA 2004 Short Course and Trade Show
Columbus, Ohio
(614) 487-1117
www.ofa.org

11-12 Birdwatch America
Columbus, Ohio
(813) 995-2804
www.birdwatchamerica.com

13-18 ANLA Convention and Learning Retreat
Maui, Hawaii
(202) 789-2900
www.anla.org

AUGUST

12-14 SNA: World's Showcase of Horticulture
Atlanta, Ga.
(770) 953-3311
www.sna.org

26-28 Farwest Show
Portland, Ore
(800) 342-6401
www.farwestshow.com

'MISTY' NAMED IVY OF THE YEAR 2005

The winner of the American Ivy Society (AIS) award Ivy of the Year 2005 is *Hedera helix* 'Misty'.

Misty is a variegated, miniature, Bird's Foot ivy in the Pierot Classification system. It was found as a mutation of *H. helix* 'Needlepoint' in the late 1970s. Ivies are called Bird's Foot when the shape of their leaves resembles the track a bird's foot makes in the snow.

The leaves of Misty have five narrow lobes in various shades of green and gray-green with a thin white margin and white veins. Under low temperatures, the white is diffused with a pink blush. It is winter-hardy, surviving to at least -20° F. Misty does well in the sun, but it does not lose its variegation in the shade, so it will do well in darker areas of the garden.

Its self-branching habit and small leaves make Misty well suited for pots, hanging baskets and topiaries. In fact, Misty is one of the top six ivies used by professional growers for both large and small topiaries because it tends to be very consistent in leaf size throughout the year and, with little adjustment, does well in full sun situations, according to AIS.

A committee made up of members of The American Ivy Society, nurserymen and growers across the United States choose the winner of the award, which must complete a three-year trial period in the Society's test gardens and commercial nurseries.

The Ivy of the Year is selected for its attractiveness, ease of growth and multi-purpose uses. According to the AIS, the ivy must be suitable for both interior use and exterior home landscap-



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HEADLINES

"OFA" continued from page 6

feature presentations and idea exchanges on topics such as POS systems, customer relations, leadership skills, time management, increasing profits, maintaining customers and the generation gap.

The industry newcomer outreach sessions will include ideas on starting a new business, family business hints and being a good employee/supervisor.

OFA Short Course attendees will also be able to review new products and varieties displays, attend the OFA Short Course reception, visit the OFA showcase, participate in the FIRST fund-raising activities and shop at the OFA bookstore and apparel shop.

the research, production and marketing of ornamental crops.

"We have kept pace with the trends in gardening by emphasizing what is new, improved and profitable," says Jim Nau, Ball Horticultural Company trials manager. "Our gardens are due for an update so we can better show our visitors the innovation, excellence and creativity we value at Ball."

KMART CONFIRMS LAWSUIT AGAINST MARTHA STEWART LIVING OMNIMEDIA

Kmart Holding Corporation recently confirmed that it filed an action against Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (MSO) with the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division on February 11, 2004. Kmart is seeking declaratory and other relief under the June 2001 contract between Kmart and MSO IP Holdings, Inc. (MSO IP), a wholly owned subsidiary of MSO.

Kmart believes that MSO's news release distributed recently does not accurately reflect Kmart's position as set forth in the complaint. In particular, Kmart is not, at this time, seeking to reduce the total guarantees or the required advertising levels, but rather it is MSO that is seeking to force Kmart to make payments in excess of the contractual requirement, which payments would represent an impermissible double-counting. MSO's interpretation is inconsistent with the basis on which the contract was assumed in bankruptcy. Further, Kmart is seeking to clarify the amount that Kmart is required to spend on MSO media properties consistent with the plain language of the document and the referenced actual spend in 2001.

Kmart has repeatedly but unsuccessfully attempted to resolve this issue through negotiation since last fall. According to Kmart, it was left with no choice, in light of its need to plan its business. Kmart continues to value its relationship with MSO and sincerely hopes for a prompt conclusion to this matter. ♦

BALL HORTICULTURAL COMPANY UNDERGOES CHANGES FOR CENTENNIAL

The Ball Horticultural Company trial and display gardens, located on six acres at the company's headquarters in West Chicago, Ill., will undergo a transformation to be unveiled for its centennial celebration.

The next generation of the Ball trial and display gardens will be open to growers, garden center retailers, landscapers and home gardeners in the summer of 2005. Ball is also an All-American Selections trial location, and those trials will take place in 2004.

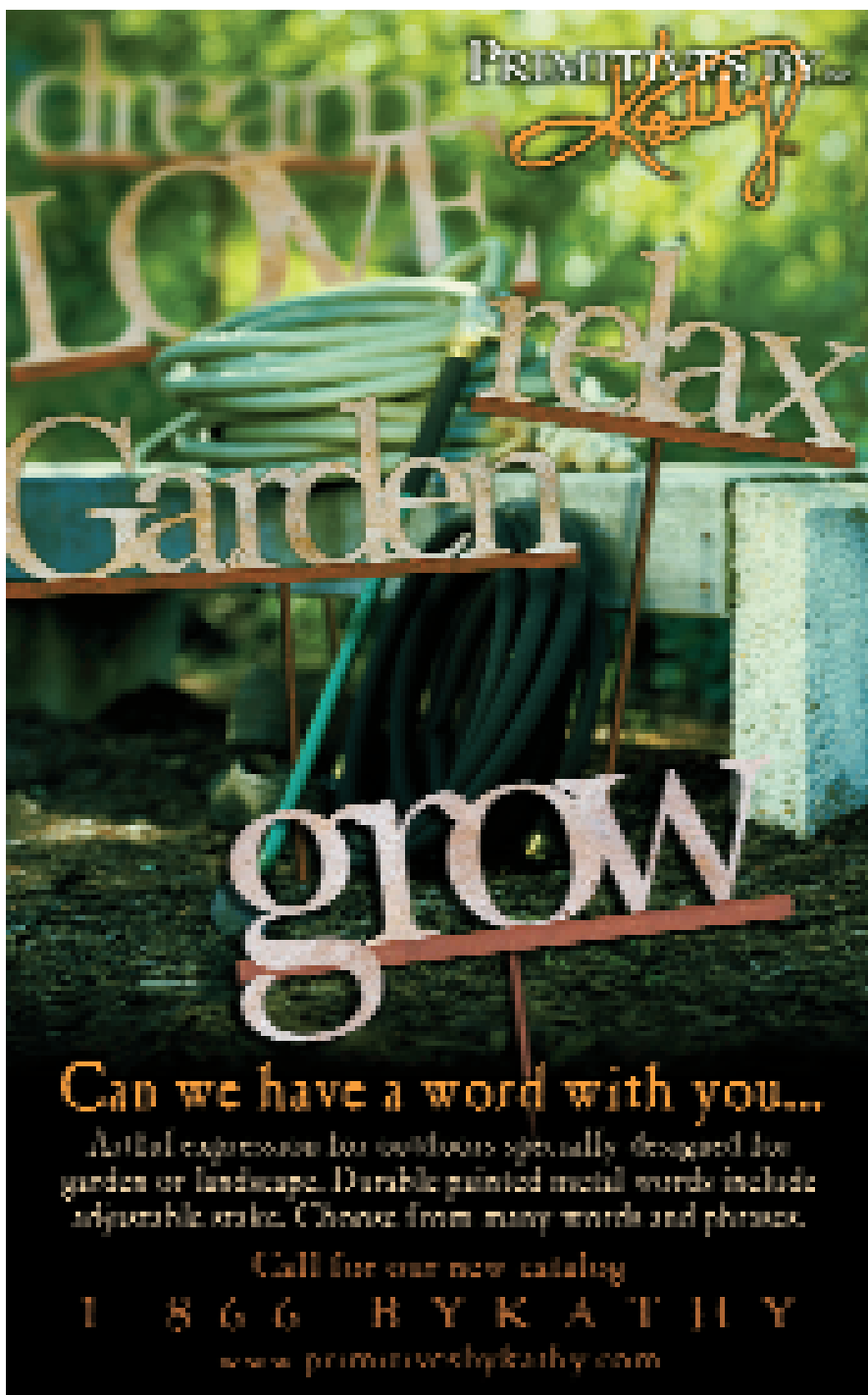
While plans are still in the preliminary development stage, Ball will be working with its existing acreage to update aging infrastructures and other structural components. The Ball gardens will be closed this summer for the renovation.

"We'll be debuting this new, beautiful, different garden, and it will give visitors a chance to see new and exciting things in a new and exciting way. It's just time for an update, and we thought this was the perfect time to do it," said Jessie Atchison, Ball's PR representative.

Since 1905, Ball Horticultural Company has kept a commitment to provide professional growers with innovative products and service. A family-owned business, Ball has grown from a one-man operation into a major player in



Write in 759



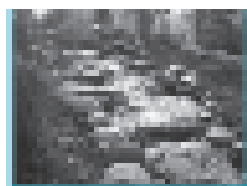
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EasyPro POND SUPPLIES

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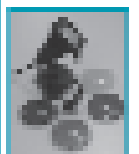
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Write in 850

HEADLINES

"Ivy" continued from page 7

ing. It must be beautiful, lush and noninvasive in a garden.

Because of the rising popularity of ivy as a pot and garden plant, The American Ivy Society initiated the annual Ivy of the Year program in 2001, with that year's winner 'Lady Frances.' The winners since then have been 'Golden Ingot' 2002, 'Teardrop' 2003 and 'Duck Foot' 2004.

The American Ivy Society is offering a Seal of Verification for ivy that has come from a grower whose stock has been identified and verified as being true to name. The seal may be used on ivy labels so that wholesalers, retailers and gardeners will know that the ivy they have purchased has the correct name. Because ivy readily tends to revert, ivy stock should be verified every 3-5 years to keep it accurate.

Keith & Deborah Ramsey's Garden Supply Company was founded in 1996. Initially the company employed three people to design and install small residential landscapes and maintain commercial properties. Today, the Garden Supply Company has grown into a business with over \$3 million in sales.

"Recognizing the progressive spirit of garden centers like these is an enormous part of what NGCO stands for. We are excited about the future of the garden center community and proud to have people like Keith, Deborah, Gary and Mary as involved members of ANLA," said Josh Bracken, president of NGCO.

CALIFORNIA CUT-FLOWER INDUSTRY STILL ON DECLINE

The California cut-flower industry has been struggling due to foreign competition and subsequent dwindling family-operated businesses.

Ten years ago, 360 growers in California belonged to the California Cut Flower Commission. Now that number is down to 300, with just 95 selling at least \$300,000 in cut flowers per year. To deal with this heavy decline, many California growers have started to produce flowers like snapdragons that don't weather shipping well and must be grown domestically, according to Virginia Walter, professor of horticulture at California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo, Calif., in a recent article called "California cut flower industry's coastal lands under growing pressure" by San Diego's *The Daily Transcript*.

Ten years ago, foreign growers had just 45 percent of the domestic market, according to the commission. In 2002, foreign growers supplied 70 percent of cut flowers in the United States. Their lower prices were fueled by cheaper production costs and efficient shipping systems. Imported cut flowers are shipped dry.

"Growers are being affected by imports from Mexico, Colombia and Ecuador," said Eric Larson, San Diego County Farm Bureau executive director, according to *The Daily Transcript*. "They are not only under siege, they haven't survived. First came the carnation,

ANLA PRESENTS INAUGURAL RISING RETAIL STAR AWARDS

ANLA, through its retail division, the National Garden Center Organization (NGCO), recently presented the inaugural Rising Retail Star Award to Keith and Deborah Ramsey, of The Garden Supply, Cary, N.C., and Gary Blondell and Mary Odenwald, of Gary's Garden Mart, Severna Park, Md. This award was developed by the NGCO to recognize the talented and visionary professionals and businesses that represent the future of the green industry.

To qualify for the Rising Retail Star Award, a candidate must own or manage a company for less than 10 years and actively participate in networking, staff professional development and the exchange of ideas with peers through an association environment. Key criteria also includes innovation and risk taking, charitable community participation, and a demonstrated belief in the value of training and education.

Established in January 2001, Gary's Garden Mart has achieved significant growth over the past three years. With increases in customer count, average sales and margins, Mary and Gary are model recipients for the Retail Rising Star Award. "We give great value to educational events and networking," said Blondell.

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