

HEADLINES

Compiled by Catherine Evans

FROM OFA
TO YOU

By Joe Boarini

OFA and the Southern Nursery Association (SNA) are partnering to develop a unique trade show and educational event for the retail and wholesale florist industry, retail garden centers and landscape contractors. FloralWorld and ColorWorld will be unveiled at SNA 2003...The World's Showcase of Horticulture scheduled for July 31 to August 2, 2003, at the Georgia World Congress Center.

NEW EVENTS

FloralWorld is co-sponsored by OFA and SNA in cooperation with *Florists' Review*. It will feature nearly 21,000 sq.ft. dedicated to retail florist products, symposium-style design shows, workshops by the industry's best and new product demonstrations.

ColorWorld is also co-sponsored by OFA and SNA in cooperation with the Southeast Greenhouse Conference. It will dedicate nearly 8,000 sq.ft. to floriculture products for the retail and landscape trade, new flower displays and innovative design concepts for annuals and perennials.

Attendees will also get an inside look at what's happening in other segments of the horticulture industry at SNA 2003 by having access to AmericasMart-Atlanta, the region's leading wholesale market for gift, silk and seasonal merchandise and home accents.

RESEARCH CONFERENCE

OFA is also assisting with the new floriculture section of the annual SNA Research Conference, to be held July 30 and 31, at SNA. OFA supplied SNA with a list of floriculture academic researchers, and Steve Carver, OFA manager — technical education, will serve as a facilitator for the floriculture section.

This two-day conference is an opportunity to see where the industry's horticulture research dollars are spent. Top researchers and educational leaders from the South's leading universities will present their latest discoveries in horticulture. Hundreds of topics in 11 categories will be shared in seven-minute presentations. The conference format allows attendees the opportunity to sit in on all or only those topics of interest.

PARTNERING PAYS OFF

OFA is pleased to work with SNA on FloralWorld and ColorWorld. This partnership is another way for OFA to expand our national scope and diversify our activities to support our national membership base.

OFA excels at bringing people to the education (e.g., through the OFA Short Course) and is continually looking for ways to expand this effort and take education to the people of our industry. With SNA, and other future partners, we can share ideas, resources and responsibilities without duplicating efforts.

Don't miss out on these two outstanding educational opportunities for floriculture industry professionals to buy, learn and network. The OFA Short Course is July 12-16 in Columbus, Ohio, and SNA 2003 is July 31-August 3 in Atlanta, Georgia. Visit www.ofa.org or www.sna.org for more information.

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Darwin Plants Offers New Marketing Program

Darwin Plants introduces a new branding and marketing program, Distinctly-Different, for new and unusual perennials. Special pot tags, bench talkers/cards and posters will be provided to promote the plants, along with a dedicated Web site that provides customers with extensive information about plants in the program, including growing tips from the hybridiser and the opportunity to take part in discussions. The program is designed to appeal to gardening enthusiasts interested in new and unusual varieties.

Coming to retail in spring 2004, Distinctly-Different will initially be comprised of 15 varieties. These will be reviewed annually and changed according to their suitability to the program. In order to qualify as Distinctly-Different, plants will have to have at least one unique characteristic and be available in limited quantities.

The 2004 selections include:

Caryopteris x clandonensis 'Summer Sorbet'

Delphinium 'Coral Sunset'

Delphinium 'Delft Blue'

Echinacea purpurea 'Razzmatazz'

Echinacea purpurea 'Vintage Wine'

Euphorbia 'Mini Martini'

Geranium 'Jolly Bee'

Geum 'Flames of Passion'

Heuchera 'Swirling Fantasy'

Hosta 'Christmas Candy'

Ligularia 'Laternchen'

Phlox 'Fancy Feelings'

Phlox 'Goldmine'

Phlox 'Natural Feelings'

Tradescantia 'Pink Chablis'



The Web site, www.distinctly-different.com, will be online in time for the start of the spring 2004 sales period. It will provide opportunities for browsers to post their own comments to published articles, and garden centers who carry Distinctly-Different varieties will be able to register their plant's serial number, enabling them to be listed on the sight as a distributor.

National Garden Month Makes A Big Splash

National Garden Month has been deemed an unqualified success according to its sponsors. More than 600 garden centers and 35 green group organizations participated in the month-long celebration.

National Garden Month began in 1986 with a presidential proclamation. "In spite of world events and a late-arriving spring," says Jeff Gibson, marketing manager for sponsor Ball Horticultural's Simply Beautiful, "attention and interest was high, especially among independent garden centers." The entire effort to attract the participation of independent garden centers was to demonstrate the power of a national promotional campaign. This kind of campaign drives traffic through garden center doors and generates media attention usually reserved for big box stores.

"Independent garden centers staged seminars, set up displays, conducted contests and handed out giveaways with the support of manufacturing partners," notes Gibson, who added that support included local and national PR as well as national television spots on HGTV and The Weather Channel. Cable networks, including HGTV; newswires, including the Associated Press; and major market media, such as *The Washington Post* and *Philadelphia Inquirer* all highlighted the campaign. Special promotional spots on local Weather Channel outlets and in-store banners at participating garden centers provided additional reminders to consumers to celebrate the power of gardening.

According to Gibson, the kickoff for National Garden Month at the U.S. Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C., was a key initiative in the success of the re-launch. It brought major national manufacturers and consumer groups together under one unified banner. For more information on National Gardening Month, visit www.garden.org.



LAWN & GARDEN RETAILER HEADLINES

U.S. ECONOMY UP IN 1ST QUARTER

According to a new U.S. Commerce Department report, the U.S. economy is up 1.9 percent for the 1st quarter of the year. Originally, economists were only predicting a 1.6 percent increase for the first three months of the year. However, even after the slight growth, the economy is still below normal.

Economists are predicting that people are still feeling the effects of the war and unemployment rates and that is why the country is still at a low. However, because of the 1st quarter increase, the predictions are that the economy will be slowly getting better, as the 4th quarter of 2002 produced only a 1.4-percent economic growth. Predictions are for a 2-percent increase in the 2nd quarter of 2003.

In other economic news, The Department of Labor is reporting that new claims of unemployment benefits have lessened in the past few weeks by 9,000. However, in late May, unemployment rose 83,000 to an 18-month high.

NENA GETS A NEW PRESIDENT

Jeff Huntington, co-owner of Pleasant View Gardens, Loudon, N.H., was recently named president of the New England Nursery Association (NENA). Huntington was first elected as the New Hampshire Representative to the board of NENA in 1983 and is also the former NENA Treasurer. Huntington has also worked on the State Association Leadership and New England Nursery and Landscape Certification Council and is the chair of the Summer Expo 2003 committee.

Huntington participates in the New Hampshire Plant Growers Association (NHPGA) and the ANLA, where he helped bring the annual national convention to Boston for 2003. He has also been instrumental in serving as a liaison between the NHPGA and the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Service.

Huntington and his family are heavily involved in running the family's greenhouse business, Pleasant View Gardens. Pleasant View Gardens is a producer of Proven Winners and Proven Selections young plants, as well as a supplier of finished plants.



HICKS NURSERIES RANKS 71

As Hicks Nurseries marks its 150th anniversary this year, *Family Business* magazine announced that the Westbury, N.Y., business is the 71st oldest family-owned company in the United States and surpassed by only three others in the New York metropolitan area. (The others are: Contigroup, global agribusiness; Henry W. T. Mali and Company, billiards fabrics; and Mager & Gougelman, manufacturers of artificial eyes and limbs.)

The magazine compiled a list of 102 companies that have remained owned and operated by the same family since at least 1865, and in some cases as far back as the early 17th century. All have operated for at least five generations, and some have a lot more behind them. Hicks Nurseries is in its sixth generation of family ownership, with Stephen Hicks as the current vice president of operations.

AHMA Hardware Show 2004

IT'S A LOT MORE THAN HARDWARE



IT'S A WORLD OF LAWN, GARDEN & OUTDOOR LIVING PRODUCTS, TOO!

World of Lawn, Garden & Outdoor Living™

JULY

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

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

29-31: PANTS
Fort Washington, Pa.
T: (717) 238-1673
www.plna.com

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

AUGUST
7-14: New York Gift Fair
New York, N.Y.
T: (800) 235-3512
www.225-fifth.com

9-14: New York International Gift 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

20-23: Calscape Expo
Irvine, Calif.
T: (707) 462-2276
www.cipaweb.org

20-24: ANLA Landscape Operations Tour
Southern Ohio
T: (202) 789-2900
www.anla.org

21-23: Farwest Show
Portland, Ore.
Sponsored by
Lawn & Garden Retailer, GPN
and Proven Winners
T: (503) 653-8733
www.farwestshow.com

31-2: 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

11-13: ANLA Landscape Distribution Tour
New York, N.Y.
T: (202) 789-2900
www.anla.org

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
1-5: ANLA Retail Roadshow
Northern California
T: (202) 789-2900
www.anla.org

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

**SAVE THE DATE:
APRIL 18-20, 2004
AHMA Hardware Show**
Chicago, Ill.
(800) 723-9895
www.ahmahardwareshow.com

WAL-MART'S EARNINGS TAKE A LEAP

For the first three months of its 1st quarter, ending April 30, Wal-Mart's earnings were up by approximately 14 percent, with earnings totaling \$1.86 billion. Earnings are up from \$1.63 billion during the same time period in 2002. Sales increased to \$56.7 billion, a 9.7-percent increase from \$51.7 in 2002.

According to Wal-Mart officials, the company is not expecting 2nd quarter results to be much better. They said they were disappointed with 1st quarter results, but expect sales will increase. Due to the recent war with Iraq, economic difficulties and lowering job availability, market analysts said there will be continuing consumer caution for months to come.

WHOLESALE PRICES FALL TO RECORD LOW

Even with the war in Iraq coming to a close, wholesale prices decreased 1.9 percent in April, making it the largest drop for wholesale prices in almost 17 years. According to the Labor Department, the decrease in the Producer Price Index (PPI), which measures the prices of goods before they reach store shelves, was a complete turn-around from March when higher energy prices, affected by the war, helped raise wholesale prices 1.5 percent.

Also according to the report, the decrease was more than double the 0.7 percent decline that economists predicted for the month of April. But gasoline and home-heating oil prices lowered a significant amount, adding a little bit of good news for businesses and consumers. Because of the slow growth, policy-makers at the Federal Reserve are worried that the United States could face possible deflation. It was indicated there is only a small chance of that happening, but the decline could still cause a possible threat to the economy. Currently, members at the Federal Reserve are preparing to cut rates, which are already at a

41-year low, to help with the possible threat of deflation.

PETS ARE A GROWING BUSINESS

Within the past few years, pets have gone from a company-keeping creature to a spoiled family member. According to a new research study, *Why People Buy Things For Their Pets*, from Unity Marketing, Americans spent nearly \$30 billion on pet-related products and services in 2002.

According to the survey, approximately 55 percent of American households own one or more pets. Pet food and supplies added up to \$18 billion, while pet and veterinary services equaled \$12 billion. People are doing more things for their pets, including exercise, pet sitting, grooming, etc. According to PETsMART and Petco, pet purchases are booming.

The survey also stated that more than 80 percent of pet owners purchased one or more "extras," including toys, bath and grooming products, dining bowls, vitamin supplements, furniture and beds, gifts, travel accessories and wearables, in 2002.

HOME DEPOT COPIES CHRISTMAS IDEAS

Home Depot is being forced to pay \$13.6 billion to a small Christmas tree stand maker after a federal court jury ruled that the home improvement store illegally copied a product and packaging design from a stand made by a company called Turlock.

Jim Boucher, owner of the family-owned Turlock, sent his patented design to China to be reproduced at a lower cost. Soon after, Home Depot ordered less stands from Turlock and stocked more stands from China with the same price, stock number dimensions, packaging and colors as the ones from Turlock.

Because of this lawsuit, Turlock has lost one of its largest clients, Home Depot, causing them to downsize from 20 employees to eight. All of the charges were denied by Home Depot in court, where the company stated that the products have very different qualities to them.

SCOTTS STARTS NEW ADVENTURE

The Scotts Co. has recently acquired Pam Pottery Inc., a

Florida pottery distributor, and is planning to acquire Scan-Pot USA in order to enter the \$1 billion pottery market. In 2004, two lines of Miracle-Gro branded pottery will be launched. Scotts new adventure into containers is part of a strategy to venture into unbranded, under-marketed and high-margin parts of the garden industry, allowing Miracle-Gro to use the strengths of its brands, merchandising and supply-chain expertise.

SAF ASSISTS IN HIPAA PRIVACY RULE

Despite rumors to the contrary, a representative of the Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Civil Rights recently reassured the Society of American Florists (SAF) that new health-care privacy standards do not prohibit flower deliveries to hospitals. The standards, which were established under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and went into effect in April, have caused some confusion among hospital personnel, patients and the media in recent weeks. ♦

Under the HIPAA Privacy Rule, hospitals must maintain a directory of patients' names, their locations in the facility and general health conditions. If a patient asks to be

excluded from the directory, the hospital cannot disclose any information about that patient, making direct deliveries or visits by non-hospital personnel to those patients

impossible. However, hospital personnel can still deliver flowers directly to those patients.

While the Privacy Rule does not prohibit flower deliveries,

some hospitals have imposed their own restrictions on deliveries. In that instance, florists should contact hospital administration for further direction. 
