‘Must Attend’ Spring Event: Florida Flower Trials

Growing the Next Generation of our Industry

President Ed Bravo: ‘It’s good to be a grower again!’

Fishing for a Good Cause: Dick Fuhr Tournament Returns
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FNGLA Welcomes New Members
It’s good to be a grower again! Spring is upon us with a vengeance. Throughout most of our state, homeowners are cleaning up winter’s damage to their landscapes. Folks are replanting or enhancing their properties with a variety of flowering plants, trees, shrubs and palms. They are replacing damaged turf areas with new sod or replacing it with Florida-Friendly™ landscape designs. New hardscapes and landscape lighting projects are also very popular additions to this spring garden fever.

 Everywhere you travel, there are construction projects underway which will require landscaping of residential developments, commercial projects and roadways. Landscape companies statewide have terrific opportunities for profits and growth, while nurseries are finally able to get better prices on their limited inventories. Nursery crops are turning over faster than usual due, in many cases, to heavy demand. And, this situation is only aggravated by storm damage from Hurricane Irma.

 This has led to shortages in larger trees and palms, as well as some woody shrubs. My hope is this doesn’t lead to a reactive cycle of expansion and over-production which invariably leads to negative impacts on prices. Yes, it’s good to be a grower again – but, please, don’t overproduce your current markets!

 Despite the shortages in plant materials for the near future, the single largest issue affecting grower and landscape professionals continues to be the lack of available skilled managers and workers. Although there is no one-size-fits-all solution, FNGLA staff and officers are here to help and are working on solutions for the long term. CEO Ben Bolusky will keep us informed about legislative matters affecting our workforce and if/when grassroots action is required on our part. Just make sure you read Ben’s Bullets or respond to actionable emails and alerts on critical issues.

 FNGLA’s Director of Certifications and Career Development Merry Mott, along with volunteer leaders, are exploring new ways to become more involved with high school horticulture, vocational and technical programs statewide. We hope to expand our relationships with FFA and FBA (Future Builders of America) along with teaching and testing high school students in FNGLA’s FCHP certification. A small investment of our individual time and FNGLA chapters’ involvement could produce a stream of young knowledgeable workers for our industry.

 We also need to ensure our current workforce doesn’t fall victim to substance abuse or, worse, become addicted to opioids. FNGLA is at the threshold of providing informative resources to help member companies identify and deal with this toxic problem which destroys individual lives, families and businesses.

 With spring in the air and flowers in bloom, the last thing folks may be thinking about is the dreaded H-word! Yet, if we learned anything at all from last year’s hurricane season it is: preparation is imperative. Whether it’s stocking extra shadehouse materials and on-site fuel and generators, or creating a list of resources, now is the best time to start. Each FNGLA chapter’s board of directors now has a Disaster Preparedness Manual to help start the conversation. And, this manual can also be accessed on FNGLA’s website by any individual member to print out -- before the power goes out!

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Offering an intimate look at how more than 100 new seasonal plant varieties hold up in Florida’s grueling growing climates, the Florida Flower Trials returns to Central Florida for two days of learning, networking -- and plant admiration.

“Seasonal color can be an incredible addition to one’s landscape toolbox,” Linda Reindl, FNGLA’s director of education, said. “This event is a great place to sharpen business skills and get a first-hand glimpse of how the newest annual plant varieties can boost profit margins.”

The event will include tours of three unique trial locations and will highlight unique perspectives on planting designs, growing conditions and maintenance techniques, according to Reindl. In addition, each site location presents different growing challenges, including varying degrees of sun exposure, human interaction, and soil compositions.

“Trial sites were planted six weeks prior to the conference which allowed ample time for plants to show their beautiful colors,” Reindl added.

Also slated are 11 presentations geared toward growing insights for landscape professionals, gar-
den center retailers and growers (more details on page 10 of this issue).

Each day of the event is slated to include a packed agenda:

**Day One** will offer tours of three trial sites: Walt Disney World’s nursery; Harry P. Leu Gardens; and, the University of Florida/IFAS Orange County Extension Service. Along with making stops at all trial sites, the tour will make a special stop at SeaWorld Orlando where the park’s horticulture employees will pull back the curtain a bit on how the theme park’s team of landscape professionals are using seasonal color to enhance park landscapes.

**Day Two** will include a full day of educational programs where top plant breeders, education experts and key industry members come together to exchange ideas. Each presenter will share their unique insights, aimed at delivering innovative business strategies and maintenance techniques.

The cost to attend for FNGLA members who register prior to May 7 is $189. Nonmembers prior to May 7 pay $219.

Participants are required to wear closed-toe shoes to the event, and are strongly encouraged to bring wide-brimmed hats and sunscreen.

For more information on the program, visit www.floridaflowertrials.org, or contact Linda Reindl at: lreindl@fnbla.org. •
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Chapter Spotlight

Fishing for a Good Cause

Miami-Dade chapter’s memorial tournament returns for 34th year

A labor of love honoring an industry great, The Dick Fuhr Memorial Fishing Tournament has, so far, raised $200,000 for industry research and scholarships. Put on by FNGLA’s Miami-Dade chapter, the tournament’s proceeds go into a National Horticulture Foundation endowment.

“Through the dedicated efforts of Miami-Dade’s chapter members, the Dick Fuhr endowment is now one of NHF’s largest,” Linda Reindl, foundation director, said. “The chapter deserves an incredible amount of recognition for making this event not just successful – but fun.”

These days, many may not know Dick Fuhr was most notably remembered for his instrumental role in the production of Lerio pots. In the 1960s, egg containers were used in most greenhouse productions. With Fuhr’s help and persuasion, he created a company which designed and mass-produced metal containers. The metal containers were then converted into the plastic-style pots which are widely used today.

“Dick built his business with strong business ethics. ‘Customer Supreme’ were the words not only spoken but a philosophy he ran his business with,” Reindl said. “Whether you were a friend, associate or business acquaintance, you were always treated the same.”

Even 48 years later, Fuhr’s children continue to practice the same ethics as their father. Through freezes, depressions and other economic hardships, Universal Enterprise Supply Corp. has been there to share knowledge, expertise and service to the industry.

In spite of the fact that many in the Keys are still working to recover from damages suffered from Hurricane Irma, Miami-Dade chapter volunteers have stepped up with plans to make this year’s event the best yet. The tournament will take place June 1-2 in Islamorada, Florida. A captain’s meeting and dinner buffet will take place from 7-9 p.m, June 1, while the awards ceremony is slated for 6:30-7:30 p.m., June 2.

Reservations must be booked by May 1 at the host hotel, Amara Cay Resort, 80001 Overseas Hwy. Special rates are available to those who book early. Attendees are also encouraged to book boat rentals to ensure availability.

For more tournament details, contact Chris Oppenheimer at 305-345-3529 or Walter Hoffman at 305-458-4257.
Session Spotlights

Top experts from across the country will impart bottom line-bolstering insights

Bringing insights from across a wide cross-section of industries, 11 top experts are set to join together at the 2018 Florida Flower Trials for a super shot of professional development.

Each presenter is prepared to bring their A-game, while focusing on imparting actionable items to help attendees gain the most value.

All sessions will take place Thursday, May 17 at UF/IFAS Extension Orange County, in Orlando, Florida.

Here’s a rundown of the presentations on the agenda:

Adding Edible Gardening to the Landscape

*Presented by Jason ‘Farmer Jay’ McCobb, Farmer Jay Pure Organics, Delray Beach, FL*

**Session Overview**

In today’s world of rapidly expanding social media platforms, consumers are constantly being touched by the rising trend of wellness and sustainability. Growers have seen an increased demand for edible plants and consumers are asking for edibles to be incorporated in their landscape, according to Jason McCobb, an expert in sustainable agriculture.

McCobb, who specializes in urban gardening, will share creative ways landscape professionals can successfully add edibles to their landscape designs.

**About the Presenter**

With the belief that the garden is an extension of nature and something that must be protected and nurtured, McCobb says he never uses pesticides or synthetic chemicals.

In addition to farming and building gardens, McCobb has also developed Jay’s Jr. Sprouts, a non-profit which teaches kids where food comes from and helps to pass along the lost art of sustainable agriculture. Together, McCobb and his wife, a program co-creator, look forward to making an impact in their local community by teaching kids how to grow their own food.
Bringing Innovative Business Strategies Back to Horticulture
Presented by Seth Reed and Mason Day of Growit, Chicago

COURTESY PHOTOS
PLANT TECH - Mason Day, left, and Seth Reed, right, of Growit, will talk tech innovation at the 2018 Florida Flower Trials.

Session Overview
Advances in technology have rapidly changed the world around us. Seth Reed and Mason Day will help show how the horticulture industry can think outside the box and borrow strategies for success. Working in the fast-paced environment of consumer technology has given these two a behind-the-scenes look at what other companies are up to. Now, the pair seek to bring those insights back to horticulture.

About the Presenters
Seth Reed began his career in the plant industry when he was 15 years old at a local garden center. Reed currently manages team and industry partnerships, and stewarding app functionality at Growit, an app which assists users in digitally sharing their gardening experience.

Mason Day grew up on a farm in rural Michigan. He graduated from Cornell University in 2012 and currently handles marketing, public relations and user experience at Growit.

The Benefits of Consumable Water Management Products
Presented by James J. Spindler, Ecologel Solutions, LLC

Session Overview
In addition to advancements in irrigation hardware and software, there are a variety of consumable technologies and products designed to manage water in the soil and maximizing watering efficiencies. Spindler will lay out how and why to use those technologies, and how to maintain healthy turfgrass and landscapes during periods of drought or watering restrictions. Spindler will also cover the economic benefits of using water management solutions.

About the Presenter
Spindler serves as both president of BioPro Technologies, LLC, and director of agronomy for Ecologel Solutions, LLC. He also serves as agronomist and research director for the O.J. Noer Turf Research Foundation, and holds a Bachelor’s degree in agronomy and a Master’s degree in forestry.

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Beneficials and Pesticides, How to Make Them Work Together  
*Presented by Suzanne Wainwright of Buglady Consulting*

**Session Overview**  
Suzanne Wainwright will lay out how pesticide selection can really make a difference in a pest management program. She will also cover insect identification, pesticide modes of action, and how sprays and beneficials can work together.

**About the Presenter**  
Involved in the Green industry for more than 25 years, Wainwright is an ornamental entomologist who specializes in integrated pest management. She holds degrees in both entomology and environmental horticulture, and has worked both domestically and abroad consulting for greenhouses, nurseries, landscapers and interior landscape companies.

Wainwright has also spoken in the past at the Smithsonian Institute and has appeared on the PBS television program “Growing a Greener World.”

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It’s all about Getting the Right Soil Mix  
*Presented by Guillermo Maldonado of Berger*

**Session Overview**  
Berger’s technical team members are conducting groundbreaking work in growing mixes to achieve unmatched results in the field. Learn what Berger is doing to achieve better production time, higher crop yields along with longevity in the landscape.

**About the Presenter**  
Guillermo Maldonado, a grower advisor at Berger, studied at the University of South Carolina, and later completed an agri-science degree at Massey University in New Zealand. For the past 17 years, he has been involved in many aspects of the horticulture industry exploring a wide range of products and techniques. He is experienced with hardening of tissue culture plants, growing media -- especially bulb crops, rooting processes, forcing and hydroponics in commercial environments.

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Discovering Niches  
*Presented by Jenny Hardgrave, Simply Flowers*

**Session Overview**  
Have you ever wondered how seasonal color fits into your business plan? This is the session for you. With a dream to start her own business -- and only $10 in her pocket, Jenny Hardgrave set out to launch a successful company based solely on seasonal color. Today, Simply Flowers has more than 800 commercial and residential accounts and has roughly $3 million in sales.

**About the Presenter**  
After earning her college degree in nursery and landscape management, Hardgrave moved to Atlanta where she founded Simply Flowers Inc. in 2001. Prior to that, she gained experience in the horticulture world as a seasonal color designer and production manager for a prominent Atlanta landscape company.

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Containers and More!  
*Presented by Jacob McCall, AIFD, AAF, CFC, FSMD*

**Session Overview**  
A seasoned designer in the floral industry, Jacob McCall is experienced in all aspects of the industry including retail, event, mass market, competition and education. He will share his cutting-edge ideas on trends along with his color expertise. McCall will also impart great ideas for container combinations.

**About the Presenter**  
McCall is an award-winning designer with more than 17 years’ experience in the floral industry. He has traveled throughout the U.S. teaching design and creating events for clients. McCall has also in the past designed floral arrangements for notable people including Tiger Woods and Diana Ross.”

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Summer Survivors of 2017
Presented by Melissa Shepherd, Walt Disney World, and Kelly Greer, UF/IFAS

Every year, Florida Flower Trials’ program organizers work hard to bring attendees in close contact with the season’s new varieties -- but what happens to those varieties when attendees leave the conference? What varieties finished out the summer strong?

For this session, two trial site managers from 2017 will team up to share their thoughts on the best performers. Hear which varieties beat the odds, lasted longer, proved to be great pollinators and offered great new options for many seasons to come.

About the Presenters
Melissa Shepherd is a 29-year veteran of Walt Disney World serving as a plant production specialist and trial manager at the Walt Disney World Nursery.

Kelly Greer provides education in Florida-Friendly™ Landscaping, irrigation, pollution control, pesticide use, integrated pest management, recycling, composting and resource conservation. Greer holds both a Master’s degree in management and leadership, and a Bachelor’s degree in agriculture.

What’s Working in the South
Presented by Angelica Cretu, Costa Farms

She will share the criteria Costa uses to select items for its programs. Learn about the varieties the company plans to add to production in 2018-2019 based on garden performance and information gathered from extensive trials the company is conducting with bio pots.

About the Presenter
Cretu earned an agriculture degree from Romania and later relocated to the U.S. as an intern for Hermann Engelmann Greenhouses. In 2009, Cretu earned a Master’s degree. Her first job at Costa Farms was as a research and development manager.
Some of the world’s top breeders are fired up to show off their heat and humidity tolerant plant varieties at the 2018 Florida Flower Trials.

The multi-national floriculture company, Danziger, will this year trial both its Vanessa™ and Phloxstar™ series, along with new container combinations.

Classic Caladiums, based in Avon Park, Florida, will unveil flagship caladium varieties including the quick germanators Fast Flash and the full-sun tolerant Day Dreamers.

Hem Genetics, a Netherlands-based company who specializes in breeding, development and marketing seed and vegetative-raised ornamental pot and bedding plant varieties, will trial their vincas and dianthus, along with one variety of snapdragons.

A sixth-generation family business, Benary brings six varieties of hearty Super Hero™ marigolds to the trials.

Part of the Ball Horticultural family of companies, PanAmerican Seed, Ball Ingenuity and Selecta one are slated to showcase offerings.

PanAmerican will unveil 12 different varieties including begonias, salvias, pentas, and its zinnia Double Zahara™ series.

Selecta will share varieties from its Phlox Gisele™ and Salvia Scraper™ series.

Ball Ingenuity will trials its Canna Cannova® Red Flame cannas variety.

Suntory Flowers, which specializes in transforming global landscapes with their bold and colorful collections, brings a new Brindabella Roses™ series, which are touted for their bold aromas.

A third-generation family farming and shipping business that specializes in bulb production, Bates Sons & Daughters will unveil six caladium varieties including Watermelon and Hot Pants.

Vegetable and ornamental seed and vegetative cutting breeder Sakata will showcase 12 Sunpatiens® varieties from the company’s Vigorous and Compact series.

International heavyweight Dümmen Orange® will showcase its New Guinea Impatiens, and coleus, verbena and lantana varieties.

Florist Holland brings five varieties of Garvinea® gerbera daisies.

In addition to viewing how their varieties fare at this year’s three trial sites, all breeders will also gather on May 17 for a Breeders Showcase session, according to Linda Reindl, FNGLA’s director of Education.

“The best part about this session will be that it gives attendees the opportunity to ask questions, and interact directly with some of the world’s premier breeders and growers,” Reindl said.
Using the old proverb, ‘it takes a village to raise a child’, FNGLA members and volunteers joined forces to host two career and leadership events to provide students a look at what their futures could hold in Florida’s nursery and landscape industry.

Nearly 50 volunteers and sponsors took part in two recent youth events which served hundreds of Future Farmers of America (FFA) and Future Builders of America (FBA) students.

Special thanks to the following FNGLA members for going the extra mile to lend support:

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- ArtisTree Landscape
- ASI Landscape Management
- Broward Chapter FNGLA
- Costa Farms
- Farm Credit of Central FL
- FNGLA Cert. Professionals
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- Manasota Chapter FNGLA
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Special thanks go out to our 2018 Florida Flower Trials sponsors and contributing companies for all they do to make this program happen.
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“What’s up with this younger generation?”

When we hear this exasperated question, maybe, just maybe, we aren't focusing on the right students within this younger generation.

Let’s talk about students involved with the Future Farmers of America and the Future Builders of America. You won’t find a group of students who are more polite, interested and forward-thinking than the members of these youth groups.

Now, how do we capture this audience and introduce them to Florida's nursery and landscape industry? I say we encourage them to get their hands dirty!

In February and March, FNGLA members and volunteers engaged more than 400 horticulture and construction students through competitions and projects which offered lots of hands-on opportunities in a variety of industry specialties.

FFA nursery, landscape and floriculture students at a recent career development event in Central Florida tried their hands at plant and pest identification, landscape estimating, and equipment safety. They even created floral arrangements. In February, FBA's hands-on construction students laid a paver path at the FFA Leadership Training Center as part of a group project.

Talk about learning by doing. They truly got their hands dirty!

The two recent events were collectively supported by 24 sponsors and team of 25 incredible volunteers who offered students a glimpse into how truly gratifying a career in the heart of Florida's nursery and landscape profession can be.

FNGLA's overarching goal was to show this younger generation how they can fit into fulfilling careers in this wonderful, (profitable!) industry.
FNGLA Welcomes New Members

Association gains 108 new member companies from January to March 2018

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Malibu Quality Greens, Inc.
Michael W Moore, Eustis

Metro Lawn and Property Services LLC
Jaem Lopez, Kissimmee

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Thomas Elardo, Sunrise

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Daniel Gomez, Plantation

Grass Roots Complete
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It’s Renewal Time!

FNGLA membership renewal notices have gone out via mail. The deadline to renew one’s membership is June 30, 2018.

“It’s critical our members be sure to renew their membership so they can continue to access all the benefits,” says Deb Joneck, FNGLA membership committee chair.

Members can renew by visiting FNGLA’s website, or by sending a check to FNGLA at 1533 Park Center Dr., Orlando, FL 32835. •
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