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MAGAZINE



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Weekly Dirt

An e-mail newsletter from [garden center](#) editor Carol Miller

FEBRUARY 5, 2008

Hines Horticulture works to stage turnaround

Hines Horticulture, on the edge of financial default, still hopes to stage a [comeback](#), according to TheReporter.com. Financial statements show the company's operating income has been negative for the past 12 months. In August, the company was suspended from the NASDAQ stock market when its share prices fell below \$1 each, and then it was completely delisted from the exchange in October. Also in October, the company hired Miller Buckfire, a New York-based consulting firm that handles large-scale restructuring, mergers and acquisitions and debt refinancing. Jason Matsuura, director of corporate finance for Hines Horticulture Inc., told the paper he could not say what changes the turnaround firm had planned for Hines, but said it is looking at its options.

Wooden planters could hold emerald ash borer

Wooden planter boxes sold at Lowe's stores in Minnesota and across the U.S. could be harboring [emerald ash borer](#), a pest responsible for destroying millions of trees in the Midwest, the Duluth News-Tribune reported. Minn. Dept. of Ag. asked consumers to check for wooden planter boxes labeled Nature's Own Planters, manufactured in Indiana by Lawson Products. The planters come from an area under federal quarantine for emerald ash borers. "We are asking people to either burn the planters or double-wrap them in 6-millimeter plastic bags and put them in the trash," said Geir Friisoe, plant protection division director for MDA, in a statement.

- [Independent Garden Center Show](#)
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Finally, a show tailored specifically to independents! Nursery Retailer and Garden Chic Magazines proudly announce the launch of a new event specifically tailored for you. It's your show!

Watchers gear up for Backyard Bird Count

The [Great Backyard Bird Count](#), led by Nat'l. Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, will take place Feb. 15-18. Participants will be counting birds in their immediate location and entering results at www.birdcount.org. "Each tally helps us learn more about how our North American birds are doing and what that says about the health and future of our environment," said Tom Bancroft, chief science officer for Audubon. "These volunteers are counting not only for fun, but for the future."

Quality time trumps gifts this Valentine's Day

Traditional gifts such as candy, flowers and jewelry will see a slight decrease in popularity this year with more consumers preferring gifts of experience and gift cards, according to Nat'l. Retail Federation's 2008 [Valentine's Day Consumer Intentions and Actions Survey](#). Almost half of all consumers (48.2%) plan to celebrate with a special night out, compared to 45.3% last year, and 12.3% will give a gift card, compared to 11.3% last year. Nearly 48% will buy candy, 35.9% will buy flowers and 11.8% will buy clothing.

GCA to visit N.C. retailers this summer

[Garden Centers of America](#) will tour retailers in Raleigh, N.C., and the surrounding area June 22-25. Stops include DeWayne's Home & Garden Showplace, Fairview Greenhouses & Garden Center, Garden Supply Co., Homewood Nursery & Garden Center, L.A. Reynolds Garden Showcase and New Garden Landscaping & Nursery. Participants will also visit the JC Raulston Arboretum at N.C. State Univ., Monrovia Growers, Piedmont Carolina Nursery and Plant Delights Nursery. Early-bird registration deadline is June 6. Cost for GCA members is \$550 per person; \$750 for nonmembers.

More employers ditch group health coverage

Some small businesses are [canceling group health insurance](#) and choosing to give employees a monthly stipend toward the cost of individual policies, USA Today reported. Many of these same businesses are also depositing funds to pay part of employees' medical costs into tax-free accounts workers can tap. The shift is touted as a lower-cost way for employers to offer workers some kind of health coverage, while making smaller and more predictable financial contributions toward that coverage.

View from a blog

- A Gen Y horticulture fan has her say. [Open Register](#)
- Univ. of Md. is seeking funds for its "green" research farm. [Project: Green Industry](#)



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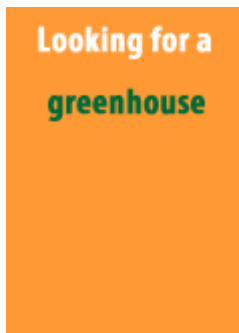
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Plant Picks



'Purity' flowers are 4 1/2 inches across. Photo courtesy of Terra Nova Nurseries

Echinacea purpurea 'Purity'. Brilliant flowers create impressive garden show

Echinacea purpurea 'Purity' makes a bold statement without a lot of bold color. There's nothing boring about this white-flowered selection.

Brilliant-white flowers encircle a green cone that matures to orange. The 4 1/2-inch flowers stand sturdily on durable stems. 'Purity' typically grows 18-24 inches tall. A 1-year-old established plant may produce more than 25 flowers.

'Purity,' a Terra Nova Nurseries release, is hardy in USDA Hardiness Zones 4-9.

Production pointers

'Purity' grows best in coarse and slightly mineral media with a pH of 5.8-7.3. It's a moderate feeder. Dry moderately between waterings in the greenhouse. Finish time for a 4-inch container is six to eight weeks. It easily shifts into a 1-gallon without any fussy production needs, said Terrisa Wells, a growing assistant at Sooner Plant Farm in Park Hill, Okla. Sooner Plant Farm grows echinacea in a pine bark/perlite/vermiculite mix. 'Purity' grows best in full sun, and the white petals do not suffer from sun burn, Wells said. It's drought tolerant once established. It flowers all summer and into fall or sometimes until frost.

Dormancy is required for normal growth and flowering. Heat can force dormancy in the plug stage resulting in overwatering.

There are no pests or diseases associated with 'Purity,' but echinacea in general are sometimes susceptible to Japanese beetles and leaf spot.

The species has dark-green leaves that are 4-8 inches long. Leaves are lance-shaped and coarsely-toothed.

In the landscape

The species grows well in rock gardens, as a specimen plant, in mass plantings or in mixed containers. It attracts butterflies and birds.

The dead flower stems remain erect well into the winter and, if flower heads are not removed, are often visited by goldfinches to feed on the seeds, according to the Missouri Botanical Garden.

Market 'Purity' with other white plants for a monochromatic garden or mixed container. Plant with rudbeckia, salvia and ornamental grasses. Garden Crossings in Zeeland, Mich., suggests these companion plants: *Caryopteris incana* 'Sunshine Blue,' *C. x clandonensis* 'Petit Bleu,' *Arabis caucasica* 'White Sequins,' *E. purpurea* 'Pink Double Delight' and *Baptisia* 'Twilite Prairieblues.'

—Kelli Rodda

SPECIFICS:

Name: *Echinacea purpurea* 'Purity.'

Common name: Coneflower 'Purity.'

Description: Pristine white flowers with bright-orange cones. It has an upright habit and is well-branched. 'Purity' can grow 24 inches tall. Flowers are 4 1/2 inches in diameter. **Hardiness:** USDA Hardiness Zone 4-9.

Landscape uses: Specimen plant, mass plantings, rock gardens, combination planters and cut flowers.

For more: Terra Nova Nurseries, (800) 215-9450, www.terrannovanurseries.com. Sooner Plant Farm, (918) 453-0771; www.soonerplantfarm.com. Garden Crossings, (616) 875-6355; www.gardencrossings.com.

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