



**Growing together™**

**December 2016**

## *Growers join poinsettia marketing campaign*

**Moved by a desire to see poinsettia promotion in garden centres, Colin and Graeme Edwards of Woodlark Nursery in Surrey got involved with this seasons 'Stars for Europe' campaign with the marketing company, Purple Spotted Media.**

They have been successful in getting some activity in a range of centres this autumn. Coordinator of the effort, Hannah Dunne of PSM said: "We've tried to pull most of this year's activities into an overarching 'Poinsettia Fest' campaign, as we've organised so many different activities in separate locations. We've had two events in London; one press preview at Clifton Nurseries which happened on Nov 29<sup>th</sup> and is continuing for customers with special poinsettia décor and unusual varieties for sale and one event targeting young non-buyers which has happened at a bar in Shoreditch last Sunday and aims to spread reach via social media and a live experience in a very busy area."

Colin Edwards made an appearance and supplied plants for the Clifton event in London with florist Pip Bensley, which was aimed at getting improved coverage of the poinsettia sea-

son in the news and home design media.

**Outer-London events** consisted of a number of demonstrations at UK garden centres, where they paired award-winning local florists with their nearby garden centre to showcase new ideas for customers to use poinsettias in the home. They've happened at:

**Millbrook Garden Centres** (3 branches) in Kent with florists Ellouise Hasler-Stott from West Malling Flowers and Heidi Lawley from Colonnade Florist.

**Fermoy's Garden Centre** in Devon with florist Amanda Randell of Academy of Floral Art.

**Pentland Plants** in Edinburgh with florist Emma McDonald of Stems

**Fryer's Garden Centre** in Cheshire with florist Ian Lloyd

"The Millbrook events went well, perhaps the Crowborough branch might have been a bit slower, but otherwise good feedback. They generated lots of great PR as well, including a full session on BBC Radio Kent as Heidi and Ellouise actually spent the morning in the studio making things with poinsettias and talking about the Millbrook events.

STV contacted us about the Pentland events, so they did some filming for that one, plus a local news reporter attended the Fermoy's event to take pictures which were printed in the paper. We've had a number of other

local newspaper clippings promoting all of the events before they happened."

**The Sun**

**Peter Seabrook**, The Sun's gardening editor, said, "We have worked exclusively with schools in the past and the last three years had school choirs taking poinsettias to local residential homes as gifts after carol singing, as well as having scholars give small plants to parents at end of term nativity performances.....schools will certainly be involved and I hope to broaden the activity to give a new twist to



the story."

"Hill Brothers are still working with the Sun and Peter Seabrook and the poinsettias for schools project with The Sun, and eight schools in England will receive plants from Hills, and two schools in Scotland will receive plants from Pentland." Hannah reported.



# Chairman's Notes



Greg Hill

As we draw to a close on the annual poinsettia marketing season and its attendant SFE promotional programme, the time to celebrate the Association's achievements and look towards the future has come around once again.

The last 12 months has, for many, been more challenging than previous years as the weather failed to play ball at the appropriate time.

That being said, the mood within the industry is still buoyant, with growers across the country approaching the future with the optimism and positivity the industry is famed for.

The Association has continued to champion all areas of the industry and support its members through the ongoing programme of technical debate and marketing strategy. We continue to raise the profile of the industry and ensure that the wide ranging and critical issues are raised, with the help of the NFU, and placed permanently on the political agenda.

**On behalf of the Association and its management committee, I wish a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to you and yours!**

*Greg Hill*

## Art van Wingerden to open conference.



Art Van Wingerden is the Co-CEO of Metrolina Greenhouses, which is located in Huntersville, North Carolina (visited by the study tour in 2015). Art has been working full-time at the greenhouse for over 30 years with 168 acres of heated greenhouses in Huntersville and 10 acres in York, (SC). Today his main responsibilities include in-house growing, production, labour and contract growing. Art has been intricately involved in the acquisition and smooth integration of Metrolina's York location. When he's not working, Art still enjoys playing basketball and the occasional round of golf. He also serves on the board of a few different charities and is very involved with his church.

Metrolina Greenhouses is one of the largest and most automated greenhouses in the world, selling to 'big box' retailers and its annual sales total over 200 million dollars. Metrolina constantly strives to innovate new technologies and to simplify labour processes.

## US Study Tour sets off!

**As we prepare for Christmas and the New Year, the final touches are being made to the arrangements for the 2017 US study tour.**



Northwest Horticulture - Mount Vernon WA

The organisers, Mike Smith and Wayne Brough have finished their work and now the Independent Traveller agency is making the bookings for the flights and accommodation. In addition to the grower supporters of the tour it has been possible to include a few younger trainees some of whom have

benefitted from the travel bursaries made available via the DCF.

During his conference presentation next month, Jamie Satterthwaite of Pentland Plants will talk about his experiences as a intern this year in Raker's Acres, Michigan.

### Bedding & Herbaceous

The study tour will feature both bedding and herbaceous plant production and cover a diverse range of businesses supplying both independent garden centres and 'box stores' along with retailers of various sizes. The businesses which will be visited as part of the study tour will be of a scale of production and technical sophistication that UK growers will be able to readily relate to. Visits are planned to North West Horticulture, Rainbow Greenhouses Inc., Smith Gardens and Terra Nova.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/863456190457284/>



Weather permitting and for a small fee the whole family can enjoy a traditional horse drawn carriage

## Christmas Trees



Santa Fir Christmas Tree Farm is located in the Surrey Hills easily accessible from all areas of Surrey West Sussex and South West London and they encourage families to visit the farm and see the trees being produced. If you're interested, you can also take a ride on their special horse drawn carriage.

The award winning Christmas trees have been lovingly cared for and grown on one of the local plantations in the Surrey Hills so you can be sure you are getting a freshly cut, local tree that has a low carbon footprint. They are proud to have won multiple awards and in 2015 supplied both the indoor Christmas tree and door wreath to number 10, Down-



ing Street.

The company has long been a supporter of the Home Grown scheme and use the label in their promotion and on the trees for sale. In their promotional material the company stresses the importance of the product being locally grown and the advantages that it brings for customers. Santa Fir is also a member of the BCTGA.

## AGM 2017 & Spring Conference – Booking now

This years Spring Conference and AGM is at Whittlebury Hall, Northamptonshire, on 17 and 18 January 2017 and entitled

**'Using Technology– serving the growers' needs'.**

The technical committee has been successful in bringing together a great group of speakers to cover the topics—*marketing, robotics, automation, environment control, disease control, biopesticides & IPM*



The BPOA Spring conference and AGM , HTA Contact Conference and the APL seminar will run alongside each other at the same venue for the first time.

Details and booking forms have been sent out to all members so **book now** to ensure your place.



**Matthew Howard** of Kings College will be speaking on 'Growbot: A grower-programmable robot for ornamental plant production tasks' In this introduction to the new AHDB project - Matthew will be answering the question-what will growers be able to take from this?

## Upcoming events

### Spring Conference & AGM 2017–

- **Tuesday January 17<sup>th</sup> & Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> Whittlebury Hall, Northamptonshire**
- **Cut Flower Centre Study Tour to Israel- 9th - 12th January 2017:**  
Danziger Flower Farm, Agridera and local flower farms,.
- **IPM Essen 2017– Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> to Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January**
- **Burston Nurseries Primrose Festival February 2017**
- **US & Canada Study Tour: 19th-27th February 2017**

## Home Grown Grower 2016



Peter & Adam Eastwood

**Peter Eastwood Plants of Ditchling in Sussex, was awarded the 2016 Home Grown Grower prize at Four Oaks Show for their promotion of their Home Grown produce to garden centres all over the south east of England.**

Peter and Adam Eastwood are continuing the business set up by their grandfather just over a century ago and give their plants all the care and attention that they need to maintain their freshness and vigour when planted-out in consumers gardens.

### History

The business can date their family origins in horticulture over four generations, building on invaluable experience in all areas of garden plant cultivation.

Starting in 1907, their grandfather rented a kitchen garden nursery from the Downs Hotel in Hassocks where, later on in the 1960's, Acker Bilk, the Hollies and the Who regularly performed. Then he opened his own shop in the village, selling high quality fruit,

vegetables and flowers. He also grew peaches, grapes and nectarines which were popular with consumers throughout London, a testament to the quality he achieved.

In 1971, following the decision to sell the Brighton nursery so it could be re-developed as a garden centre, the nursery was built just north of the village of Ditchling, near Hassocks, the current site. Today father and son, run the business, supplying year round bedding plants, seasonal pot plants and garden bulbs to garden centres throughout South East England.

### Branding

The plant pots bearing their own Peter Eastwood Plants logo are also printed with the Home Grown logo to denote the quality plants have been produced in the UK and emphasises the local nature of the produce. The logo appears on over 500,000 pots per year as well as their pack bedding labels.

*Simon Davenport*



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HORTICULTURE

## Cut Flower Study Tour to Israel

In association with The Cut Flower Centre, this four day study tour will focus on the propagation and cultivation of a number of unusual cut flower species some of them bred by the Israeli plant breeding company Danziger, examples of which include: cutting raised caryopteris, craspedia, gypsophila, limonium, scabious and veronica.

The study tour will include visits to both Danziger's propagation facility and a number of local commercial cut flower farms. The objective of the visits will be to determine the potential for UK production of the range of cut flower species examined and gain cultural production detail about them.

The study tour will also feature a visit to the sunflower plant breeding company, Agridera, and a number of sunflower growers on the final day of the study tour.

Date: 9 - 12 January 2017  
Venue: Danziger Flower Farm, Agridera and local flower farms, Israel



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