

## YODER EXPANDS PRODUCT MIX

Yoder Brothers has reached a tentative agreement to acquire four of the five potted plant crops from Earl J. Small Growers, Pinellas Park, Fla.

Under terms of the agreement, Yoder will acquire all of Small's seed inventory and genetic materials for future seed production of the exacum series Champion, Little Champ, Mini-Persian, Royal and Double Royal; gloxinia series Super Compact, Florist Regular and Mini; lisianthus series Little Bell, Dream-Rose Double and King; and penta Monarch series.

The seed supply will be used by Yoder to produce liners for sale to growers via the Yoder Sales and Yoder Distributor network. According to Chris Kelleher public relations manager for Yoder Brothers, "Effective immediately, all orders are coming through Yoder, and product is shipping now."

Orders on file with Small will be transferred to Yoder and will be filled with the same quality product Small's and Yoder's customers have become accustomed to.

According to Rick Hollis, former president/CEO and current consultant for Earl J. Small Growers, the company will be finishing production within the next several weeks and is working on closing the corporation within the next two years. The fifth of their potted crops, gerbera daisies, is in the process of being sold to another party, according to Hollis. "We trust there will be a seamless transition of all current and future orders for all of the Small-bred



*Gloxinia Super Compact*

product lines we have supplied in the past," said Hollis.

There are a number of details that Yoder and Earl J. Small Growers are working out. As far as the Small breeder, Paul Cumiskey, "Paul will be working with Yoder to coordinate the transfer process," said Kelleher. And according to Hollis, "Paul will also be working and helping with the future seed and seedling production." Bay Gardens may be contracting with Yoder to help and produce plugs for the Small line, "Bay Gardens is continuing to produce the plugs for Yoder to fill orders," according to Kelleher.

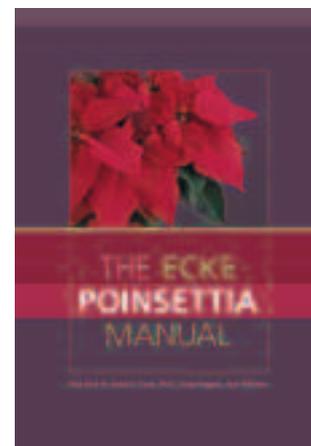
These product series have a strong following in the industry and complement Yoder's existing pot plant lines, according to Kelleher. For more information contact Yoder Customer Service at (800) 321-9573.

## Ecke Rewrites Poinsettia Manual

The Paul Ecke Ranch, Encinitas, Calif., has recently announced the completion of *The Ecke Poinsettia Manual*, published by Ball Publishing. Paul Ecke III, Ecke Ranch CEO said, "Growers around the country continue to look to the [Ecke] Ranch for support in every aspect of poinsettia growing — from genetics to the details on how to grow. It was time to revise our manual, updating the full gamut of information — from history to new production techniques to pest management — I am proud to put our name on this book."

In 1971 the first *Poinsettia Manual* was published, written by Paul Ecke Jr. and O.A. Matkin. In 1976 it was updated, and the second edition of the *Poinsettia Manual* was printed. The third *Poinsettia Manual* was updated by David Hartley and printed in 1990, a publication that went on to win numerous industry awards. Since this last publication, so many things have changed, and Ecke Ranch believed it was time to update and rewrite the industry's main cultural resource for poinsettia growers. This was an effort led by Paul Ecke III, Andy Higgins and Jack Williams of the Ecke Ranch and Jim Faust of Clemson University. Andy Higgins, executive vice president of Ecke Ranch adds, "We all agree that growing poinsettias is a mixture of both art and science; you really have to understand what the plant is doing to make good cultural choices. The previous manuals did an outstanding job of covering this balance of art and science, and we kept much of that foundation intact in this edition." Higgins continues, "We overlaid it with new techniques and science, new philosophies in production and marketing, and of course, with all new cultivars."

*The Ecke Poinsettia Manual* gives growers the information they have been asking for," said Jack Williams, technical adviser for the Ecke Ranch. "Today's success is based on poinsettias being programmable, dependable and as free of problems as possible! Growers need to produce the right products for their markets and deliver plants that stand up to the rigors of shipping and handling at retail. This book provides guidance in areas of scheduling, managing height, nutrition, preventing disorders and other key factors in production from start to finish. I think growers will appreciate how this book meets their needs." For more information in the new manual visit [www.ecke.com](http://www.ecke.com).



## Scotts Signs Agreement to Acquire Smith & Hawken

The Scotts Company recently announced its plan to acquire Smith & Hawken, Ltd., one of the nation's leading brands in the fast-growing garden lifestyle category.

According to Michelle Farabaugh, senior vice-president of marketing at Smith & Hawken, The Scotts Company approached DDJ Capital Management, which privately owns Smith & Hawken through funds managed by the investment boutique, several months ago about the possible acquisition of the garden tool company. Farabaugh said that Scotts wants to be associated with the best brands in the industry; they want to own the best brands in the industry as well. Scotts could not be reached for comment.

As for the Smith & Hawken end of the deal, Farabaugh said that the company is very excited about the new agreement because it will give the company access to a number of aspects of the industry that it did not have before, and it will help lift the brand even more.

"The Smith & Hawken brand is the gold standard in

outdoor living and is an outstanding fit with our strategy to extend our reach into adjacent lawn and garden categories and to own industry-leading brands in every category in which we compete," said Jim Hagedorn, chairman and CEO of Scotts in a recent press release. "Avid gardeners know and trust the Smith & Hawken brand just as they do Scotts. The power and flexibility of the Smith & Hawken brand are the driving forces in pursuing this opportunity. The Smith & Hawken brand will further strengthen our relationship with consumers and create exciting and new opportunities for growth."

Also according to Farabaugh, as of right now, Smith & Hawken will continue business as usual, and that includes all of its branding programs. She said that currently there will not be co-branding on any of the Smith & Hawken promotional material with the Scotts name; the company will still retain just the Smith & Hawken name. However, the definitive agreement was only signed about one week prior to this information, and many details still remain up in the air; the final documents will not be signed until October 1. Again,

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Scotts could not be reached for comment.

Smith & Hawken products are sold through its 56 retail stores around the United States as well as through catalog and Internet sales. The company has also extended its brand into other

retail channels with its successful store-within-a-store concept in garden centers across the country.

Scotts will pay approximately \$72 million for Smith & Hawken, including the assumption of \$14 million of existing debt. It will fund the transaction, which is

scheduled to close October 1, with its existing credit facility. Smith & Hawken is projected to report 2004 revenue of about \$145 million, and the transaction is expected to be slightly dilutive in fiscal 2005. Banc of America Securities LLC will serve as financial adviser

to The Scotts Company in connection with the transaction.

Smith & Hawken employs approximately 850 people and will continue to be based in Novato, Calif. Upon completion of the deal, Barry Gilbert, CEO of Smith & Hawken, who has led the company since 2001, will continue to lead the Smith & Hawken business. The rest of the Smith & Hawken management team will also be retained.

### Speedling Expands on New Aspects

Earlier this year Speedling, Incorporated made a decision to begin its five-year modernization plan, as announced by Mike Samilian, Speedling vice president. This summer, the initial phase of a greenhouse renovation project at its Sun City, Fla., headquarters got underway.

The Sun City operation produces both vegetable transplants and ornamental plugs, and the renovation is being done largely in recognition of the fact that ornamental transplants are the fastest growing of the Speedling business segments. The product line consists primarily of bedding plant plugs (60 percent) and specialty products such as geraniums (20 percent) and pansies (20 percent).

While Speedling has been quite successful at the Florida location, the ornamental program has not been well served by the outdated facilities, since nearly half the production in the Sun City nursery relied on 36-year-old wooden greenhouses. Therefore, this summer brought about the demolition of most of those wooden greenhouses, beginning the renovation process. According to Samilian, the renovation process will take about 5-7 years to complete, and Speedling will not be adding space, just replacing what it already uses.

Speedling will also be conducting Pack Trials at its San Juan Bautista, Calif., nursery in early April 2005, making it the only trialing location for Pack Trials in Northern California. Speedling will be spearheading that activity with the intention of gaining industry awareness that it will be available on the West Coast. There will be 4-5 new breeders introduced at that event.



## Peace of Mind

Write in 713

### **Sakata Makes Pansy Push**

Sakata Seed America has recently decided to team up with Franks Nursery for the addition of a new element to the Franks' Jack Frost Program.

Beginning fall 2004, the Jack Frost program will offer consumers Sakata pansy and viola genetics with an overwintering guarantee program. Consumers will be provided a guarantee that, when using the new pansy and viola assortment offered for fall planting, the Jack Frost selection will come back in the spring for early bloom.

The guarantee program will allow consumers to purchase pansies and violas in the fall and enjoy the season of color as temperatures cool. In the spring they can see that their gardens will surface from the winter weather with a renewing color from these dual-season pansies.

In other Sakata news, the company has issued a schedule for the Fall Performance Trials for the Southeast and Northwest. For the past several years, Sakata has teamed up with regional growers to present pansy trials open to other growers, hoping to aid them in understanding new genetics available to assist in improving pansy programs.

This year, Sakata has announced four separate trial locations that have expanded to include additional varieties. Trials will be held in the Northwest at Yoshitomi Brothers, West Linn, Ore., October 13-14 and Henry's Plant Farm in Snohomish, Wash., October 6-7. In the Southeast, trials will be held at Metrolina Greenhouses, Huntersville, N.C., October 24-25 and Rambo Nursery in Dallas, Ga., November 10-11.

In addition to a broad look at pansies, the fall 2004 trials will also include Explorer petunias, Surfin' pelargoniums, osteospermum (Crescendo and Side Series), Festival gerbera, Profusion zinnia and many more. Those interested in attending the trials can contact Sakata at (260) 672-3820.

### **Kentucky and California Agree on Nursery Plants Settlement**

In an effort to end the recent suit filed by the California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers

(CANGC) regarding the ban on nursery stock from California to Kentucky, the two states have reached a settlement allowing locally grown nursery stock to be shipped to Kentucky under the stipulation that plants have been certified disease-free under guide-

lines established by the federal government, according to the *Associated Press (AP)*.

The dispute started this past spring after the finding of Sudden Oak Death (SOD) at a Monrovia Growers facility in California. Many states across the country began a

ban on all nursery plants from the state when the infection started popping up around the country from the shipments from California. Despite the fact that the USDA prevented the shipping of any more plants out of the state until they were declared disease free, after

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the disease was discovered, many states still imposed a ban of their own, according to the *AP*.

"In the lawsuit that was filed July 9 in Frankfort, Ky., CANGC argued that federal law prevents individual states from establishing rules that deviate from the USDA

quarantine and inspection program," in an article from the *AP*.

Last week in the effort to settle, Kentucky agreed to sign a consent decree stating it agrees to adhere to USDA rules.

California hopes that this suit can be seen as a test case that will

help eliminate bans by Florida, Louisiana, West Virginia, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Indiana, Delaware and Montana.

According to the *AP*, California ships about \$500 million of plant material across the country every year. "The state bans and the

destruction of infected plants, as well as the expense of complying with the USDA's actions related to oak death disease, have cost growers millions of dollars," stated the *AP* article.

For more information on SOD visit [www.suddenoakdeath.org](http://www.suddenoakdeath.org).

### **Connecticut Florists Suffer From Terrorists Threats**

Due to the number of terrorist threats in the United States since 9/11, and most recently with the level orange terrorism alert on the East Coast, florists in Connecticut have been experiencing a number of problems with deliveries.

When federal officials announced that a number of financial buildings in the United States were possible sites for terrorist attacks, companies around the country started adding security of their own. One of the ways the government thinks the attacks may happen is by using vans or other motor vehicles as bombs, and a number of florists have been suffering the effects of this belief.

In downtown Hartford, Conn., city officials put a policy in place that, until further notice, florists vans can no longer remain running without a driver, according to the Connecticut Florists Association (CFA). Hartford is home to several of the country's largest insurance companies and major banking institutions, which have high-rises. Florist drivers must now take their vans to designated parking areas away from the buildings, park, turn off the vehicles and then deliver the flowers, causing a lot of time and money as well as efficiency and profits to be lost during prime delivery hours.

Another effect is that many companies in the state are beginning to get tougher about allowing flower deliveries to employees while on the job. Concerns about security and employee productivity and interruptions have forced new policies that, in some cases, have hurt florist sales, according to CFA. The state's phone company, SBC in downtown New Haven, now has a policy that prevents any staffer from receiving personal deliveries while working inside the building, according to CFA.

According to Bob Heffernan, executive director of CFA, florists are having to try to convince customers to have flowers sent to the recipient's home instead of the office because of the new policies. He also said that it is difficult for florists because a number of people view getting flowers at work as status, and people look to see where the flowers come from, adding a lot of business opportunities for the florists. Without the ability to deliver to many businesses, that recognition lessens.

However, Heffernan did add that despite the difficulties a number of florists are currently having with their deliveries, it is a matter of national safety. Because it is being done for the safety of the United States and all of the people in it, florists are keeping complaints to a minimum because they understand the reasoning behind the recent policies.

### **5th Annual Relay for FIRST Brings Funds for Floriculture**

For the past five years, Dramm Corp., Manitowoc, Wis., with OFA, has organized and sponsored the 5K Relay for Floriculture. Athletes competed on Saturday, July 10 during the OFA Short Course at Goodale Park in Columbus, Ohio.

On Saturday morning, groups of four arrived at the park ready to run. Runners warmed up pinned tag numbers denoting team affiliation to their "Give FIRStAid" t-shirts. Companies not able to participate in the run were able to be a sponsor through a donation. Each company received a logo spot on the relay t-shirts, start/finish line banner and a promotional sign displayed at the park and at the Short Course in the Dramm booth.

Eleven teams competed for top honors. This year's winner was "Svensson Energy Conservation" comprised of Kurt Parbst and Mauricio Manotas of LS Svensson, Scott Thompson of XS Smith and Ed Lauer of Albert Lauer. They had the best time of 22:37. The first-, second- and third-place teams were honored at the Short Course Opening Reception Sunday, July 11. Each

team received a trophy and four appropriately colored (gold, silver and bronze) engraved Rain Wand watering tools from Dramm.

Through registrants and sponsors, a net total of \$3,770 was raised for FIRST. Dramm's contribution to organize the event, a

professional race coordination team and cold bottled water among other materials, totaled approximately \$5,095. If you missed out this year, plan on organizing a running team for next year's event on the Saturday before the Short Course. You can

run, walk or sponsor to raise money for FIRST, the non-profit organization that provides funds for floriculture research and scholarships to horticulture students. For more information on the Relay contact Dramm at (800) 258-0848. [GPN](#)