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# *GrowerTalks'* Acres Online

News and commentary from *GrowerTalks* magazine

Wednesday, September 30, 2009

Dear Jennifer Sackrider  
 This time:

**Three big awards from SAF**  
**Obama's begonias**  
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**Private Gardens donates greenhouse to "Extreme Makeover"**  
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## Three big awards from SAF

SAF (Society of American Florists) just concluded its 125th annual convention, with three big honors being announced.

First, Jim Leider, CEO of Leider Horticultural Companies in Buffalo Grove, Illinois, was inducted into the Floriculture Hall of Fame. Jim has guided the 100-plus-year-old family business through decades of industry change, from cut flowers and interiorscaping to grocery store pots and now warehouse store products (they're a major supplier to Costco).

Second, Dr. Marvin N. Miller, market research manager for Ball Horticultural, was presented with the Paul Ecke Jr. Award. This award represents "exemplary devotion to profession, industry and community." During Marvin's 26-year career with Ball he's been viewed as the industry's No. 1



“numbers” man; he’s also the president of America in Bloom and a long-time *GrowerTalks* contributor.

Finally, Dr. Lance Osborne, professor of entomology/nematology at the University of Florida, was presented with the 2009 Alex Laurie Award for Research and Education. Go Gators!

## Obama’s begonias

Ball Horticultural should see about getting a White House version of those “royal warrants”—you know, “Purveyors of bespoke goods to His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh”—for their Dragon Wing begonias. They showed up prominently in a photo of President Obama that ran in the October issue of *Men’s Health* magazine (page 132).

That gives me an idea for some in-store marketing: “Good enough for the White House, good enough for Your House!”



## Syngenta gets the rest of Goldsmith

Meanwhile, over in Europe, Syngenta has finished their acquisition of Goldsmith with the purchase of the remaining 50% of Goldsmith Seeds Europe that wasn’t included in the original deal back in October. For those of you who didn’t know Goldsmith had a European location, it’s a breeding, trialing and production facility in Andijk, the Netherlands, that employs about 100 staff. We used to visit every year during the European Pack Trials and it was set up very much the same way—including the great dinners every night.

## Private Gardens donates greenhouse to Extreme Makeover

Tune in to ABC’s “Extreme Makeover” October 4 to see a Victorian greenhouse become part of a deserving family’s new home. Private Gardens of Hampden, Massachusetts, was approached by the Extreme Makeover producers about donating a personal glasshouse to a Missouri family that loves to garden, and they were happy to oblige. Three company crew members helped install the house during the shoot, which took place in July.

## Veranda O fungicide good to go in CA

OHP Inc. just announced that their new environmentally friendly fungicide, Veranda-O, is now registered for California use. Veranda O, which contains the active ingredient Polyoxin D, a natural antibiotic and fermentation product of a soil bacterium, is especially effective on botrytis and rhizoctonia, along with many other hard-to-control diseases such as alternaria, anthracnose and powdery mildew. Best of all, it has virtually no toxicity to land mammals, insects or birds, and degrades rapidly in the environment—within two to three days—according to Jeff Dobbs, OHP’s director of technical services.

It’s available as an easy-to-use water dispersible granule (WDG), and it can be sprayed or drenched. It’s got a 4-hour REI and a Caution signal word. It’s designated as a biochemical fungicide by the United States EPA Bio-Pesticide Division.

For more information, visit [www.ohp.com](http://www.ohp.com).

## Oops, it's betterplants, not bestplants

I got carried away when I listed the website for BASF in the September issue of *GrowerTalks* as [www.bestplants.basf.us](http://www.bestplants.basf.us) (page 66). It's actually [www.betterplants.basf.us](http://www.betterplants.basf.us). Go there, search via zip code for your BASF rep, and ask them to hook you up with one of Ann Chase's cool "Best Fungicide Options" wheels.

There are all sorts of handy resources for you at BASF's site, including an "ask the experts" section, a downloadable Pest Management Guide, online product training, and educational videos.

## Growers: Open your own online store

Want to sell straight to the end consumer but don't want to open a garden center? How about selling through a website? A group of "passionate, technology-savvy" gardeners has launched an online marketplace called DoLeaf.com that will let gardeners buy fruit, veggies and specialty plants from independent growers and garden centers through their free online store.

They say they're actively recruiting growers who want to set up a DoLeaf store for free. Go to <http://doleaf.com/sell-with-us> to learn how it works. There's a video tutorial, too, and tips on how to ship.

I can't vouch for how it will work, so if any of you check it out and have an opinion, let me know [HERE](#).

## A few last impressions of South Africa

Thanks for all the positive comments about the reports from my long trip to South Africa. One can't do nearly two weeks in a place without accumulating reams of notes; here are a few random oddball scribbles from my notebook:

**Water availability:** Despite the relatively arid landscape, there's currently a decent amount of water in South Africa. So, like U.S. growers, the industry doesn't give it much thought until there's a drought. The rainy and dry seasons so far are fairly dependable, although they did have a decent drought a few years ago. Interestingly, one grower said climate change is making his area WETTER. Just as you can see the U.S. drought monitor map [HERE](#), you can view the South Africa drought map [HERE](#).

**Customers:** Someone here asked me where all the annuals are used in South Africa. Bedding all goes into landscapes, often planted by a gardener or commercial landscaper. They don't seem to do much with bedding in containers or hanging baskets, and even less with mixed containers.

**The big garden pest: monkeys.** And we think squirrels and rabbits are bad! You can imagine the damage a troupe of them can do. At the Sun City resort, where monkeys run wild, they've found pepper-based repellent works. Repels baboons, too. In case you wondered.

**Tea is the big drink:** Very British. Yes, you can get coffee. But not at Starbucks (none in the country ... yet). Even at the seminars I gave, we took a tea break. Civilized, eh, what?

**North American connections:** Dramm watering tools are popular at some garden centers. Weber grills are a favorite outdoor cooking device.

**Need a place to stay:** I highly recommend "[The Palace of the Lost City](#)" at Sun City for a once-in-a-lifetime hotel experience (no mud huts here). And right outside Sun City is the Bakubung Game Park for an easy look at giraffes, rhinos, elephants, zebra, eland, gazelle, crocodile, hippos,



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lions (if you're lucky) and warthogs.

## Finally ... South African definitions

Robot = traffic light (no wonder their nurseries aren't yet automated, if three colored lights is their idea of a robot).

Bakkie = Afrikaans for pickup truck (pronounced "buckee," it's probably derived from "buckboard").

Braai = Afrikaans for grilled meat—like "barbecue," it's both a noun and an adjective.

Boerewors = delicious "farmer's sausage," probably the most popular thing to cook on the braai.

"Pull a scab off a tinny"—Australian for "let's have a beer" (but related to me by a South African, which is why I include it here).

## Finally II ... local sales lingo

My favorite line from a souvenir salesman when I inquired about the price (which I assumed would be high) of a giant carved lion: "Oh, you have to be strong in the pocket."

## Finally III ... Everything's backwards

Yes, the water DOES go down the drain in the opposite direction: clockwise. Also, they drive on the wrong (left) side of the road.

## Finally IV ... Idol in the garden

Last time I mentioned Jason Hartman, South Africa's 2009 Idol winner (their version of American Idol) and his connection to gardening. Jason is very into sustainability and earth-friendly living; to

JASON GARDEN



that end he's launched a website, [www.jasonsgarden.com](http://www.jasonsgarden.com) and has partnered with SANA, the South African Nursery Association, as official spokesman for their "Life is a Garden" promotion campaign. He's made appearances at their trade show, garden shows and garden centers to promote earth-friendly living, including gardening. In fact, on one page of his website, you can learn how to make a veggie garden from old tires! Click [HERE](#) to see it.

Wonder if Carrie Underwood is into gardening? Or even Kellie Pickler. Pickler is a good name for a gardener!

As always, if you have a comment, question, gripe or compliment, share it [HERE](#). And click [HERE](#) to hook up to me on Twitter for truly instant news.

See you next time,

Chi

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