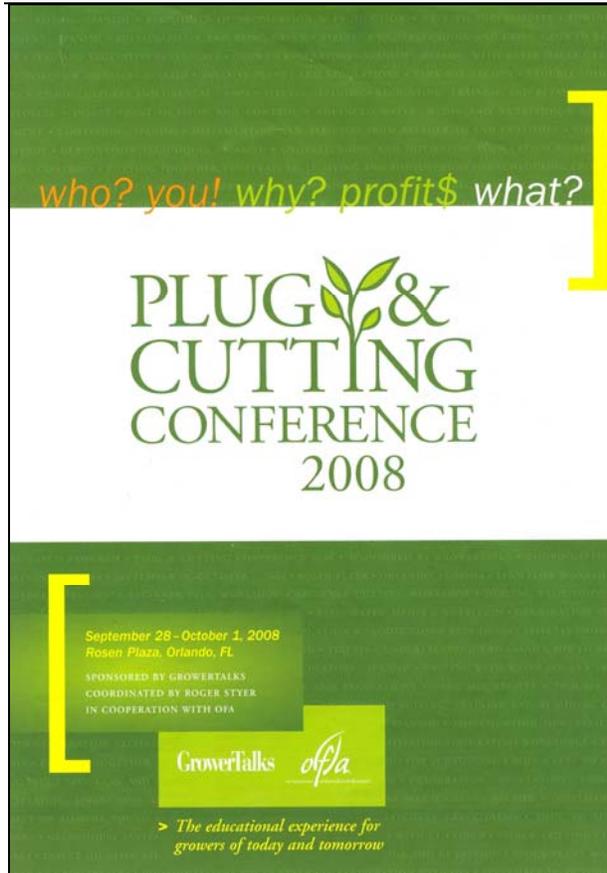


To

Date

Wednesday December 10, 2008

6 pages from Sonja Peters



The “Plug & Cutting Conference 2008” was sponsored by the magazine GrowerTalks (Ball Publishing) and the Ohio Florist Association. It was held September 28 to October 1 in Orlando, Florida.

About 530 people attended, mostly growers from the United States. From Canada were 59 persons: 24 from Ontario, 11 from Quebec, 8 from Alberta and 16 from British Columbia.

This annual conference has a 3-year cycle: 2009 will be on perennials, 2010 on bedding plants, 2011 again on plugs and cuttings.

Schedule

- Day 1 - Workshop on cuttings (useful information will be added to regular reports)
- Days 2 and 3 – Lectures (again, useful information will be added later).
- Day 4 – Tour of 4 commercial greenhouses. See the following pages.

Topics of presentations

Management:

Understanding the Latino Workers / Recruiting, Training, Retaining / Key Employees

Production:

Water treatment / Plant growth regulators / Nutrition / Temperature and Lighting

Integrated Pest Management:

Spraying and spraying techniques / Biocontrol / Disease viruses / Sanitation

KNOX NURSERY (Winter Garden, Florida)

This nursery, started in 1963, produces young plants for the greenhouse industry and 4-inch annuals for local theme parks and landscape customers. They produce over 150 million plugs and liners in Ellepots in 700,000 square feet of greenhouses.

Knox is recognized as a leader in Radio Frequency Identification (RFID).



Above: Tag with a computer chip designed to send a radio frequency. Each plant tray is scanned at the start of propagation, then at each stage of production. If the label does not correspond to the programmed production, the machinery stops.

Below: Scanning of trays during production.

The same technology is used at shipping to ensure the tray is matching the order.



KNOX NURSERY (Winter Garden, Florida)



Above: Ellepots maker produced by Ellegaard (www.ellepot.dk). The Ellepot is made of degradable paper filled with growing media. It uses less plastic and is therefore more environmentally friendly. Plants are said to root faster. Plants can be lifted even when not fully rooted. The manufacturer sells machines which allow the user to produce their own Ellepots.

Below: Tool used to stick unrooted cuttings at Knox Nursery. Tape is wrapped at the correct depth to create a hole and help stick the cutting. Twisiers are not used to push the cuttings for fear of breaking the stem of the cutting.



DEROOSE PLANTS (Apopka, Florida)

This nursery grows indoor plants from tissue culture. The 35,000 square feet of greenhouses have pad and fan cooling, ebb-and-flow irrigation, overhead sprinklers, rolling containers and double screen.



Above: An employee washing and disinfecting trays and flats. The first bath contains a disinfectant product. The second bath contains a sanitizer.

Below: A transplanting machine.



AGRISTARTS INC (Apopka, Florida)

This biotech company was started in 1984. It produces tissue culture liners for wholesale, with a specialty in hybrid blueberries and tropical plants.



Above: "Sanitation is key in a greenhouse".
Weeds and plant debris are disposed in garbage cans to prevent spread of pests. Note the lids are placed on the garbage cans, which are then emptied regularly.

Below: Nozzles to produce a very fine fog (not a mist) during propagation.



HERMANN ENGELMANN GREENHOUSES (Apopka, Florida)

This company was started in 1971. It produces tropical plants at 9 locations totaling 2.7 million square feet of glass and poly greenhouses.



Above: Production area at one greenhouse facility.

Below: The “basket tree” system, a method to maximize growing space. Note the layered arrangement of rows from top to bottom. The entire greenhouse was made of these “trees”.

