

Stop By Stop By Stop

A Pack Trials Overview, Part I

With more emphasis on programs and elaborate exhibits, the varieties are only part of the Pack Trials story. We have rounded up the happenings at each stop in the company-by-company coverage.

**By Tim Hodson,
Catherine Evans
and Bridget White**

As the *GPN* editorial staff hit Pack Trials this year, each one of us had different questions. What would the companies have to offer? How would they display their new introductions? What wouldn't we be seeing this year and why? How would we survive the rain and mudslides?

As we threaded our way up the coast, we were treated to a wide array of stops — we saw everything from the elaborate gardens at Proven Winners to the garden center location of Plant

Haven to the actual trial at Plug Connection. In fact, one of the best things about Pack Trials is visiting all the different companies to see how they set up their stops and what kind of news they have for us when we get there.

Yes, a big part of Pack Trials is what each of the companies is actually doing, so this year we added a new article to give you a feel for each stop. We can certainly say all of the companies were very gracious in their hospitality...even if the weather wasn't.

Companion Coverage

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Next month: Results from the varieties' first landscape trial, breeding breakthroughs, site snapshots and many more varieties.

Agrexco www.agrexco.com

The marketing arm of the largest agricultural exporter in Israel, Agrexco again occupied space at Pacific Plug & Liner during Pack Trials. Five Agrexco companies were in attendance: Cohen Propagation Nurseries, Hishtil Nurseries, Jaldety Nursery, Schwartz Nursery and newcomer Biological Industries. Focusing on a wide range of plant material — from ornamental herbs to vegetative annuals to perennials and more — the companies showcased their offerings in a very simple way that focused on the plants. As propagators shipping cuttings into the United States, the companies are trying to establish their genetics as alternatives to the already-established companies.



American Takii www.takii.com

This was a big introduction year for American Takii. The typically conservative company introduced approximately 30 new varieties and three new series this year including a great new Pink Morn spreading petunia and a number of new cut flowers. Especially exciting was Takii's emphasis on warm-season crops. Traditionally known for its cool-season offerings, Takii is continuing to expand its offerings into the all-important summer season. Takii's theme this year even drove home the concept of expanded breadth. Flowers That Make Cents, Sense And Scents drew attention to the fact that Takii offers plants for all uses — plants that are economical to produce (cents), have multiple uses (sense) and offer an attractive fragrance (scents). ▶





Automated Equipment for All of Your Growing Needs

Mini Flat Filler

The **Mini Flat Filler** is designed for the grower who wants to take the first step into automation or for the larger grower with a specialty need. The Mini Flat Filler is the most cost effective way to uniformly fill plug flats on a small scale.



Containers 15" wide and 5" high
Production Rate up to 700 flats per hour

TTA PackPlanter Transplanter

Bouldin & Lawson and TTA are proud to present the TTA PackPlanter. This machine meets the entry level price point, but also gives the grower a high-speed and versatile transplanter. Growers will appreciate the speed of change-over and TTA's proven gripper design.



12, 16, 24, and 32 gripper models available
20,000 plugs per hour w/ 16 grippers

Compact Needle Seeder

The **Compact Needle Seeder** is an entry-level seeder that accurately sows a wide range of small and odd shaped seeds. Quick change-over for seeds and trays and low maintenance is perfect for smaller operations.



Great Entry-Level Seeder, Production Rate
of approx. 100 plug trays (288) per hour

Maxi Flat Filler

Compact but versatile, the **Maxi Flat Filler** offers speed, efficiency, and convenience to growers of all sizes. Uniform filling of a wide range of containers at increased production speeds assures simplicity of operation, and low maintenance.



Containers 18" wide and 12" high
Production Rate up to 1000 flats per hour

Watering Tunnel

The **Watering Tunnel** is available in standard model for plug trays and pots and an extended height model for potted plants and hanging baskets. Planted containers travel through the stainless-steel hood where interchangeable nozzles allow you to water to the desired moisture level.



Two models available: 14" high watering
tunnel and 27" high watering tunnel

Precision Needle Seeder

The **Precision Needle Seeder** will sow a wide variety of seed types into most standard plug trays. This patented seeder is designed for the grower who demands speed and accuracy when sowing small, difficult and odd-shaped seeds.



Wide variety of seed types
Production Rate of 200 trays per hour

Maxi Pro Filler

High Speed production and uniform filling of multiple types of containers are characteristics that define the new **Maxi Pro Filler**. This unit is capable of filling a full range of containers from plug trays to hanging baskets and pots. The Maxi Pro is easily the most versatile and user-friendly flat filler on the market.



Containers 18" wide and 12" high
Production Rate up to 1,300+ flats per hour

Accu-Water Watering Conveyor

The **Accu-Water Watering Conveyor** is a highly accurate watering system. It is designed for multiple watering applications. Features variable speed conveyor, adjustable water controls, and tray sensor.



Watering of plug trays, flats,
baskets, and pots.

Basic Fluffer

Mounted on an Incline Conveyor, the **Basic Fluffer** is a rugged and cost-effective attachment that saves valuable time and manual labor. It is designed to convert baled or compressed materials into usable media ready for container filling.



3.8 cu. ft. increase volume 15%+
from compressed materials.
(Need to add an incline conveyor for this Unit.)

Model 131 Flat and Pot Filling System

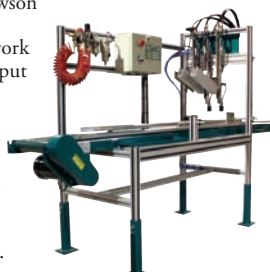
The **Model 131 Flat and Pot Filling System** is designed for growers who need high speed production with uniform filling of multiple types of growing containers, including plug flats, hanging baskets, and nursery pots.



Containers 18" wide and 14" high
Production Rate up to 1800 flats per hour

TagMaster Tagger

The **Bouldin & Lawson TagMaster Tagger** is designed to work with our high-output transplanters. The TagMaster Tagger can be used with an integrated system being fed automatically, or independently in a hand-fed operation.



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BP-01 Bale Processor

Designed for ease of loading and processing peat moss and pre-mixed compressed bales. The **BP-01 Bale Processor** includes a fluffer attachment and automatic misting system that will bring the bales back to the proper consistency needed for plant growth.



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pack trials

Ball FloraPlant www.ballfloraplant.com

Even with almost 70 new varieties, this was a slow introduction year for Ball FloraPlant. We may have gotten used to seeing triple-digit numbers every year, but the "limited" introductions were not the only change at FloraPlant. Instead of focusing exclusively on varieties, the company devoted more than three-fourths of its space to vignettes and themed displays this year. Programs covered everything from the standard emphasis on climate preference to crops selected to be low maintenance or good gift plants. In addition to working on its core crops such as angelonia, calibrachoa and geraniums, FloraPlant added a number of new perennials and a surprising range of unpatented component plants.



Danziger "Dan" Flower Farm www.danziger.co.il

This was definitely the year of bacopa at Danziger "Dan" Flower Farm. The focus was evident in everything from bacopa-shaped key chains to two huge bacopa displays. Seven new sutera-type Copias were shown including 'Copia Gulliver Lilac', which has what looks like the largest blue flowers on the market. Danziger also expanded its coverage in the jamesbrittenia-type bacopa, with five new colors in the Britney series. Among the 100-plus new introductions this year were two torenia varieties we will be highlighting next month for their unique yellow color. Other notable introductions included a new calibrachoa series, Noa; a new lobelia series, Anabel; and a new bicolor verbena sub-series, Donalena Twinkle.



Bodger Seeds And Bodger Botanicals www.bodger.com

Bodger is a great stop where you can still see actual variety comparisons grown in packs, but this old-school Pack Trial showed some interesting varieties. This was the first year the vegetative trial at Bodger Botanicals was open to all attendees, and the more open trial site really showcased the differences between each division. On the seed side, Bodger played to its strengths with a new impatiens series and several new mixes. On the vegetative side, the company continued to offer a range of genetics from different breeders. This year the company focused on filling out existing series, with the salvia Stampede series the only completely new series addition.



Ecke Ranch www.ecke.com

Under the tag line "Ecke Means Business," Ecke Ranch opened the doors at its own facility for the first time in three years, but this was not a regular Pack Trial stop. Several weeks before Pack Trials, Ecke announced it would not be hosting a Pack Trial. Instead, the company invited customers to make appointments to discuss Ecke's offerings, and the "Pack Trial that wasn't a trial" was a big success. The company presented a clear, strong positioning message, showcasing a number of marketing programs and the possibilities with its genetics. And while Ecke showed a full range of new plant introductions, the focus was definitely on programs for grower success, with more ideas than any other stop. ♦



EPA Grants TriStar™ Insecticide Non-Agricultural Use Label Amendment

Cleary Chemical Corporation announces that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has accepted a label amendment to include the WPS non-agricultural use re-entry instructions for TriStar™ 70 WSP insecticide. The amendment means that TriStar can be used by professional lawn and landscape contractors in residential and commercial applications for effective control of a broad range of insects without the 12 hour REI.

Introduced to the ornamental market in 2003, TriStar quickly established itself as the leading neonicotinyl foliar insect spray for the greenhouse, field, nursery and landscape markets. Featuring contact, systemic, ovicidal and translaminar activity, TriStar provides fast-acting control that lasts for weeks. Precise foliar applications save time and money in the greenhouse, field, nursery, and landscape.



The inclusion of the WPS non-agricultural use re-entry instructions is the latest label expansion for the product. In 2005, the EPA granted TriStar an expanded label that increased its already broad-spectrum control to key, economically important insect categories such as aphids, mealy bugs, caterpillars, sharpshooters, scales, whiteflies, thrips, leaf eating beetles and leaf miners.

"We are extremely pleased with the acceptance that TriStar continues to receive from leading ornamental growers and landscapers", says Don Rossi, Director of Sales and Marketing, Cleary Ornamental Products. "The fact that TriStar is a foliar spray with rapid knockdown that controls a wide variety of insects is a winning combination of benefits for the customer.

Applicators are reminded that in non-agricultural applications, such as residential and commercial landscapes, pets and children must be kept off of treated areas until the product application dries.

For 68 years, the turf and ornamental industries have come to count on Cleary Chemical for superior, quality plant protection products, utilizing the most up-to-date technology. Cleary markets innovative products such as new 3336 Plus™ fungicide with ClearTec™ Activation Technology™, 26/36 Fungicide™ and TriStar™ 70 WSP insecticide; Cleary 3336™, Endorse™, Spectro™, new Protect™ DF, Spotrete™, and Alude™ fungicides; and, Nutri-Grow™ Magnum foliar nutrient.

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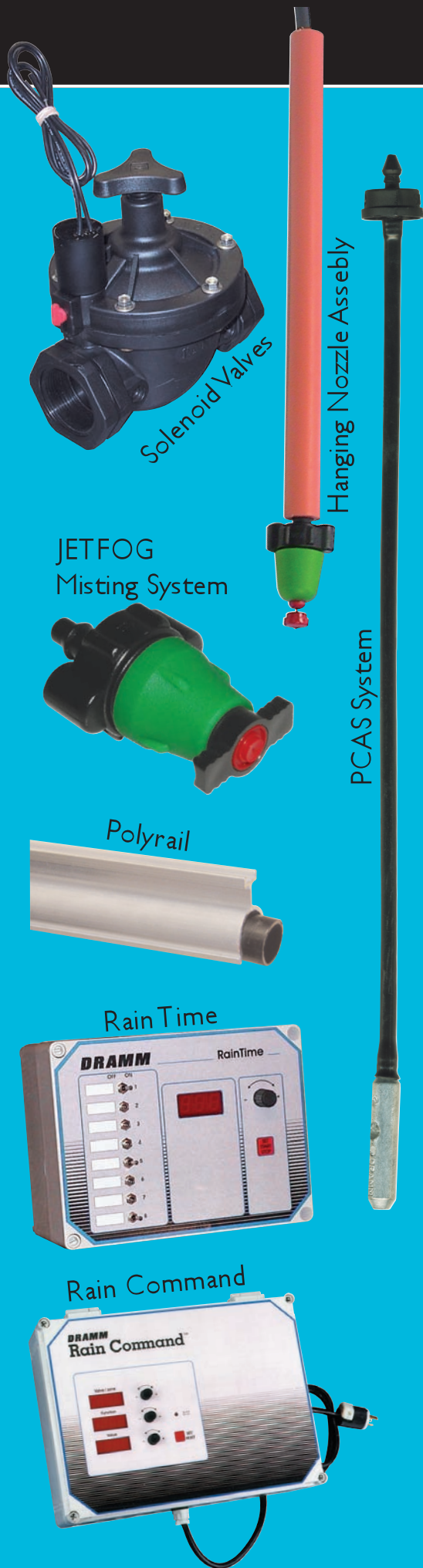


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Ernst Benary Of America www.benary.com

Benary's Pack Trial site looked even better this year, the second at its new location. The plants looked great, and Benary devoted substantial space to theme gardens on everything from butterflies to shade, showcasing the products' many uses. With 40 new varieties, this was a very good introduction year for Benary, especially in more mainstream crops such as begonias, pentas and pansies. There were, however, a number of new specialty and perennial introductions, and Benary continues to add to the Fastrax first-year flowering perennial program with eight new introductions.



Farmen

www.farmen.com

Exhibited at Pack Trials by broker H.F. Michell's at the Speedling facility, Farmen's exhibit was much larger this year than in years past, with the display occupying seven benches. This year, we even saw a fairly extensive POP display on the company's big push item, two new petunia series named after a famous Italian racecar driver. This Italian breeder of bedding crops is probably best known for its ruffled pansies but showed a range of standard bedding crops this year. Perhaps by having a consistent trial location and adding a POP program, Farmen can establish a bigger presence for itself in the United States.



Fides North America www.fidesnorthamerica.com

In a big year for introductions, Fides North America showed approximately 50 new varieties including a new hybrid nemesia series and several new osteo varieties. Fides now has the location all to itself since parent company Kirin sold Twyford and transferred all color genetics to the Fides brand. All of this culminated in a great Pack Trial that emphasized the ever-expanding breadth of Fides' offerings. And despite a few new kalanchoe and carnation introductions, Fides definitely focused on spring annuals this year, continuing the move toward crops with wider customer appeal.



Fischer USA

www.fischerusa.com

Co-located at Goldsmith Seeds, Fischer benefited from having more space this year. Instead of being buried among a sea of benches, the company's display occupied the entire back of the greenhouse, breaking with tradition and showing new varieties in one "in-ground" bed. Several of the introductions in the new variety island were truly innovative, but the most impressive part of the show was "Fischer Solutions." The theme of this year's trial, Fischer Solutions highlighted various Fischer programs designed to help growers succeed. The program covers everything from marketing disease-resistant crops to creating a new shipping packages.



DRAMM

pack trials

Floranova

www.floranova.co.uk

Co-located with Oglevee, English-breeder Floranova showed a large offering of new varieties for a company that is still trying to establish a strong presence in the U.S. market. Its 37 introductions included standard seed crops such as salvia and petunia but focused on vinca for the second year in a row with an entirely new series introduction. Aside from the new varieties, Floranova's exhibit showcased its new logo and new tag line: creative plant breeding. There was also much discussion about last year's purchase of Floranova by Jeff Colgrave and how this will affect operations.



GGG-International Inc.

www.ggg-gruenewald.com

This was the German company's second year participating in Pack Trials and co-locating with the H.F. Michell's companies at Speedling. GGG showed a sampling of its own breeding work mixed with some impressive offerings from companies such as Westhoff and Suntory. In total, more than 350 varieties were on display, with several notable new introductions such as the new upright snap series Dazzling Lips and a double bacopa we will be covering next month. GGG is fairly new to the American market and offers many of the standard spring annuals.



Golden State Bulb Growers


www.goldenstatebulb.com

Golden State Bulb Growers is always a very nice stop. Though you really only see one crop — callas — the greenhouse is full of them and the coordinators always include demonstrations of common culture problems. The tone is always educational, with this year's push on the use of multiple tubers per pot and the use of plant growth regulators. Golden State never overwhelms with introductions, this year offering only two, but if you are a pot or cut calla grower, the visit is well worth the stop because of the personalized help you receive.



Goldsmith Seeds

www.goldsmithseeds.com

At the company that started the very first Pack Trials, the new trends in displays could not have been more obvious. With only two companies located at Goldsmith's facility, Fischer being the other, there was much more space for really showcasing the varieties and their uses, and Goldsmith took advantage. Not only was the trial easier to maneuver and less cramped, but there were also impressive vignettes highlighting Goldsmith's new programs to help growers increase sales and have better success with Goldsmith crops. In the way of introductions, Goldsmith focused on filling out existing lines this year with no new series introductions. 



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