



**Growing together™**

December 2017

## **BPPC Poinsettia Day at Neame Lea**

A very interesting day for growers was held at Neame Lea nursery in November to view some of the trial results from the BPPC project on the future of plant growth



Vasily Agache of Neame Lea

control and poinsettia variety trials. The early results on the growth control using some new products was explained by Jill England of ADAS and progress on the poinsettia monitoring scheme for soil nutrition covered by Neil Bragg. Mark Else of EMR discussed

the findings from the study this year and related this back to his earlier work with Staplehurst Nurseries on a very similar project over 10 years ago. The intervening years working on irrigation of strawberries has refined the approach but the overall conclusion is the same that it is possible to accurately control growth by employing a system



Mark Else of EMR on deficit irrigation

known as 'deficit irrigation' which effectively restricts the plant's ability to stretch easily by reducing the water availability.

The use of growth regulants has always been an art rather than a science as many growers who regard themselves as 'dry growers' have been able to use much less chemical than those trying to promote rapid growth.

These approaches were noted to be useful in the last season at Neame Lea as explained by Production Director, Andrew Fuller. In a short talk on the practicalities, Vasily Agache, head grower, described how he used timing and frequency of irrigation to control plants without any chemical additions. The work in the future will be to see how the adoption of these techniques and the integration with new chemicals will allow the move away from Chlormequat and create defined regimes which are repeatable from year to year.



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# Chairman's Notes

**Weather** A rather dry and mild winter led into a warm and dry spring which created a good start to the spring trade culminating in a peak of activity in March and April. Unfortunately, the summer was really rather wet making it the ninth wettest since 1910. Overall a good year for the spring outdoor trade but difficult trading for some companies through the later part of the season.



**Business climate:** Life, in this post Brexit world, continues to remain as uncertain as ever. Indoor plants and flowers have traded reasonably well and the continued devaluation of sterling meant that there is now a small resurgence in the demand for Home Grown produce. With this in mind more retailers are diversifying their 'offer' and looking towards more Garden orientated product which should provide an opportunity for some growers.

**Promotion:** The BPOA has continued to raise the profile of Home Grown produce via support for the display at the Great Yorkshire Show as described in the last issue of this newsletter and on the website.

The Stars for Europe promotion this year has changed a little from previous years as a new marketing company was instructed. Colin Edwards of Woodlark Nurseries continued his work in helping to promote Poinsettia through increased gar-

den centre activities which will continue to expand in 2018.

**Consultation-The Review:** The Organisation has spent much of 2017 reflecting on the report commissioned by the NFU and carried out by John Hall on how best to re-structure the organisation in order that it is best placed to represent its members throughout the industry.

The feedback from members was considerable and varied and we are very grateful for all the comments received. The job of formulating these into a new structure has been as challenging as we expected but we are hopeful that the new way of operating will make the association a more streamlined entity. These discussions will be continued at the AGM in January and all will have the opportunity to express their opinions.

**Technical Committee** has continued its meetings during the year and more interaction has been encouraged using the 'topics of interest' discussion for all members of the committee to input their ideas to the debate. The work with AHDB has also been progressed and more growers have been appointed to the PO panel. The new strategy document from AHDB caused a lot of comment from growers and the committee has written to the AHDB management to complain about the overall approach to this strategy review. There has been some interesting work done with the cooperation between growers and researchers via the bedding and pot plant centre and this was publicised during the June Open Days and the Meeting at Neame Lea in November.

I am proud to have been BPOA chairman for the last two years and I wish Kersten Catella well in her new role as she takes over in January.

*Greg Hill*

## Peter Kamp to speak on climate

Peter Kamp will join in the presentations at Spring Conference. He has a long and distinguished career having taught climate control and energy management in horticulture for ten years. He has published a variety of articles for the industry including the book Environmental Control in Greenhouses and worked as a consulting



engineer for Westland Energy. Since 2007, Peter has worked for Priva BV as 'Innovator Crop Systems' where he conducts research in new automation systems for horticulture and indoor farming.

## Arthur Coutts

The death has been announced of Arthur Coutts. Together with his brother, Stuart, they set up Four Oaks Nurseries in Cheshire in 1964 and were pioneers of the bedding plant industry adopting new techniques including supplementary lighting. In 1971 they inaugurated the Four Oaks Show which started as an open day with Norweb to show the potential of electricity in bedding production. They were very active in the BBPA during the 80's and 90's supporting many initiatives in product promotion.



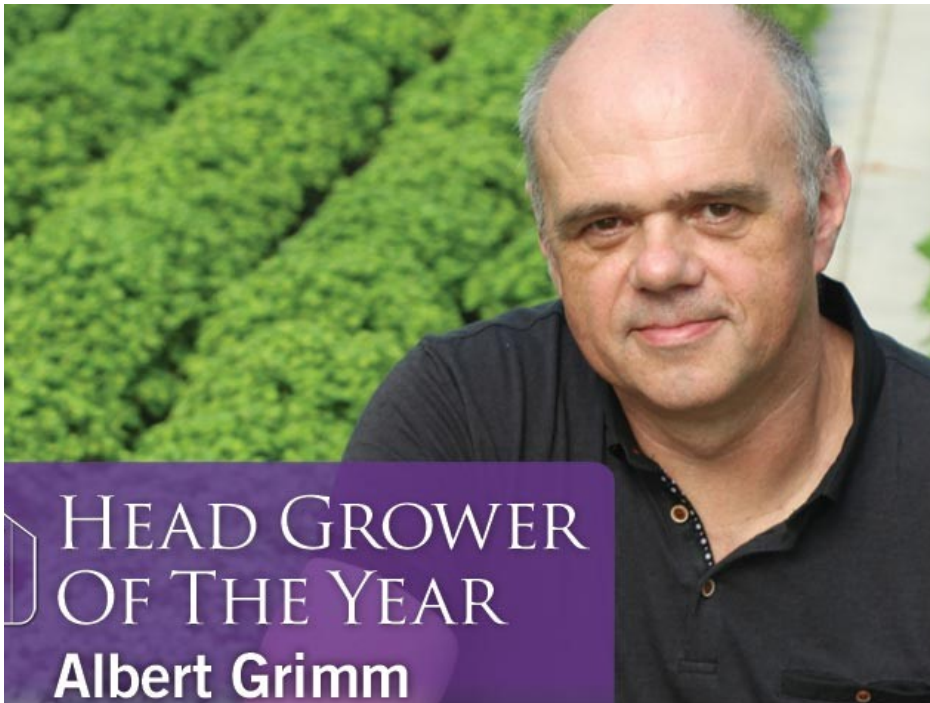
# Albert Grimm to open conference

Albert Grimm is a horticulturist by trade and passion. He graduated from an apprenticeship in his native Germany, and he has experience in most sectors of horticulture production.

Albert emigrated to Canada in 1988, and he lives with his family in southern Ontario, the heartland of Canadian greenhouse production. For nearly 20 years, he has been working as head grower for Jeffery's Greenhouses, a major producer of bedding plants in St. Catharines. Albert believes that education, professionalism, and pride in workmanship are the keys to excellent quality of plant material and to lasting success in this

business. Motivated by this perspective, he participates in the education of horticulturists with a wide variety of lectures and training sessions.

During the study tour in October, Albert gave the group some of his ideas on marketing and writes on this for the Greenhouse Grower "Our industry is beginning to understand that we won't be able to create interest in our products, unless we go out and talk to people. Too often, our attempts at communication with consumers turn into clumsy sermons on the benefits of unpleasant garden chores. It does not have to be this way."



## Upcoming events

### Spring Conference & AGM 2018—

- **Tuesday January 16<sup>th</sup> & Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup>** Stratford Manor Hotel and NFU Conference Centre
- **AHDB Poinsettia meeting** January 16th Lincoln University
- **IPM Show Essen** January 23rd-26th Essen Messe

## Ball Colegrave make POS posters available



This is one of over 110 colourful variety posters, which include many of popular **Annual and Perennial varieties**, that are available to print off on demand in both A1 and A3 formats. These are ideal to laminate and drop straight into retail sign holders. You can see the range on their website: <http://www.ballcolegrave.co.uk/Retailers/varietyposters.aspx>

## Earley video available



Earley Ornamentals of Thirsk have an illustrative video of their production unit available on their website <http://www.earleyornamentals.co.uk/video.aspx>



# Stars for Europe

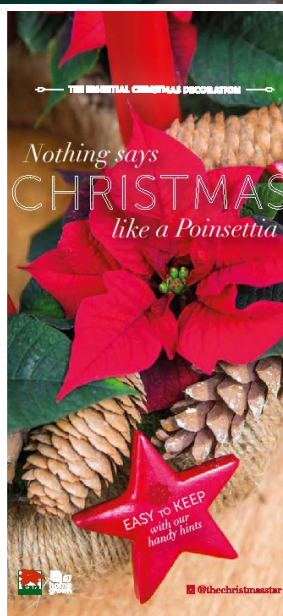


Bench tape enlivens the display

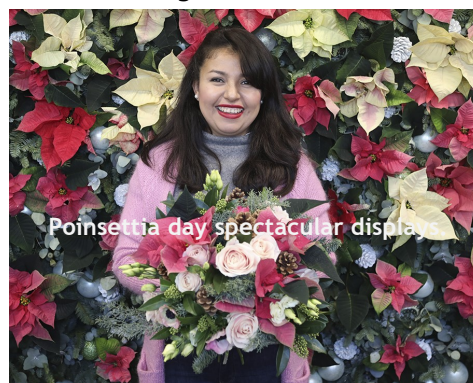
The Stars for Europe programme has undergone some changes in the 17 years since its foundation to promote the sales of poinsettia in Europe. Poinsettia is the second largest pot plant sold (by volume with around 120M sold throughout Europe annually and it is estimated 8M sold in the UK. Approximately 36M are sold in Germany and 85% of those are produced at 'home'.

This year the annual Poinsettia Day on 12th December was a timely device to remind consumers that the season is once more upon us and they need to obtain their very own 'essential Christmas decoration' (leaving aside fir trees etc).

Our own Trumpet Blowing poinsettia grower from the home counties, Colin Edwards of Woodlark Nursery along with his son, Graeme, have been extending their efforts to promote sales via the garden centre network and, with the



Large pvc banners catch the eye



Poinsettia day spectacular display

assistance of SfE, got the banners and bench tape into the centres. This effort was also supported by Sandymere Nurseries in Cheshire, KRN in Lincolnshire and Pentland Plants in Midlothian and all agree that an earlier agreement on the scope of the campaign are needed early in the year if they are to capture a significant

portion of the garden centres. Certainly, there was a interest in next season expressed at the presentation made to the HTA marketing forum some weeks ago.



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## Poinsettia meeting Holbeach

As part of the new AHDB Horticulture collaboration with the BPPC project 'New poinsettia genetics and controlled substrate moisture growing', the second of two events is being staged on January 16th, 2018 at the National Centre for Food Manufacturing, Holbeach, Lincs.

It will review a number of new poinsettia varieties and explore the potential of growth control with plant growth regulators other than chlormequat in the short term, without the need for any chemical growth regulator in the longer term. This meeting will present the principles and practice of deficit irrigation as a tool for growth regulation and the results of the shelf life trial.