

Berl Thomas and Associates, Inc.

Bringing Cultures Together For Over 20 Years



Volume 1 Number 6

August 2009

A Brand With a Difference by Scott Titus

Remember Scott from the July issue. Scott has shared a few more tips that led him to strong customer loyalty and his desire to bring quality, service and value to his customers. Scott's view in his own words. "When I started my nursery twenty years ago, my business advisor asked me about my marketing plan. My reply was to produce the best crop I could and hope to sell it. He told me I needed to develop pull through marketing strategies by identifying any differential advantages I had over my competitors. I would then have to advertise these advantages to my buyers and consumers by creating a brand. Over the years I've accomplished all the tasks needed to sustain a brand with distinct advantages for the consumer as well as my

retail accounts. Last year we supplied several permanent display baskets to four of Seattle's largest independent garden centers. We were picked to supply these specimens because of our consistently high quality in the several hundred other crops we grow. We are able to produce the level of quality that these businesses demand by using a long list of sustainable nursery practices that ensures superior garden performance and lasting quality for the consumer.

I started branding our plants fifteen years ago and registered the trademarks Intrepid Coco-Coir® and Intrepid quality grows on you® as part of the INTREPID brand identity. Custom tags direct people to our educational website, www.coco-coir.com.

Branding is one way Windy Meadow has worked with retailers to achieve premium margins on plants, potting soil, and fertilizer. A small group of my retail customers use Intrepid products exclusively in their businesses with great results. I often meet retail garden customers who comment on how much better our plants perform compared to others they purchase. If you don't sell fertilizer to everyone who purchases plants, then there's an opportunity to educate the consumer at the cash register."

[Click here for Scott's full article](#)

In the current economic conditions it is important to take advantage of all strategies including branding, tags and packaging. Make it easy for the customer to get excited.

George Lucas Greenhouse Grower's Grower of the Year

Lucas Greenhouses has been chosen "Grower of the Year" by Greenhouse Grower Magazine for 2009! You can visit www.greenhousegrower.com to read more.

Lucas Greenhouses are committed to providing the highest quality plants on the market supported by remarkable customer service. No matter the

size of your company or order, their unique approach is to treat each customer and order with the personal attention they need. They are a customer-driven greenhouse, and they find great pride in partnering with their customers and helping them grow and achieve the success they desire.

On April 7, 1979, Lucas

Greenhouses was officially open for business.

Today the standard that has always remained constant is their focus on excellence. They gear their product toward the Retail Garden Center, striving to give them the very best in both plant material and service.



December 1 to 3, 2009

Hortiflorexpo Beijing



April 14 to 17, 2010

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IQ150 pH Meter for Media pH in Pots and Plug Trays



The fully redesigned IQ150 probe extends a full 6 inches in length and has a "New" narrower point (3/16th in) which is great for small plug trays and causes less root disturbance. The Improved sensor design

allows for sampling on the side and prolongs probe life.

The IQ 150 permits instant, accurate measurement of pH in soil media as well as water or nutrient solutions. Use this portable meter for field work, food testing, soil testing, industrial applications and educational use. Probe to measure pH in growing media right on the spot, without conducting tedious soil sampling and preparation.

The IQ 150's tough, stainless steel probe stores dry. A durable ISFET silicon chip sensor eliminates problems associated with glass bulb sensors and accurately measures even a

single drop. The ultra-rugged meter is armored in a water-resistant rubber holster and is engineered to withstand a 10-foot drop onto concrete.

Features include recognition of 7 buffers, 0.1 or 0.01 pH resolution, automatic or manual temperature compensation, and one-point or two-point calibration.

Measuring pH media in pots or plug flats has been very difficult and unreliable in the past, however, with the IQ150 this problem is no longer a problem.

[Click for more information](#)

American Takii Hollyhock (*Alcea rosea*) Spring Celebrities

Biennial Bedding Plant



The current varieties for this new and exciting series are *Appleblossom*, *Apricot*, *Icy Blue* and *Crimson*.

The dwarf hollyhock series Spring Celebrities now encompasses 8 varieties/colors, with more on the way for 2010. Normally a biennial, growing vegetatively the first year then flowering the second season, the Spring Celebrities flower the first year from seed. They have a nice, compact habit, with large, fully double very showy flowers. Normally *Alcea rosea* grows to about 5 feet tall,

but Spring Celebrities stays 2-1/2 to 3 feet, and they also can be regulated to stay shorter. They make an ideal gallon pot, with great consumer appeal! They can also be used in combinations in large containers.

New for 2010 are the colors Carmine Rose, Lemon, Purple and White and a formula mix. Lemon is showing resistance to *Alcea* rust; the other colors are currently being tested for resistance as well.

Crop time 14 to 16 weeks.

[American Takii Seed](#)

China World Fruit & Vegetable Trade Fair 2009

At present, the total quantity of Chinese fruits and vegetables amounts to 745 million tons, ranking the top of the world. Such output not only well satisfies Chinese domestic demand but also labels Chinese fresh products all over the world. Meanwhile, China plays a leading role among fruit-importing and exporting countries in the same way.

Therefore, it is undoubtedly that an enormous potential and massive market could be tapped and explored at aspect concerning import and export of Chinese fruit and vegetable industry.

Accordingly, the target buyers both home and abroad attending this fair will come from sectors of distributors,

food processors, supermarkets, wholesale, retail, services, consult and so on. Meanwhile fresh ideas from this industry will be shared at the "Summit of World Fruit and Vegetable Industry" as well, which is an equally important concurrent event of the fair November 13 to 15.

[Click for more information](#)

INDUSTRY LINKS

American Nurseryman

Read our August issue today! [Click here!](#)

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July 10 to 13., 2010

Spectrum Technologies, Inc.

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China Greenhouse



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www.china-flower.com

FloraCulture INTERNATIONAL



Berl Thomas, Ph.D.

September 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		<u>Four Oaks UK</u>		<u>Flormart - Miflor Italy</u>		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
<u>OFA Perennial Conference</u>			<u>CanWest Hort Show</u>			
27	28	29	30			

Do you have something new to share with the industry?

New research, new products, new production techniques, share your products and experience with others.

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Communications - Are You the Wheat or Chafe? Part 4

Treat others as you would like to be treated. I know this is an old saying but it brings home the basis of a good relationship with your customers, suppliers and business relationships.

A few years ago I was in a quality management training program and I had the opportunity to meet one of the senior managers at ATT. A few weeks later I had a major problem with the ATT phone system the company. My manager at the time did not seem to be able to solve the problem so I got involved.

I called the ATT manager that I had met at the quality management meeting. The person that answered his phone was his assistant and after we discussed the purpose of my call his assistant surprised me by saying "My manager has a person that takes care of these problems and I will call her if she does not call you in 5 minutes call me back". My thought was that there was no way I would get a call back in 5 minutes. Well I was wrong they not only called me back in 5 minutes but every time we talked they

would give me a call back time. The result was that we were committed to ATT because they solved the problem and they performed beyond expectations.

I also have had the total opposite communication experience. When you wait on an email reply for days or weeks this is not professional. What message are they sending you when they delay the reply so long that you have to spend additional time to review the previous emails? Wheat or Chafe?

www.berlthomas.com