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We're Hittin' the Road!

It's March — must be time for California Pack Trials.

Later this month, the *GPN* crew will be heading to California to check out the 2009 edition of one of the industry's most important show-and-tells of varieties, new products, and marketing and merchandising programs.

The official dates for Pack Trials this year are March 28 through April 4. Over the course of that week, we will log nearly 1,000 miles as we travel from Encinitas, through the central region of the state and end up in Gilroy seven days later.

Whew!

Pack Trials can be an exhausting trip, but it is also incredibly rewarding.

We will spend seven nights in seven different hotels, eat at some of the best (and not-so-best) California dining establishments, take hundreds and hundreds of photographs, and talk until we are hoarse.

Pack Trials is always a great opportunity to catch up with some of the brightest minds at the breeder companies and not only pick their

tunity to see the latest varieties that the breeders have on display and check out their latest merchandising/marketing programs.

Read About It

As in years past, the June and July issues of *GPN* will feature extended coverage of California Pack Trials. If you can't make it to California this year, we will be your eyes and ears: Paige, Jasmina and I will be reporting on what we see and hear during our journey.

Hort TV at Pack Trials

This year, we're also packing our video camera for the trip and getting ready to present you with unparalleled coverage of the unique sights and sounds of Pack Trials — that's right, Hort TV will be there, too!

Throughout the week, we are planning to post video reports from California on our website. If you go to www.gpnmag.com and click on the "Hort TV @ Pack Trials" link, you will be able to watch video clips from some of the different stops during our West Coast adventure.

Get It in the Zone

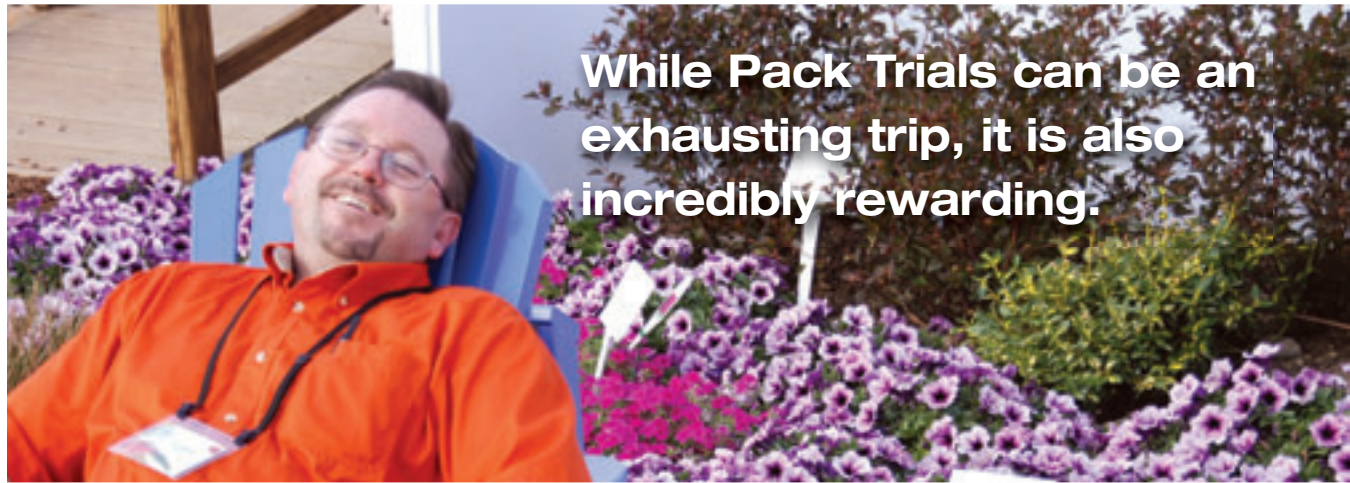
Don't forget to check out the Pack Trials Zone on our website, www.gpnmag.com. There you will find the electronic version of our "California Pack Trials Companion," which contains all of the information you need to guide you through California. It contains the addresses for all of the stops as well as the key contact information for the breeder companies, so you can key the info into your GPS and hit the California highways.

The Pack Trials Zone also contains links to all of the Pack Trials articles that have run in *GPN* since 2002.

What Do You Think?

If you are going to Pack Trials this year, keep an eye out for Paige, Jasmina or myself. We would love to compare notes with you and find out how your trip is going.

If we don't see you on the road, feel free to drop me an e-mail at thodson@sgcmail.com and tell me about your Pack Trials experience. [GPN](http://www.gpnmag.com)



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brains on what is taking place at their companies and with their specific varieties, but also to get their opinions on the state of the overall industry. It is also a perfect chance to talk to attending growers to find out their predictions for 2009.

But most importantly, we will have the oppor-