



Tim Hodson,
Editorial Director

Reaching the Summit

During the last week of February, *GPN* along with our partners The Visions Group, hosted the fourth annual *Big Grower Executive Summit* (see story on page 9).

This year's Executive Summit took place in Miami where 35 large growers from across the country came together for two days to gain insight into what is going on in today's marketplace and learn about what they could do to add value to their individual businesses.

The Executive Summit is a one-of-a-kind event for growers. Each year *GPN* and The Visions Group put together this event to help large growers discover new perspectives on successfully operating in today's challenging economy while understanding the needs and wants of the modern day consumer.

This year, attendees had the chance to participate in a day-and-a-half of exclusive and informative educational sessions, observe a consumer focus group and take part in a comprehensive tour of Costa Farms!

The brain power and flower power that was in the Monte Carlo Room at the Miami Sofitel was amazing. The growers, the "faculty" presenters and the representatives from our sponsoring companies discussed the tough issues facing our industry and what they need do to succeed, and the conversations that took place during the breaks and during the social hours were incredible.

Among the topics addressed during the Summit were: the latest research on what today's consumers want when it comes to flowers; innovative ways that growers can use social media; how to raise consumer awareness and consumption of live goods; lessons learned from the produce industry; and what's happening in Washington, D.C., and how it could impact the horticulture industry. There was also an in-depth on-site consumer focus group, moderated by Kip Creel of the Standpoint Group, where growers heard directly from consumers on how they view green goods and what motivates their gardening purchases.

To cap off the event, we got a behind-the-scenes tour of three different Costa Farms' facilities and dinner in Costa's beautiful (and huge) trials gardens. A special thank you goes out to Maria Costa Smith and Joche Smith for their warm hospitality and fascinating insight into how and why their business works and is so successful.

If you'd like to see photos from the Big Grower Executive Summit please visit our Flickr page (www.flickr.com/photos/lgr-and-gpn).

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