

CELEBRATE THE SUNFLOWER

Sunflowers are a forever favorite among many flower lovers — from children to new gardeners to experienced gardening vets. For many, they symbolize unwavering faith. For others, they signify joy, warmth and vitality. As a matter of fact, in some folklore traditions, it is said that sunflowers are a symbol of good luck; planting them around the home could bring fortune.

In any case, it is no wonder why the National Garden Bureau designated 2021 as the “Year of the Sunflower.” Each year, the organization selects one annual, perennial, bulb, edible and shrub that is trending in the market, easy to grow and versatile in use.

Sunflower was obviously selected for the annual category. For 2021, the perennial is monarda, the bulb is hyacinth, the edible is garden bean and the shrub is hardy hibiscus.

Each of these plant categories is certainly worthy of the promotion. When I surveyed readers a couple of months ago, nearly half of the respondents said they grow both sunflowers and monarda and more than half said they grow hardy hibiscus!

But how will you promote them? As an industry, I think we can all agree that we all need to step up our game when it comes to self-promotion. While this year has certainly had its share of struggles, one silver lining has been the amount of new gardeners we gained. And we need to keep them!

Going into 2021, I am definitely making it a point to share more of what we do and what we grow. And I hope you do the same.

If you need a little inspiration, the NGB website (www.ngb.org) is an excellent resource for shareable materials on the “Year of” plants — from articles to PowerPoint presentations to beautiful imagery.

Much like the food on their plate, consumers these days want to know where many of their purchases, flowers included, originate. They enjoy a good anecdote, or a fun fact. The more we share and educate, the more their interest will grow.

Remember, sunflowers symbolize feelings like faith and joy. And right now, we all sure could use a little bit of both.



DON'T FORGET

While we are on the topic of self-promotion ... do you know any horticulture industry professionals under the age of 40 that you think should be tooting their horn?

We are currently accepting nominations for the 40 Under 40 Class of 2021. If you know someone who is dedicated to the industry and truly making a difference, we want to know more about them. Learn about the program and submit your nomination at www.gpnmag.com/40-under-40-awards.

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