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Not Too Bad

I've spent a lot of time on the road over the past few weeks, attending different trade shows, visiting growers, going to open houses at some of the breeders, and checking out a lot of different garden centers and big boxes. From everything I have seen and the people I've talked to, all in all, it looks like 2007 has been a pretty good year.

As wacky as the weather was across the country (especially in the spring), it seems like most growers did not struggle with the conditions and actually had a strong spring (see "Reviewing Spring 2007" on page 36). While the weather is always unpredictable and can be challenging, it wasn't too bad this year. In fact, when we polled about 75 different growers, two-thirds of the respondents said the weather had a positive or no impact at all on their production.

Attendance at all of the trade shows this summer seemed to be very strong too and everyone is in learning and buying mode to make for an even better 2008! The aisles were bustling at the Southeast Greenhouse Conference, OFA Short Course, Far-West, and some other smaller regional grower and retail shows that I attended. It looks like a lot of you are investing in your continued education and checking out what the suppliers have to offer as you get ready for next season.

At the retail level, the garden centers and big boxes that I visited in the Southeast and throughout the Midwest really seemed to be moving green goods. From mid-May until the end of July I tried to stop in at least one independent garden center and one big box every weekend — to load up for my own yard and to see what other people were buying. Other than one rainy weekend, the crowds were healthy, the product was moving off the benches and the cash registers were ringing.

While visiting some of the breeders over the summer, it was great to see how they are preparing for 2008. Pack Trials is always a great opportunity to see what the breeders have planned for the coming season, but at their open houses, everything is much more low key and I get to spend some quality time

with them to gain even more insight into the future. And it is always fun to get a peek behind the curtain and see the varieties and other R&D projects the breeders are working on. Stay tuned because I think you will like a lot of what they have in development.

The final numbers aren't in yet, but from all appearances (and despite the slowdown in the overall economy), 2007 seems to be a pretty healthy year. Let's just keep our fingers crossed for 2008!

Hello and Good-bye

This issue marks the debut and the departure of two editorial staff members. In August, Darhiana Mateo joined GPN as associate editor. A graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Darhiana comes to Scranton Gillette Communications from the *Courier-Journal* in Louisville, where she was a suburban reporter covering a wide variety of topics for the newspaper, including the constantly evolving immigration issue as well as many other business-related topics. Her reporting and writing skills will be put to work on all of our publications. In the coming months, Darhiana will be on the road visiting growers and attending trade shows and other industry events to report back to you on what is happening. You can reach Darhiana at dmateo@sgcmail.com or (847) 391-1013.

As Darhiana joins the staff, we bid adieu to Christa Reynolds, our summer intern. Christa spent the past three-and-a-half months learning all about the floriculture industry and what it takes to publish GPN and our sister magazines. She even had the opportunity to attend Short Course this past July in Columbus, Ohio. Christa will be returning to the University of Chicago this fall to complete her undergraduate degree. She has been a great asset to us this summer, and everyone at GPN will definitely miss seeing her smiling face and all of her hard work! **GPN**



Top: Darhiana Mateo. Bottom: Christa Reynolds.

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