

# FROM OFA TO YOU

## Designed Online

by **R. Holmes, CAE**

If you visited [www.ofa.org](http://www.ofa.org) recently? If you have been surfing lately, visit our site soon, and see what's new here for you. This page features information on association activities and links to the industry, and has been recently redesigned to be an even better resource about OFA.



The Web site, [www.ofa.org](http://www.ofa.org), is a great place to get to know OFA better and connect with others in the industry. You can start with a review of our history, past presidents, executive committee and board members, plus current committee members who have

shared their thoughts and skills to making OFA a member-driven organization. Upcoming events are listed — from the OFA Short Course to our outreach programs and board/committees. A special Short Course section highlights educational session topics, the trade show, and sponsorship opportunities. In late 2004, you'll be able to register for Short Course, make our hotel reservations and preview the 2005 Short Course online.

You can also access many OFA partners from [www.ofa.org](http://www.ofa.org). Add *Florists' Review* magazine to your library; see if the APPI energy savings program can help you; reference the Green Industry Yellow Pages; connect to universities and other industry organizations. You can even update your library via the Bookstore — with OFA and other titles designed for OFA members.

Furthermore, you can join OFA with our online membership application, even dues renewal. The "Members Only" section features a searchable directory of all OFA members and archives of the *OFA Bulletin*. Other members can be located by company name or city. You can also view and update your member profile. To reach this section, use

# The Flower Fields Alliance Split

The Flower Fields has announced several changes to The Flower Fields Alliance structure and brand strategy. While The Flower Fields continues as an association of companies working together to meet the needs of its customers, due to market conditions and organizational changes, Fischer USA and Goldsmith Seeds will no longer be formal members of The Flower Fields Alliance and nor offer products under The Flower Fields brand effective with the new fiscal year, April 1, 2005.

"We have responded to changes in market demands by reducing emphasis on retail brand development and shifting our focus to our business-to-business efforts to create solutions that use the products and resources of the companies in a greater variety of ways," said Tom Doak of Yoder Brothers who serves as chair of The Flower Fields Alliance. "All four companies are committed to continuing our primary efforts to develop and bring to market new and improved varieties."

"Fischer will be focusing on the products coming from the combined programs of Fischer and vegetative products from Goldsmith Seeds, marketed under the Goldfish label which is a grower program and not a retail brand," said Falkenstein, co-president, Fischer USA.

"For us it was the logical business decision since we're no longer in vegetative propagation," said Joel Goldsmith, president of Goldsmith Seeds. "We intend to continue our personal and professional relationships with one another on an informal basis rather than part of a marketing alliance."

By way of example, according to Paul Ecke, CEO of Ecke Ranch, Ecke will be offering a plug program using Goldsmith genetics. "Our goal is to offer integrated and cutting order fulfillment and prefinished programs that include both seed and vegetative materials tailored to individual grower needs," said Ecke.

According to the four companies, the fundamental operational relationships of The Flower Fields that led to easing the ordering and fulfillment process continue to be in place for growers. "The Flower Fields has always offered flexibility, and flexibility requires permitting selection of suppliers, product combinations, product forms, the programs, or brand identification requested by the retailer or grower," said Ecker. "Ecke and Yoder will continue to offer The Flower Fields tags, pots and other programs for use consistent with our customer needs."

Due to the organizational and strategic changes, the companies will not be offering P. Allen Smith's Garden Home Collection as a retail program in 2005. "Allen Smith is the nation's leading voice to the home gardener and has helped build The Flower Fields brand at all levels, which helps us as we transition to our B-to-B strategy," said Garofalo, The Flower Fields marketing director. "I've enjoyed working with The Flower Fields," said P. Allen Smith. "My focus remains on reaching out to home gardeners, and I will be working with other sources for my collection in several categories and home related categories."

The broad and comprehensive range of products offered by all four companies continues and will be on display at the Spring Trials 2005 combined Pack Trade Show at the Goldsmith facility in Gilroy, Calif. For information regarding the trials, visit [www.theflowerfields.com](http://www.theflowerfields.com) or contact [tina@goldsmithseeds.com](mailto:tina@goldsmithseeds.com).



where color

## SOD Update

### SOD ORDER PROTECTS INDUSTRY

On January 10, a revised USDA order took effect as the latest step toward ensuring clean, disease-free nursery plants in the U.S. market. The order strengthens

In brief, the order requires export inspection and/or testing for nurseries shipping plant material interstate from California, Oregon, Washington. "USDA and its state partners are strengthening surveillance and protective measures for *Xanthomonas*," said Craig Regelbom.

# Traveling Through January

Well, I know, January is one of the biggest travel months of the year, and there is no way to attend all of them. The *Lawn & Garden Retailer* editors were able to travel to Atlanta and thought we would share our sightings to help those of you unable to go to all of the shows this month. The show we attended that is not mentioned below is the National Retailer's annual conference called the Big Show. A summary about that see Editorial Bridget White's "Editor's Report" in a recent issue of *Lawn & Garden Retailer*.

**AMERICASMART ATLANTA**  
At the beginning of January, I took the trip to AmericasMart Atlanta to see all of the new products and learn about all of the exciting new products that have come to market for 2005. The show consists of three floors full of gifts, apparatus, décor, garden ornaments, urnet food and so on. This year was more exciting than all of the new garden centers have opened and all of the product categories have been added. I needed to see the trends in 2005 on the floors that I had seen in the past.

One of the trends I saw were color extensions of the bright colors meaning a lot of bright colors. There were some interesting things I saw in 2005 a little surprising. One thing that is pretty hot right now is the tropical theme, meaning not only the bird and the rich purples, greens, aquas, golds, as well as feather designs, as well as feather designs, as well as feather designs. Strange right, that's what I saw. There were figurines, wall hangings, the showrooms were just bursting with products to sell feathered products; heck, even my woman was even wearing peacock on her dress at the Golden Globe in January, so you know that there has to be some truth to the rumor right? I saw the Hat Society and tropical items were large focal points. I don't have

working, hence the reason so many manufacturers are offering that theme right now. There were so many items with purple and red themes, you could open up a store just to cater to these classy ladies.

The tropical theme is fun and exciting to look at. The Hawaiian aspect, with hula dancers, large flower prints and more is quite popular. A subset of Hawaiian is the beach theme, which has hit it pretty big with the new flip flop and sunglass craze that has moved into figurines, frames and more.

There were tons more themes to talk about, but if you want more, you are just going to have to read my column, "Market Watch," every month (see page 14). All in all, visiting the Mart was a great learning experience and one that people should check out themselves every year. I want to thank AmericasMart for the wonderful show and all of the great Southern hospitality they offered. For more information on the show visit [www.americasmart.com](http://www.americasmart.com).

—Catherine Evans

## TPIE/GCA

We take a trip to Florida at the end of January every year— isn't it a shame that I had to go from Chicago to Ft. Lauderdale in the middle of winter, during Chicago's biggest snow storm of the season? While in the sunshine state, we get to knock out two events in one trip — Garden Centers of America's (GCA) National Conference of Independent Garden Centers and the Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition (TPIE) held by the Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association (FNGLA).

**GCA.** The first event was GCA's National Conference of Independent Garden Centers, which began the evening of Jan. 18, 2005 with a reception. The next morning attendees were up bright and early for a day of production tours. On the schedule were Harold B. Martin Nursery, Miami; Kerry's Bromeliads Nursery, Homestead; Farm Life Tropical Foliage, Homestead; and Tony Costa



**Top:** Buyers made their way around AmericasMart looking for all of the latest trends to bring home to their stores. (Photo courtesy of AmericasMart Atlanta) **Bottom:** Attendees on the GCA production tour were able to see Farm Life Tropical Foliage's product line.



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## MARCH

**6-13: Philadelphia Flower Show**  
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[www.theflowershow.com](http://www.theflowershow.com)

**10: AHMA's EDI  
ASN Workshop**  
Chicago, Ill.  
(847) 605-1025  
[www.ahma.org](http://www.ahma.org)

**14-15: SAF Congressional  
Action Days**  
Washington, D.C.  
(800) 336-4743  
[www.safnow.org](http://www.safnow.org)

## APRIL

**4-13: California Pack Trials  
Throughout California**  
Contact breeder companies

**10-13: Lawn & Garden  
Retailer/GCA Retail  
Pack Trials Tour**  
Throughout California  
(888) 648-6463  
[www.gardencentersofamerica.org](http://www.gardencentersofamerica.org)

## MAY

**1-4: AHMA's Hardlines  
Technology Forum**  
New Orleans, La.  
(847) 605-1025  
[www.ahma.org](http://www.ahma.org)

**17-19: The 60th National  
Hardware Show**  
Las Vegas, Nev.  
(888) 425-9377  
[www.nationalhardwareshow.com](http://www.nationalhardwareshow.com)

## JUNE

**7-9: National Lawn &  
Garden Show**  
Chicago, Ill.  
(888) 316-0226  
[www.nlgshow.com](http://www.nlgshow.com)

**15-18: ANLA Retail Roadshow**  
Minneapolis, Minn.  
(202) 789-2900  
[www.anla.org](http://www.anla.org)

(800) 453-3070  
[www.sgcts.org](http://www.sgcts.org)

**23-25: The Super  
Floral Show**  
Houston, Texas  
(617) 728-0300  
[www.superfloralshow.com](http://www.superfloralshow.com)

**26-29: Seeley Co  
Conference**  
Ithaca, N.Y.  
(607) 255-4568  
[www.hort.cornell.edu/seeleyconference](http://www.hort.cornell.edu/seeleyconference)

**26-30: 2005 GCA  
National Conference**  
St. Louis, Mo.  
(888) 648-6463  
[www.gardencenters.com](http://www.gardencenters.com)

## JULY

**9-13: OFA 2005  
National  
& Trade Show**  
Columbus, Ohio  
(614) 487-1117  
[www.ofa.org](http://www.ofa.org)

**16-21: ANLA Leg  
Conference/Ann  
Meeting**  
Washington D.C.  
(202) 789-2900  
[www.anla.org](http://www.anla.org)

**17-23: Perennial  
Symposium and  
Trade Show**  
Knoxville & Nashville, Tenn.  
(614) 771-8431  
[www.perennialplantshow.com](http://www.perennialplantshow.com)

**26-28: Penn Allie  
Trade Show (PAN  
Show)**  
Fort Washington, Pa.  
(800) 898-3411  
[www.plna.org](http://www.plna.org)

## AUGUST

**11-13: SNA 2005  
National  
Showcase of Horti  
Culture**  
Atlanta, Ga.  
(770) 953-3311  
[www.sna.org](http://www.sna.org)

**19-21: The Nurser  
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S H E L T E R E D

With much inspection and testing work already done, and more underway, the order is not expected to seriously disrupt either the supply or price of plant material this spring. "There will be added burdens and some potential delays for some nurseries, but USDA and the states are taking proactive steps to minimize delays," Regelbrugge added. Lining up additional diagnostic labs for plant sample testing is one such measure, he said.

For the short term, the USDA order is the next step in the U.S. response to this disease, with further modifications as knowledge is gained. "We have so much to learn about this disease," said Marc Tefteau, director of research with the Horticultural Research Institute (HRI). Tefteau said that a major research effort has been underway since 2002, with HRI and USDA's Agricultural Research Service and a number of universities working to answer research questions important to U.S. horticultural industries.

Regelbrugge said that the arrival and establishment in the United States of serious plant pests and diseases is inevitable in the global economy, with expanding travel and trade. "We must improve our prevention, detection and rapid response capabilities to keep the next *P. ramorum* from getting to the U.S. in the first place. Once here, we need to learn how to live with it, how to manage it" he said. For more details on the USDA revised order, visit [www.anla.org](http://www.anla.org).

### NEW SOD ENTERS THE U.S.

"A previously unknown strain of the tree-killing disease *Phytophthora ramorum*, more commonly known as sudden oak death (SOD), has been found in a nursery in Washington state, a possible mutant child of the fast-spreading pathogen," asserted a recent article in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

According to the article, this new strain is a combination of two different types of

that this new strain may be the offspring of the two strains mixing together; however, at this point, scientists have not been able to officially prove this as the case.

"We detected a third strain with traits from both the U.S. and European strains," said a Berkeley forest pathologist. Garbelotto during a third Sudden Oak Death Symposium in Monterey. "We found some genetic traits in the new strain that we've never seen. It's a new strain," he stated in the article.

"The obvious risk," said Jonathan Jones, who manages a sudden oak death program with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, "is that there could be sexual recombination, and we could end up with something worse than what we have," the article continued.

According to the *Chronicle*, the new strain was found last past summer on a plant nursery where both American and European strains were known to exist. Though different strains, this is the offspring of a male and female of the same species and may have resulted from the intermingling.

"The European strain has been deadly to England's ubiquitous rhododendrons and beeches, but it wasn't until 2003 that it was detected in a nursery in Columbia, South Carolina. It has since been found in nurseries in Oregon, Washington, and California," explained the article. "One hypothesis is that the new strain is the result of recombination," Garbelotto said. "The other hypothesis is that it's a representative of the species that predated the split between the European and U.S. mating types, and was introduced separately. It's interesting because it offers us a clue into the origin of the *Phytophthora* species. Maybe we can find out where this plant came from and trace the disease back to its source."

In addition to this new strain emerging in the state of California, American Nursery & Landscaping

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current proposed name is *Phytophthora kernovii*. According to the *ANLA Update*, this new pathogen seems to be much more aggressive than *Phytophthora ramorum* and also seems to have a broader host range. “Some English scientists suspect that the disease may have come from China on magnolia,” said the *Update*. ANLA is recommending that U.S. nurseries importing plant material from Europe or Asia should be very careful and check for signs of disease right away. According to the *Chronicle*, “The disease itself seems to be progressing more rapidly than ramorum,” said Stephen Hunter, head of plant health for the Department for Environmental Food and Rural Affairs in Britain. “There is a lot of concern.”

### KNLA, TNLA and SNA Announce Trade Show

Three horticultural associations — the Kentucky Nursery & Landscape Association (KNLA), the Tennessee Nursery & Landscape Association (TNLA) and the Southern Nursery Association (SNA) — have joined together to form a new regional winter trade show, which will open January 5-6, 2006 in Louisville, Ky. This new event, the Mid-States Horticultural Expo (MSHE), is the result of combining the KNLA winter trade show and the TNLA summer trade show to form a regional event for the Mid-South.

MSHE will be held at the Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center, which is more commonly known as the Kentucky Fairgrounds. One of the top 10 largest public facilities of its kind in the United States, this expo center features a 400-acre property that offers more than 1,000,000 sq.ft. of indoor space. The center is currently expanding the South Wing, which will house MSHE. The project is expected to be complete by October 2005.

This new combined trade show is the result of a study that began in 1994 by SNA and many of its participating state associations. The study later produced the

shows of the Alabama Nursery Landscape Association with Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association and the Mississippi Nursery and Landscape Association. Both Gulf States and Mid-Atlantic Nursery Show (MANTS) were started while developing Mid-States Strategies are being developed to co-promote these shows, including greater promotional efforts while coordinating rules for our industry members. For more information on MANTS contact the Southern Nursery Association, call (770) 952-1111 or visit [www.sna.org](http://www.sna.org).

### SoilSoup Receives Research Grant

SoilSoup, Inc. is one of the first companies to receive grant funding from Washington Technology Center (WTC). More than \$657,000 has been awarded for technical and commercialization projects in Washington State.

WTC's Research & Technology Development (RTD) grant program awards more than \$1 million annually to university researchers teamed with technology companies on projects that show potential for commercial success.

The award recipients represent sent businesses all over Washington State, with regional support provided by three state's major academic institutions: University of Washington, Washington State University, and Central Washington University.

The financing assistance provided by these awards is designed to help companies look for ways to develop innovative new products to get the support necessary to conduct critical research and development studies.

SoilSoup along with Carpenter-Boggs from the Department of Crop and Environmental Sciences at Washington State University will be working on a biotechnology solution for increasing the life of liquid post (compost tea).

SoilSoup currently has produced aerobic compost tea brewing equipment that makes a fresh

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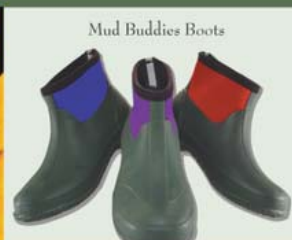
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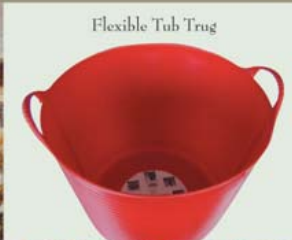


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are also growers, but it was very helpful to see large-scale production and where many of their bought-in live goods come from. Attendees were able to see plants they weren't familiar with due to their location; many attendees didn't hail from Florida — some quite the opposite, from Michigan to Maryland.

Then it was on to the days of seminars (some held in conjunction with TPIE) — one day that was very well received included seminars on destination garden centers, the future of garden center structures, marketing and branding trends that will affect your business, and radio frequency identification's impact on retailing. This was also a significant moment for GCA as they introduced their new president, John Trax. The only complaint I overheard about this day was that there was not enough time to take in all of this useful information. Attendees were then able to venture over to TPIE to enjoy the show. Thank you to the GCA for a fun and educational time.

**TPIE.** Not since the IPM, International Trade Fair for Plants in Essen, Germany, have I seen booths so colorful and unique. Even an industry friend said to me at TPIE, "It's like Essen; all they need are grills going and kitchens in their booths," which is typical at European trade shows. But, this show is definitely about more than booths — TPIE drew nearly 8,500 attendees and offered an extensive showcase of foliage products and plant accessories, as well as three days of educational programs and nursery tours through the TPIE Short Course. This show is a must for anyone who has a foliage department, while it also covers other segments of the retail business, from a group of retailers speaking on loyalty programs to consultants speaking on organic products and sales techniques.

One item I found myself talking about with exhibitors as well as attendees is pay-by-scan. With Home Depot deciding to implement pay-by-scan this coming spring may not affect you just yet, it was still something folks wanted to talk about. It helped to have Stan Pohmer with me while we walked, so he could get his two cents in, which by the way,

show; well, here it is — colorfully orchids and bromeliads. These were abundant and I've never seen. They know do it down there. Orchids been gaining popularity over years, and bromeliads are there — something to look. Another thanks goes out to F

— Carr

## Requests For The "Plants At Work" Message

Plants at Work, the foliage industry's educational initiative developed to expand the profitability of the interior trade, has seen its consistency to create a significant overall interest in the human environmental benefits of indoor plants finally start to pay off.

The campaign celebrates a significant message buy-in from Manhattan Avenue, touting interior plants as a differentiating factor for added value. According to Bacon's Monitoring the "plant benefit" message hit a sharp saturation increase with both professional trades and consumer media through the last quarter. With news outlets syndicating the message, the Plants at Work Web site is reporting a steady pick up of hits over the last several months. January already recording a high in unique qualified visitors to the site, according to Plants at Work.

In addition to securing extensive coverage the campaign includes presentations and a presence at major target events and conferences. The dissemination of a 16-page catalog published by the campaign further quantifies the benefits of indoor plants; an informational Web site (www.plantsatwork.org) with professional interiorscape providers geographically. The campaign provides foliage industry business owners with a menu of customizable local action marketing sales tools.

Under the volunteer direction of McRae Anderson, of Stone McCaren designs, the campaign budget of approximately \$100,000 per year is funded 100 percent by pledges from independent companies within the foliage industry.