

05.03.2024

Hortiflorexpo China and IPM ESSEN extend cooperation

China's largest horticultural trade fair from May 23 to 25, 2024

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Hortiflorexpo China, the leading trade fair for the horticultural industry in China, and IPM ESSEN, the world's leading trade fair for horticulture, are continuing their successful partnership. The two trade fairs are thus promoting international exchange on all aspects of the horticultural industry in China and opening up a profitable new business network for German exhibitors in particular. The next event, "Hortiflorexpo IPM Beijing", will take place as scheduled from 23 to 25 May 2024 at the new China International Exhibition Center in Beijing.

The close partnership between Hortiflorexpo and IPM ESSEN enables exhibitors to benefit from the synergy effects and to establish and expand important business contacts in the Chinese market. For example, Messe Essen organizes the German Nations Pavilion, which presents innovations "made in Germany", and is also responsible for international marketing.

Oliver P. Kuhrt, CEO of Messe Essen, emphasizes the importance of this strong intercontinental partnership: "The extension of the contract not only consolidates our cooperation, but also underlines the position of Hortiflorexpo IPM China as the leading trade fair in the horticultural industry throughout Asia."

Contract signed during the world's leading horticultural trade fair in Essen

The signing of the contract took place during the 40th IPM ESSEN (January 23 to 26, 2024), at which the Vice Secretary General of the China Flower Association, Xuemei Liu, representing Hortiflorexpo, and Oliver P. Kuhrt, CEO of Messe Essen, sealed the cooperation agreement.

Hortiflorexpo IPM China is regarded as the most important platform for innovations, networking and business opportunities for the horticultural industry in the entire Asian region. It is held annually, alternating between Shanghai and Beijing. More than 700 companies from 20 nations are expected to attend the next trade fair in Beijing in May, occupying 40,000 square meters of exhibition space. Trade visitors can look forward to an event that presents the latest trends, products and technologies in the green industry. A supporting program with live presentations, forums and horticultural excursions is also planned.

01.02.2024

IPM ESSEN donates over 1,000 trees to its exhibitors for anniversary

Initiative supports small farmers worldwide

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For the 40th edition of IPM ESSEN, the Essen Trade Fair has come up with something special for exhibitors at the world's leading horticultural trade fair: Each booth received a voucher for tree planting on the first day of the fair. The codes can be redeemed online on the Treedom web platform, which collaborates with small farmers in Africa, Central and South America, as well as South Asia. The farmers plant the trees in their local environment, contributing to a sustainable ecosystem and securing a portion of their income. Treedom uses the proceeds to fund the training of participating agricultural cooperatives. Many exhibitors participated in the initiative during IPM ESSEN.

Those who have planted a tree can track the progress of their own tree in the shared IPM forest and see how the IPM community is growing. Additionally, regular information about the species and the project country is posted. After a few weeks, each tree receives an updated photo and GPS data. "Our heart beats green – that's why we wanted to give our exhibitors a special gift for the 40th IPM ESSEN. The tree planting initiative aligns perfectly with the fair. At the same time, we make the planet a little greener and support local agriculture," explains Andrea Hölker, project manager of IPM ESSEN, regarding the background of the surprise.

Climate trees are a focus at IPM ESSEN

At the 40th IPM ESSEN, exhibitors from 43 nations showcased their innovations in the exhibition areas of plants, technology, floristry, and garden features. The special anniversary edition offered numerous program highlights for the approximately 36,000 professional visitors. Especially in view of upcoming climate goals, horticulture is currently in demand. Therefore, climate trees and insect-friendly perennials were the focus of guided tours. In addition, the seminar "Big Trees for the City," offered by the German Association of Tree Nurseries, was a popular event.

For more information, visit: www.ipm-essen.de

26.01.2024

IPM ESSEN 2024 Shines on Its 40th Anniversary

Climate-resilient plants took center stage at the world's leading horticultural trade fair

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The International Plant Fair IPM ESSEN continues to make history: Despite a nationwide rail strike, approximately 36,000 trade visitors attended the Essen Trade Fair from January 23 to 26, 2024, to explore innovations in the areas of plants, technology, floristry, and equipment presented by 1,403 exhibiting companies from 43 countries. The 40th edition of the world's leading horticultural trade fair was distinguished once again by the notably high quality of its professional audience. Significant interest was directed towards climate-resilient and biodiversity-promoting plants, as well as innovations for resource-efficient production. In comparison to the previous year, IPM ESSEN 2024 experienced an increase in the internationality of its audience.

"The green industry once again demonstrated its relevance to contemporary issues at the 40th IPM ESSEN. Horticulture is powerful and innovative, as we have seen and proven over these four days," reflects Eva Kähler-Theuerkauf, President of the State Association of Horticulture North Rhine-Westphalia and Chairwoman of the IPM Trade Fair Advisory Board.

The fact that IPM ESSEN is the leading platform for the international horticulture sector to plan for the upcoming season, place orders, or make investments is evident in the 71 percent high proportion of trade visitors with purchasing and procurement competencies within their own companies. In 2023, this figure stood at 66 percent. "This is precisely what makes a high-caliber trade fair. Despite the ongoing rail strike significantly restricting travel, the right visitors were on site," explains Oliver P. Kuhrt, CEO of Messe Essen.

Sustainability Along the Entire Value Chain

Approximately 30 percent of visitors placed orders during the fair, while over 60 percent plan to make purchases based on the information obtained at IPM ESSEN. The list of buyers primarily featured new and innovative plant breeds. Currently trending are climate-resilient species that can withstand heavy rain and heat – a factor increasingly significant in both private gardens and urban green spaces. The guided tours focusing on climate-resistant trees and insect-friendly perennials attracted a large number of attendees.

Sustainability was also a recurring theme in the technology exhibition area. The Innovation Center for Horticultural Technology, for instance, provided information on peat substitutes and resource-efficient production. Automation processes have also seen an increase in horticulture, with the importance of artificial intelligence growing. At IPM ESSEN, innovations such as a watering robot and solutions for automated weed control were presented. The new special exhibition "Utility Vehicles" featured electric-powered mobile solutions for use in horticulture.

The IPM Discovery Center showcased how sustainable solutions, such as biodegradable materials for

packaging and plant pots, can be integrated into the trade and how customers can be enthused about green products in the future. Sustainable floristry was also in focus at the FDF-World. The Professional Association of German Florists – Federal Association (FDF) provided inspiration in its creative area, demonstrating how trend topics can be translated into one's own business. The IPM Concept Store displayed products for meaningful assortment additions in the green retail sector.

IPM ESSEN 2024: Platform for Green Industry Awards

Once again, IPM ESSEN served as the stage for numerous awards, where the industry annually honors its best. The kick-off on the first day of the fair was the Novelties Showcase by the Central Association of Horticulture (ZVG) for newly bred plants and new wild and growth forms. The winners included *Catharanthus roseus* 'Soirée® White' from MNP/Suntory (category Bed and Balcony Plants); *Pericallis cruentus* Mandala® Plus Magic Purple from Dümmer Orange (Spring Bloomers); *Zygopetalum* 'Oxygen Optimistic' (AK8) from Alpha Orchids Breeding (Blooming Indoor Plants); *Aloe vera* Medivera from Amigo Plant (Green Indoor Plant); *Helleborus hybrida* Frostkiss Vibey Velvet from AllPlant (Perennials); *Eutrema japonicum* 'Hana Utogi' from FitzGerald Nurseries Lt (Balcony Fruit/Vegetables); *Pyracantha coccinea* 'Orange Star' from Hoogeveen Plants (Shrubs); and *Mangave* Mad about Mangave® 'Praying Hands' from Cactusmania di Manera Bruno in Ventimiglia, Italy (Special Prize). The Audience Award also went to Eclipse Bigleaf Hydrangea from First Editions by Bailey Nurseries International from Minnesota.

A premiere at IPM ESSEN was the Best Practice Award in collaboration with FDF for practical products in the floristry trade. In the Design and Trend category, the company LiveTrends Design Group Europe Ap received the award for the trend, "The Botanist." In the category of Technology and Tools in Floristic Practice, Newwen won with the Flowerbox. Baza Seeds Holland's Seed Advent Calendar emerged as the winner in the Accessories and Gift Items category, and Wepot's clay amphora "Olla S" won in the Sustainability category. Capi Europe's flower pot received two awards, one in the categories of Indoor Decoration and "The Vessel."

The Show Your Colours Award, presented by BIZZ Communications and Messe Essen, honored the best storytelling for a plant. The award went to the garden rose *Rosa Hybrid* Plant'n'Relax from Roses Forever in Faaborg, Denmark. According to the jury, the climbing rose with a frame delivers exactly what its name promises: planting and relaxation.

The International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH) and FloraCulture International (FCI) awarded the International Grower of the Year Award to the best in ornamental plant production. This year, the coveted award went to the British wholesale nursery Greenwood Plants.

The series of awards concluded on the last day with the IPM Messe-Cup, where the North Rhine-Westphalia State Association of FDF and the North Rhine-Westphalia State Association of Horticulture honored the best floral arrangements. Lilli Kramer from Kramer Garten & Ambiente in Buchholz, Germany emerged as the winner in the combination competition.

High Intentions for Return Visits

Overall, trade visitors evaluated the offerings of IPM ESSEN 2024 very positively, with 87 percent giving ratings of one to three. Ninety-one percent would recommend attending, and an equal percentage expressed the intention to visit IPM ESSEN again. Among the exhibiting companies, the percentage was also high at 87 percent. The next IPM ESSEN is scheduled to take place from January 28 to 31, 2025, at Messe Essen.

Detailed Statistics

The approximately 36,000 visitors included registered trade visitors, national and international media representatives, as well as honored guests.

Further information: www.ipm-essen.de

23.01.2024

Anniversary edition of the International Plant Fair IPM ESSEN opens

Forward-looking plant novelties honoured

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The anniversary edition of the International Plant Fair IPM ESSEN has opened. The green industry is meeting for the 40th time at Messe Essen until Friday. Around 250 representatives from business and politics took part in the official opening ceremony. Right from the start, the world's leading horticultural trade fair lived up to its name and honoured the most promising new plant varieties.

The heart of the industry beats green. This was emphasised not only by the Lord Mayor of the City of Essen and Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Messe Essen, Thomas Kufen, but also by Eva Kähler-Theuerkauf, President of the North Rhine-Westphalia Horticultural Association, Klaus Götz, President of the Association of German Florists, and world champion florist Nikolaus Peters. Jürgen Mertz, President of the Central Horticultural Association (ZVG), addressed his speech primarily to politicians: "IPM ESSEN has been an impressive hotspot of innovation for the green sector for more than 40 years. We also urgently need this for the challenges in horticulture regarding energy issues, climate change and environmental protection. In all transformation steps, the economic viability of the companies must be kept in mind. This is also a political challenge." Silke Gorißen, Minister of Agriculture and Consumer Protection of North Rhine-Westphalia, the federal state with the most horticultural businesses, assured the audience that she wants to drive horticulture forward. The close and good dialogue with the associations contributes significantly to creating the right framework conditions for plant production.

Showcase of new products honoured innovations with added value

Particularly forward-looking innovations took part in the "IPM Novelty Showcase" competition, which is jointly organised by the ZVG and Messe Essen. Eva Kähler-Theuerkauf and the reigning flower fairy Kathrin Köhler presented the winners' certificates during the opening ceremony. Many of the new varieties showed that the factors of climate change and heat resistance are becoming increasingly important.

Catharanthus roseus 'Soirée® White' from the Dutch company MNP/Suntory was honoured in the "Bedding and balcony plants" category. The small flowers and compact, small growth habit are new. The plant is also easy to care for, well suited to sunny locations, heat-tolerant with low water requirements and at the same time resistant to prolonged rain. The winner in the "woody plants" category is also extremely drought-resistant. Here, the expert committee opted for *Pyracantha coccinea* 'Orange Star' from Hoogeveen Plants in the Netherlands. Its many large, orange berries remain on the plant for a long time and are therefore a good source of food for insects and birds. This shrub also requires little care and is resistant to disease. The *Helleborus hybrida* Frostkiss Vibey Velvet from AllPlant in the Netherlands is also a good source of food for nectar-seeking bees. The winner in the "Perennials" category shines in a radiant burgundy red colour. Its flowers bloom particularly early and also stand well above the interestingly veined foliage. The jury honoured the *Mangave* Mad about Mangave® 'Praying Hands' from Cactusmania di Manera Bruno in Ventimiglia, Italy, with a special prize. It sees this still young plant, a cross between Manfreda and Agave, as a plant of the future. It is climate-tolerant, has foliage with interesting markings and an unusual growth habit.

Award-winning novelties bring fire, colour and medicine into your own four walls

The winner in the "Balcony fruit/vegetables" category, *Eutrema japonicum* 'Hana Utogi' from Fitzgerald Nurseries Lt in Ireland, offers a fiery flavour experience. This robust variety has a large number of edible flowers and sufficient rhizomes for harvesting wasabi. It is happy in a shady spot, preferably by a watercourse, but is also suitable for vertical farming. Great leaf patterns, a uniform leaf pattern and its compact, even growth characterise the Aloe vera Medivera from Amigo Plant in the Netherlands, winner in the "Green houseplants" category. The elegant-looking Medivera requires little care and its leaf juice can be used to treat small wounds. A fragrant orchid with many flowers won the race in the "Flowering houseplants" category. The *Zygopetalum* 'Oxygen Optimistic' (AK8) by Alpha Orchids Breeding from de Lier in the Netherlands is very productive and grows compactly. The winner of the "Spring bloomers" category is an eye-catcher. This is because the *Pericallis cruentus* Mandala® Plus Magic Purple from Dümmer Orange in Germany has a fluorescent flower colour. It blooms from March to the end of May and the flower colour contrasts well with the dark foliage.

All the new plants submitted will be exhibited in Hall 1A. IPM ESSEN is open to trade visitors until Friday, 26 January.

22.01.2024

40th anniversary of IPM ESSEN

Trade visitors can look forward to numerous programme highlights

Trade visitors can look forward to numerous programme highlights

From 23 to 26 January 2024, the world's leading trade fair for horticulture will take place for the 40th time at Messe Essen. More than 1,400 exhibitors from 43 nations will showcase their innovations in the exhibition areas of plants, technology, floristry and garden features at IPM ESSEN. The special anniversary edition under the motto "Our heart beats green" has numerous programme highlights in store for the international trade visitors. Forums, congresses, competitions, tours, live shows, special shows and other side events will focus on current topics in the green industry, provide new inspiration for the coming business year and offer numerous networking opportunities.

"The green industry has found its home at Messe Essen over the decades. Here, trade visitors can experience trends, innovations and product solutions up close and personalise their discussions with experts on current issues of the future. We are very much looking forward to the upcoming event," says Oliver P. Kuhrt, CEO of Messe Essen, explaining the success of the trend-setting trade fair.

In 2024, IPM ESSEN will again occupy the entire exhibition centre in Halls 1, 1A, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and the Galeria. The nations of Belgium, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, India, Israel, Japan, South Korea, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, the UK and the USA will participate with at least one joint stand. The BGI Trade Centre in Hall 1 with 31 exhibitors will once again be the focal point for the international plant wholesale trade. The joint "Young Innovators" stand in Hall 5, which is sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs, will be focussing on German start-ups.

Special shows and themed areas

Numerous special shows invite trade visitors to find out about current industry topics. In the Green City in Hall 1A, the green trade associations will be presenting themselves in the **Horticulture Info Centre** and will be available to answer questions from member companies. The adjoining **educational show** "Gardeners can do it!" will shed light on the important and controversial topic of plant protection in 2024.

Inspiration for creative floral design will be provided in the **FDF World** of The Association of German Florists (Fachverband Deutscher Floristen – Bundesverband FDF). In addition to the numerous live shows by international stars of the floristry scene, the highlight of the unique revolving stage will be the visit by world champion florist Nicolaus Peters on the first day of the fair. In addition, showrooms will present new ideas for your own business.

Hall 1A is also the new home of the **IPM Discovery Centre** designed by Romeo Sommers in cooperation with the De Haan Group. In guided **trend tours**, the green specialised trade will receive practical tips for successful POS concepts. The **IPM podcast "From the Greenhouse"** will celebrate its premiere in the IPM Discovery

Centre. A glass studio in the shape of a greenhouse will be the recording location for interviews throughout the trade fair. In addition to the IPM podcast, episodes of other industry podcasts will also be produced here. Visitors will have the opportunity to listen to the interviews via headphones.

For the second time in a row, the **IPM Concept Store** will be launched in Hall 5. Sales-promoting product ranges such as gifts, candles, cosmetics, spirits and garden gourmet will receive special attention here.

Horticulture is currently in demand, especially with regard to upcoming climate targets. **Climate trees** and **insect-friendly perennials** will be the focus of **guided tours**, which will be further expanded in 2024 due to the high demand at the last IPM ESSEN. They will start at the Meeting Point in Hall 6.

Commercial vehicles for horticulture will have their own special area at IPM ESSEN for the first time. Manufacturers will be showcasing their products in Hall 7, while Hall 4 will also be a technical area where the **Innovation Centre for Horticultural Technology** will provide information on current solutions in short presentations. Young start-ups, companies and projects from research and science will be presenting themselves there together.

In the Congress Center

The adjoining Congress Center Essen will also be the place to be. At the "**Training Day**" on the Wednesday of the trade fair, 24 January, everything will revolve around young talent and the recruitment of skilled workers. On the same day, the Association of German Nurseries (Bund deutscher Baumschulen) will be hosting a seminar entitled "**Big Trees for the City**", which is dedicated to the future of urban greenery and its realisation. 25 January will then start with the **future congress "Galabau Ausblicke"**, organised by the North Rhine-Westphalia Gardening, Landscaping and Sports Ground Construction Association (Verband Garten-, Landschafts- und Sportplatzbau Nordrhein-Westfalen). The event will continue with perspectives for young managers in the "**Career + Future**" forum organised by Eugen Ulmer Verlag.

Award ceremonies

The awards ceremonies will begin on the first day of the fair, 23 January, with the **IPM Innovation Showcase**. Since 2008, it has been presenting the newcomers of the year at IPM ESSEN - from bedding and balcony plants, cut flowers and houseplants to woody plants and perennials. All entries will be presented in Hall 1A.

New at IPM ESSEN is the Best Practice Award for the floristry and furnishings sector. Trade visitors will find out who the winner is on the day of the fair. The award ceremony will take place in Hall 5, where all the products submitted will be on display.

In the evening of 23 January, the umbrella organisation AIPH - International Association of Horticultural Producers will present the popular "**International Grower of the Year Awards**" in a festive ceremony (tickets: <https://aiph.org/event/igoty-2024/>).

The winners of the **Show Your Colours Awards** (Hall 8, BIZZ Holland) will be announced on the Thursday of the fair. The IPM Messecup will honour the best floral workpieces on the last day of the trade fair (FDF revolving stage, Hall 1A).

#congratsipmessen

Messe Essen has set up a social wall on the website www.ipm-essen.de for the 40th IPM ESSEN. Anyone who posts under the hashtag #congratsipmessen on Instagram or Facebook and congratulates the fair will become part of the colourful anniversary collage. The motif of the anniversary campaign, a heart overgrown with plants, is available for digital download on the website and may be used explicitly for the congratulatory posts.

Further information on the programme and tickets at: www.ipm-essen.de.

22.01.2024

Facts, figures and data: IPM ESSEN 2024

All important information at a glance

22.01.2024

International joint stands showcase the world of horticulture

16 nations present typical plants and technology at the world's leading trade fair

16 nations present typical plants and technology at the world's leading trade fair

As the world's leading trade fair for horticulture, IPM ESSEN will offer its visitors a comprehensive overview of innovations and market trends from January 23 to 26, 2024. The international joint stands play a special role here. There, exhibitors from one nation will present their country-specific plants and technical solutions compactly and together. This is a unique opportunity for trade visitors to gain insights into the diverse array of products offered by each nation. 2024 will feature joint stands from these 16 countries: Belgium, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Great Britain, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and the USA.

Belgium (Hall 2, Hall 6, Hall 8)

The anniversary of IPM ESSEN is also a reason for Belgian exhibitors to celebrate. After all, they have been there since the very beginning and will be exhibiting for the 40th time in 2024. The joint appearance is organized by the Flemish marketing association VLAM at a total of three stands in Hall 2 with 17 companies, Hall 6 with nine companies and Hall 8 with four exhibitors. The participating companies cover the entire Belgian ornamental plant assortment, ranging from typical Flemish products such as azaleas, rhododendrons, indoor flowering plants, the Flemish laurel and chrysanthemums to shrubs, young and bedding plants and tree nursery products. Climate trees and plants are particularly in vogue.

China (Hall 4)

Home gardening is very popular in China at the moment. Six local companies now want to export this trend. At the Chinese joint stand, they will be showcasing products with traditional national characteristics. These include flower pots, smart planters, coolers for fresh flowers, as well as bonsai, peonies, foliage plants and succulents. Plants and products for the office are also on display.

Costa Rica (Hall 1)

Costa Rica on 50 square meters: Ten companies will be presenting their country's export range at this joint stand. The exhibit will highlight an array of flora, including ficus, yuccas, dragon trees, bromeliads, and other botanical specimens. Notably, the display will feature plants cultivated through cutting-edge technological processes, including innovative in-vitro methods. Furthermore, trade visitors can anticipate an exceptional virtual reality experience as part of this immersive showcase.

Denmark (Hall 6)

A royal visit awaits the Danish joint stand: Princess Benedikte, the aunt of the Danish King, will be stopping by on the first day of the fair. In 2024, exhibitors will once again be bringing along top-selling green and flowering ornamental plants. Variegated or differently colored plants, such as Caladium Kelly, are particularly popular at the moment.

France (Hall 6)

Leading innovative French breeders from the Pays de la Loire, Brittany and Provence will be presenting their new products and bestsellers. From agapanthus to cyclamen, from chrysanthemums to dahlias, from salvia to rododendron and more, they will present a unique range of nursery plants, flowering plants, bulbs and seeds, young, semi-finished and finished products, as well as logistics solutions, marketing tools and services for innovation and competitiveness. New products on show will include ILEX paraguariensis Garden2Cup® MATE for homemade mate tea, new clematis varieties and spectacular Versailles forms of solitary fruit trees.

Great Britain (Hall 3 / Hall 7)

As usual, the Commercial Horticultural Association (CHA) is organizing the UK's joint presence. In the country pavilion, visitors can expect to see a range of leading and innovative UK manufacturers and suppliers of plants, products and services to commercial horticultural businesses and retailers from around the world. Exhibiting companies in the plant sector include rose grower David Austin Roses, ornamental plant grower Pinnacle Plants International and clematis growers and producers Raymond Evison Clematis Ltd and The Guernsey Clematis Nursery Ltd.

Also represented are technology and service companies such as the manufacturer of the Air-Pot reusable air cutting system, garden center design consultancy C Long Design Studios, lighting company INDO Lighting, the manufacturer of environmentally friendly, biodegradable plant pots, marketing trays and cell packaging Plantopia Eco Pulp, custom label, packaging, point of sale and catalog specialist PPC Labels, and horticultural products specialist Tyne Moulds, which will be showcasing its full range of horticultural products made from 90 percent recycled consumer plastic, as well as its new Chain Lock Tree Ties, Nail Tree Ties and new and improved Buckle Tree Ties.

Israel (Hall 2)

There are over 2,800 plant species in Israel - a remarkable figure. Visitors to IPM ESSEN can expect to see some of these at the Israeli joint stand in Hall 2, where the family company Cohen Propagation Nurseries, which specializes in the production and export of unrooted cuttings for bedding and basket plants, will also be present. Its most important new introductions for the coming season include the "Scaevola Surdiva Star Blue" line, which was bred by Suntory and is the first Scaevola aemula variety with star-shaped flowers. Also new are the varieties "Calibrachoa Calitastic Cappuccino" and "Petunia Tumbelina Anna".

Hishtil, one of the world's leading suppliers of seedlings and young plants of herbs, organic herbs, ornamental plants and vegetables, will also be exhibiting at the stand. At IPM ESSEN 2024, the company will be presenting its wide range of organic plants, including the new varieties 'Rosmarinus officinalis Roman Beauty', 'Scabiosa incisa Kudo Blue' and 'Scabiosa incisa Kudo Pink'. In addition, exhibitors Hochberg Export Ornamental Plants with bare-root ornamental trees and shrubs and Jaldety Propagation Nurseries with unrooted cuttings of perennials, annuals and succulents will also be taking part in the Israeli joint presentation.

Japan (Hall 7)

The Land of the Rising Sun is known for its centuries-old tradition of bonsai-style garden design. The exhibitors at the Japanese joint stand will be showing trees in this format. They will also be bringing garden trees to IPM ESSEN 2024.

Netherlands (Hall 1, Hall 8)

The new Royal FloraHolland pavilion in Hall 1 focuses on the cooperative, the growers and the product under the motto "connect to grow". The centerpiece is a shared courtyard that invites visitors to meet and exchange ideas. More than 25 exhibitors will present their classics and novelties. This includes a large selection of orchids, cut roses, greenhouse plants, cacti and succulents. Special flowers such as potted roses or mini gerberas are also part of the presentation. Visitors can also expect a colorful arrangement of flower and plant packaging and the winners of the Glazen Tulp Award and the Greenovation Award.

The entire range of Dutch tree nursery products can be found at another national stand in Hall 8. Under the umbrella of BIZZ Holland, more than 30 companies will be showcasing their innovative shrubs and perennials. The highlight is the Show your Colours Award, which honors the best plant marketing story and will be presented on the Thursday of the fair.

Spain (Hall 6)

Thirty companies, members of the industry association FEPEX and engaged in the production and export of ornamental plants, are participating in the Spanish joint stand. Among them are twelve companies from the Valencia region, ten from Andalusia, four from Catalonia, two from the Canary Islands, and two from Galicia. The focus is particularly on the nurseries from Catalonia. Two technical advisors will be present, well-acquainted with the nurseries and plants produced in Catalonia. They will be available to visitors to answer questions, provide guidance, and facilitate connections between potential buyers and Catalan companies.

Türkiye (Hall 5)

The country benefits from its climatic conditions and hosts a wide range of ornamental plant productions. Visitors to the trade fair can witness this at the Turkish joint stand. More than 20 participating companies will showcase items including young plants, green plants, flowering potted plants, perennials, cut flowers, tools, machinery, soils, and plant containers.

USA (Hall 2)

The Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA) is a non-profit agricultural export trade promotion organization comprised of the Departments of Agriculture of the 14 southern states and Puerto Rico. Since 1973, SUSTA has been supporting exporters of high-quality food and agricultural products with its programs and services. At the joint stand in Hall 2 under the umbrella of SUSTA, several companies are bundling their trade fair presence. These include the company ForemostCo, founded in Miami in 1987, with starter material

and the patent attorney for plants Cassy Bright. Visitors can also expect to see bougainvillea, hibiscus and ixora young plants from Vista Farms and bare-root liriopse from the Liriopse Factory.

There will also be joint stands from **India** (Hall 4), **South Korea** (Hall 4), **Poland** (Hall 63) and **Portugal** (Hall 6).

22.01.2024

IPM Discovery Center energizes the business

Creative Director Romeo Sommers invites visitors on trend tours

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As an international meeting place for the green sector, IPM ESSEN 2024 will show its trade visitors which trends and products will be particularly strong sellers. An important component of this is the Discovery Centre in Hall 1 A. Here, green stylist Romeo Sommers will present POS concepts and retail innovations in a showroom and communication area atmosphere. The renowned garden center supplier de Haan Group will create the perfect setting for this. This year, the focus is on "Natural Grow". 18 exhibitors will provide inspiration on how companies can benefit from this trend in a very concrete way. Sommers will also be inviting visitors on trend tours through this unique creative exhibition area.

"Natural Grow" combines all facets of the megatopic of sustainability - from natural growth and responsible production to the integration of organically produced plants into the world of work and private spaces. More and more business customers and end consumers are consciously paying attention to these criteria when making their purchasing decisions. At the IPM Discovery Center, trade visitors can find out how they too can benefit from this trend. Romeo Sommers has designed idea-promoting sales presentations that provide inspiration on how customers want to be inspired tomorrow. "A green environment not only exudes sustainability but creates a pleasant ambiance that attracts both customers and employees," says the expert.

Air-purifying plants and sustainable flower packaging

The IPM Discovery Center will showcase this concept with 18 exhibitors. Decowrap, for example, will be presenting sustainable packaging for flowers that not only looks elegant, but also reduces the ecological footprint. The air-purifying plants from Air so pure ensure a better climate in the office and at home. The Pots Company provides the matching planters made from recycled materials. Which sales tables or shopfitting systems go well with such products can be seen with solutions from Kahler. The garden care app gardify, which shows exactly when a plant needs which care steps, offers tangible added value for customers. In addition to these companies, Griebeling Keramik, Deutsche Cuxin Marketing GmbH, Plantipp, The Urban Jungle Project, Edding, Plantics, Hackboe, Seed to Soil, Rijnbeek, Capi Europe, Trilux and Wonderwall are also taking part in the IPM Discovery Center. In addition, the glass recording studio for the new IPM podcast "From the Greenhouse" can be found in the IPM Discovery Center: a greenhouse from ACD.

Register online for trend tours

On all days of the trade fair, trade visitors will have the opportunity to take a trend tour and gain exclusive insights into the products and concepts behind the IPM Discovery Center. Romeo Sommers will guide visitors through this very special impulse area at 10 am and 2.30 pm. Registration is possible online at www.ipm-essen.de.

Further information at: www.ipm-essen.de

22.01.2024

"Our heart beats green" - more dynamic than ever!

A review with an outlook by Andreas Löbke, CO CONCEPT

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The motto of this year's IPM ESSEN hits the nail on the head. "Our heart beats green". Feeling green, thinking green and operating internationally - this is still Messe Essen's recipe for success for the International Plant Fair (IPM) today. When IPM ESSEN was founded in 1983, it was initially a delicate plant alongside the well-known trade fairs in Germany at the time. Critically eyed by many when it was founded, IPM ESSEN has established itself over the past 40 years as one of the most important events in the horticultural and plant industry. Since then, it has attracted thousands of visitors from all over the world to Essen every year, not far from the Lower Rhine, Germany's largest growing region - and very easy to reach for important horticultural nations in the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark.

As a platform for the industry, IPM ESSEN offers exhibitors from the fields of plants, technology, floristry and garden decoration, and gardening and landscaping an excellent stage for the wide range of products and services relating to gardens and plants and is now regarded as an important meeting place for the trade, horticultural businesses, nurseries, landscape architecture, politics, associations and other experts in the industry. Production and sales of the green value chain come together at IPM ESSEN.

Over the past four decades, IPM ESSEN has developed in parallel with the industry and thus serves as a good mirror of developments. Messe Essen has always had its finger on the pulse of the times and implemented trends and social currents. One example of the parallel development is the number of international participations. As international trade grew, so did the number of applications and registrations from exhibitors from all over the world. Whereas in 1983 there were only a few international exhibitors, today there are around 50 exhibitor nations at IPM ESSEN, of which around 20 have official joint with their typical national products. In line with the participants, visitors now come not only from Germany, but from all over the world to take part in the trade fair, exchange ideas, trade and start the new season rich in information and ideas.

For the 40th IPM ESSEN, it is time to look back at how horticulture has changed over the last four decades and with it today's world's leading horticultural trade fair IPM ESSEN.

The 1980s: Foundation of IPM ESSEN

In the 1980s, the garden market was different to today. At that time, garden architecture was characterized by geometric shapes and strict lines. Symmetrical beds, lawns and hedges were often laid out. The use of formal elements such as steps, terraces and walls was also typical of this period. In the garden itself, garden gnomes, birdhouses and other decorative elements of the time were used in the design. It was only later that the English garden style became popular, in which a natural and relaxed atmosphere was emphasized by perennial beds, meadows and romantic seating areas, as well as the use of natural stones, ponds and water features.

Green houseplants such as monstera, dragon tree, ficus, fern and ivy were very popular in the 1980s. The green plant range experienced a renaissance, driven by a new type of consumer, the "jungle fan". Young people achieved double-digit annual growth rates in sales of these ranges. The classic demand for flowering pot plants consisted of 25% azaleas and cyclamen. Classic items such as poinsettias accounted for 24% in the fourth quarter of 1980. At that time, orchids were still listed under "Other" in the consumption statistics.

German production showed a downward trend; there was talk of a crisis; the number of production companies declined, especially in cut flower cultivation. Publications at the time spoke of "the consequence of rising energy costs and the associated increase in competition from abroad". German production increasingly focused on pot, bedding and balcony plants and began to expand its product range impressively and rapidly to this day.

The supply of cut flowers increasingly came from climatically favorable production in third countries and from the Netherlands. Here, companies switched massively from vegetable production to the more lucrative cut flower production.

While growing fruit and vegetables in your own garden declined in the years before IPM ESSEN was founded and was not considered particularly chic, growing your own fruit and vegetable garden was back in fashion at the beginning of the 1980s. Self-sufficiency gradually became fashionable again, but gardens often no longer allowed for large plants. The growing importance of the garden and greenery was also evident in the 1980s with the emergence of covered terraces and conservatories, which became increasingly popular in the 1980s to increase the use of the garden as an extended living space. Here you could linger in the garden even when the weather was bad, creating a link between indoors and outdoors.

During this time, IPM ESSEN showcased everything that reflected the spirit of the times and was on display in German horticulture as well as in neighboring countries. Ornamental shrubs and trees in particular were always well represented at IPM ESSEN, not least because the tree nurseries were among the first exhibitors.

In addition to ornamental shrubs and trees, cut flowers and floristry also have a firm place at Messe Essen. In 1986, for the fourth IPM ESSEN, FLORBEDA was integrated into the leading international trade fair. At the same time, the first plant bowl competition of the Trade Association of German Florists (FDF) NRW was held there in cooperation with Messe Essen, to which the bouquet competition was later added. The first floral IPM competitions were thus launched in the mid-1980s.

During this time, the Westphalian gardeners also transferred their horticultural technology exhibition in Hamm to the IPM in Essen.

The 1990s: IPM ESSEN continues to develop

The 1990s were already characterized by the first signs of a new, ecological way of thinking in horticulture. Terms such as "use of natural resources", "composting", "mulching" and the "renunciation of chemical fertilizers and pesticides" became commonplace.

The first signs of more greenery in urban areas can be seen in the 1990s with the increase and prioritization of balcony gardens, roof gardens and community gardens.

English-style gardens with lush planting and romantic elements such as roses and clematis became increasingly popular. Asian-inspired gardens with bamboo, water features and stone arrangements were also popular at this time. The creation of garden ponds with aquatic plants and small fish was also a common practice in the 1990s. A calm, relaxing atmosphere was created by the rippling water and the variety of aquatic and waterside plants.

The importance of self-sufficiency through one's own herb and vegetable garden increased. The cultivation of culinary herbs and seasonal vegetables gained momentum and was typical of many hobby gardeners at this time, but had not yet reached its zenith.

Garden accessories and decorative elements were a rapidly growing segment in the garden in the 1990s. More and more consumers discovered garden furniture, greenhouses, trellises and sculptures for more individuality and design variety in their gardens. Accordingly, more and more exhibitors from this sector came to IPM ESSEN. The first demand for innovative garden tools and technologies, such as automatic irrigation, was also already being met at this time.

The use of exotic and tropical plants became increasingly popular in the home. Plants such as orchids, bromeliads and palms had eye-catching leaves and flowers and were very popular alongside ficus, yucca palms and ivy.

With the increase in imports for the German market, especially in the cut flower sector, the exhibitor area in the BGI Trade Center at IPM ESSEN also became large, where all export-oriented nations and wholesale importers have since met regularly and strengthened their business relationships.

The 2000s: a mature phase in a stagnating environment

In the 2000s, the market became more mature. The use of Mediterranean plants in horticulture experienced a real boom: oleander, lavender, rosemary and cypresses were increasingly planted in gardens, giving them a Mediterranean flair. The demand for these plants was correspondingly high, which consequently led to an increase in the number of IPM exhibitors from Central Europe.

In the 2000s, consumers increasingly sought inspiration for garden design at garden fairs and exhibitions, which were specifically designed for the general public and suddenly became increasingly popular. Here, garden lovers could find inspiration and gather new ideas for their own garden design. This led to an increased demand for flowers and plants, especially solitary plants.

Naturally, horticultural companies also felt this trend in their demand. Accordingly, the specialist trade at IPM ESSEN was looking more intensively for stronger plants in larger pots. The range of plants on display at IPM ESSEN was even broader and more varied, and the plant sizes on show were larger in line with demand.

Petunias, geraniums and fuchsias were part of the standard range of bedding and balcony plants, which have been increasingly available from system retailers and discounters since the 2000s.

In horticultural production, the 2000s saw an increasing shift away from conventional cultivation methods towards organic/ecological cultivation. Controlled, integrated cultivation established itself as the standard of

horticultural practice. The range of organic plants and organic garden products offered by nurseries grew, which was also reflected in the IPM exhibitors' offerings. Plants for snack gardens, often produced according to organic standards, are becoming increasingly popular. Flowers and plants from native regions and with lower water requirements have also been a firm fixture among the exhibitors at IPM ESSEN since the turn of the millennium.

In 2008, the IPM Novelty Showcase was also installed, in which the new plants of the year are described in various categories by a jury of experts and the assessment of trade visitors. The aim was and still is to provide fresh impetus in an often stagnating market. While there were only five new products in five different categories in 2008, more and more categories have been covered by new products over the years. Today, innovations are awarded in the categories of cut flowers, flowering houseplants, potted plants, green houseplants, woody plants, bedding and balcony plants, spring bloomers, perennials, snack fruit and vegetables and often an additional special prize. Over the past 15 years, a total of more than 90 winning novelties have been selected and awarded. Today, the IPM ESSEN Novelty Show is both a driving force and a springboard for innovations in the green sector.

The last ten years: Corona isn't the only thing boosting the market

The 2010s saw a further increase in awareness of environmental issues and sustainability in horticulture. Trends such as "urban gardening", "edible city" and the trend towards plants for smaller gardens, balconies or even roof gardens led to the emergence of more urban gardens, community gardens and vertical gardens.

Overall, after decades of a relatively stable market for flowers and plants, there were signs of growing interest in green products, which peaked during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The market volume for flowers and plants in Germany in 2021 was around ten percent above the normal level during coronavirus. At times, consumer demand for greenery could not be satisfied. Houseplants experienced a revival in the 2010s, with low-maintenance plants such as ficus and monstera in particular once again becoming an important part of interior design, helping to green rooms and improve air quality. Another revival, only with a different buying motivation than in 1980. In line with the strong demand, all players in the industry were looking forward to exchanging ideas with each other at IPM ESSEN 2023, the first trade fair after the two-year coronavirus lockdown.

One trend in the 2010s, which was further fueled by the pandemic, was the demand for regional flowers and plants. More and more consumers turned their attention to short supply chains and allowed horticulture to flourish again locally in all regions of Germany.

The influence of social media over the last ten years should not be underestimated. The spread of social media and the popularity of garden blogs have enabled hobby gardeners to share their experiences and tips, gather inspiration and hype the topic themselves through influencers and companies.

Since 2012, at the 30th IPM ESSEN, the topic of plant marketing has received special attention with the "Colour your Life", later "Show your Colours Award". The best story is honored. Accordingly, trade visitors will not only find horticultural and floral inspiration at IPM ESSEN, but also supporting ideas in marketing.

IPM ESSEN has always been regarded as a driving force that always picks up on important topics and trends for the industry and presents them not only in the supporting program on the numerous stages. For example,

the seminar "The Green City" celebrated its premiere at IPM ESSEN in 2014. Here, the future of urban greenery was discussed ahead of its time.

The European Nursery Reception at IPM ESSEN was launched in 2014, among other things, in order to provide as much international impetus as possible and consciously promote international exchange. The Association of German Nurseries invites visitors to its stand in cooperation with the European Nurserystock Association. Nurserymen and women from all over Europe come together here.

40 years of change - IPM ESSEN as a catalyst

Over the last 40 years, horticulture in Germany and internationally has continued to develop and change. The keywords of this development are

- **Technological advances:** The development of new technologies has also opened up new possibilities in horticulture. Automation, controlled atmosphere greenhouses, optimized irrigation and fertilization systems and various methods of protection against pests and diseases have improved the efficiency and quality of horticultural production.
- **Sustainability:** In view of increased environmental awareness, significant changes have also taken place in horticulture. The use of environmentally friendly cultivation methods, the avoidance of chemical pesticides and fertilizers and the promotion of biodiversity have played an increasingly important role over the last four decades.
- **Structural change:** The size of horticultural businesses has increased over time. At the same time, the number of businesses has decreased significantly. This development goes hand in hand with general professionalization and specialization in order to survive in a highly competitive market.
- **Assortments and sales channels:** At the beginning of IPM ESSEN, the product ranges were still manageable compared to today and were geared towards the regional market via specialist retailers, but today it can be seen that the product ranges have expanded significantly and can increasingly be found nationwide in system retailers and discount stores. At the same time, consumer awareness of regional products and short supply chains has grown in recent decades. Consumers' needs and the proportion of consumption spent on individual product groups have also shifted significantly over the years. Consumers' desire for a diverse range of products is constant and is being better and better met. In general, however, the sales channels for flowers and plants are still more diverse and differentiated than in other sectors.
- **Urban gardening:** Another change in horticulture is the trend towards urban gardening. More and more people in urban areas are gardening in small spaces, be it on balconies, roof terraces or in community gardens. Flowers and plants are no longer just traditionally used in people's own gardens or homes, but are increasingly seen as an important contribution to climate protection as an ecosystem service.

This short list of keywords is not exhaustive, but it shows well the general change and dynamics of the last 40 years in horticulture, which is often described as a conservative market. IPM ESSEN has played a key role in this change. As an industry platform, it has made a significant contribution to networking and exchange among gardeners in Germany, later in Europe and finally worldwide over the last 40 years.

From the outside, IPM ESSEN has acted as a catalyst for change in horticulture since it was founded in the 1980s, initiating or accelerating processes without being included in the end product. Many players in the industry first came together with the opportunities offered by Messe Essen and grew with IPM ESSEN.

Summary and outlook:

Over the past 40 years, IPM ESSEN has made an important contribution to the development of the garden and plant industry. It is not only a platform for the trade, but also a place of inspiration and innovation. The trade fair has great significance for the industry and will certainly continue to play an important role in setting trends and providing new impetus for horticulture.

When IPM ESSEN was founded in 1983, hardly anyone expected that the trade fair would one day establish itself as the world trade fair for horticulture. In retrospect, the goals set were not only achieved, but exceeded. The trade fair format has made a significant contribution to the fact that greenery is increasingly popular and professionally perceived by the public today and that trade visitors can look forward to discovering the latest trends and developments in the industry and exchanging ideas with other experts every year.

Provided that the motto of this year's IPM ESSEN "Our heart beats green" continues to be the guiding principle of Messe Essen's actions in the organization of the trade fair format, the previous recipe for success of the International Plant Fair will continue to work and further consolidate IPM ESSEN as the industry meeting of international importance.

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Description of the flower and plant market

2023 was a year of surprises

2023 was a year of surprises

One thing was already certain at the start of 2023: the flower and plant business would not get any easier. Plant closures in the Netherlands and Germany, planned conversions of production to cold cultivation and many other factors led us to expect a challenging year in terms of product availability and procurement. At the same time, at the beginning of the year, it was certain that specialist retailers would purchase more and more in line with demand and at shorter notice in their day-to-day business in view of the uncertainty among customers. System retailers would also reserve significantly less due to uncertainty about future demand and allow their suppliers to produce in uncertainty. Conclusion: 2023 holds little predictability and many challenges! Knowing full well that 2020 and 2021 were two above-average years for horticulture - all expectations were exceeded and 2022 was also rated as a good year at a normal level - the industry entered 2023 with a kind of optimism for a purpose. Because at the beginning of the year, very few people were really convinced that 2023 would be a very successful year. However, the fact that things didn't turn out as badly as expected shows how flexible but also how stable the industry is - flowers and plants are simply part of life!

For an assessment of the general market situation for flowers and plants, it is interesting to look at Dutch flower and plant exports, as the Netherlands is by far the most important hub for trade in the EU and Germany. The Association of Wholesalers of Floricultural Products (VGB) presents reliable figures based on export statistics from "Floridata". According to these statistics, the export value for flowers and plants fell by around 4% in the first quarter of 2023 for both flowers and plants. Overall, the Netherlands achieved an export turnover of approx. 2 billion euros (flowers approx. 1.3 billion euros; plants approx. 0.7 billion euros).

The decline in exports is primarily due to weaker exports to the traditional top three export countries of Germany (-4%), the UK (-11%) and France (-9%). When looking at the sales channels, it is striking that supermarkets and department stores declined somewhat in importance in the first quarter of 2023, although they had discovered flowers and plants for themselves under coronavirus. Despite the fact that the Netherlands' export value for flowers and plants fell by 4% overall, this can be seen as a success. Market experts secretly expected a decline of at least 10 to 15 percent in advance.

A relaxed start to the season

In Germany, too, it was found that the shortage of goods and slump in consumption predicted at the beginning of 2023 due to the energy crisis did not materialize to the extent feared. For example, the first quarter of 2023 at the German marketing organization Veiling Rhein-Maas was on a par with the previous year.

Wholesale flower markets in Germany reported declining sales at the beginning of the year. However, it turned out that these were not as severe as expected in view of inflation and the energy crisis. As expected, January was a weak month. Accordingly, the season began somewhat more relaxed. There was also hope that the procurement of goods would not be as dramatic as feared and that a full range could be offered all year round despite the announced production shutdowns in the factories. The calmness paid off. The mood at the

wholesale flower markets in the first quarter of 2023 was more positive than expected. Once again, the sunshine boosted sales. The picture at the companies was also quite serene.

Valentin 2023 turns out differently

Alongside International Women's Day, Valentine's Day is the most important special sales day for flowers and plants in the first quarter of each year. It is an important indicator of success in the flower trade and is therefore observed with great interest in the industry. The balance sheet for Valentine's business varies among the leading marketing organizations: Landgard, Germany's largest marketing organization for flowers and plants, reports that expectations in the specialist trade were not met. Royal FloraHolland, the largest Dutch marketing organization for flowers and plants, also reported a decline in sales compared to the previous year. The marketers Veiling Rhein-Maas (D) and Plantion (NL), on the other hand, describe sales at the previous year's level. The Association of the German Flower Wholesale and Import Trade (BGI) also reports sales for Valentine's Day at the previous year's level.

Red roses on Valentine's Day are becoming less important

Although red roses are still the number one gift for Valentine's Day, according to specialist retailers, they have become less important as a gift, especially among younger consumers. In 2023, it was noticeable that in addition to the classic "red" for rose products, colors such as pink, rose and other pastel shades combined with fresh green were also in great demand among consumers. Sales of roses for Valentine's Day were good overall, and cut flower prices were slightly higher than in the previous year. However, the purchase prices for roses - as well as other products such as tulips, gerberas and ranunculus - did not explode to the extent previously assumed in the industry. "Exploding prices" for roses were feared because the sharp rise in freight costs during the winter months meant that African rose farms were very reluctant to deliver. At times, many overseas farms preferred to destroy their goods rather than export them to Europe at an unprofitable price.

Higher prices in specialist shops are not a deterrent

Higher prices did not deter customers in specialist retail to the extent that had been assumed. However, spontaneous purchases in food retail and at discounters declined according to some experts. According to a survey conducted by the Trade Association of German Florists - Federal Association (FDF) after Valentine's Day 2023, it was reported that customers' willingness to spend on flower-based Valentine's gifts was relatively high. The wholesale trade was correspondingly optimistic after Valentine's Day 2023 that consumers would continue to buy flowers and plants despite product price increases due to the passing on of cost increases in the supply chain - precisely because of the experience gained in 2022, when some price thresholds were broken and the price increases were accepted by consumers without hesitation.

Pots are getting smaller

The observations of the Agricultural Market Information Company (AMI) are very interesting in the context of consumers' supposed willingness to pay prices. The AMI analyzed the market for primroses at food retailers and discounters at the start of the season. As one of the first crops of the year, primroses are heavily traded in terms of volume until the beginning of April. In 2022 in particular, when many consumers consciously demanded "cheerful colors" as a kind of "mood lifter" after an initial general reluctance to buy, more primroses were sold and more sales were made with the product than ever before. It was therefore difficult to exceed these figures in 2023. Despite this, many growers were satisfied with sales, although the analysis of prices for primroses in the years 2019 to 2023 shows a shift towards smaller pots. To compensate for the increased

production costs, there was a "downsizing" of products; in other words, "shrinkflation". An exciting finding at the start of the year, which was observed even more frequently by the AMI in its market analyses over the course of the year.

Easter somewhat below expectations

Easter business with flowers and plants in 2023 was somewhat subdued for many retailers due to the cool weather, sometimes even accompanied by ground frost, and did not quite meet expectations. However, it was still satisfactory and at a similarly good level to the previous year. It was reported from the Netherlands that spending per customer increased slightly, meaning that the decline in the volume of goods

(-7%) was not reflected in sales as much as might have been expected. Veiling Rhein-Maas also reported a good price level at Easter, although this must be viewed in a more differentiated way: cut flowers and houseplants were above the price level of 2022, garden plants slightly below. Overall, April 2023 was very cold, which was reflected in sales of garden plants.

The breakthrough came in May

After a very weak start to the bedding and balcony plant season, the breakthrough came at the beginning of May 2023. The hesitant start to the bedding and balcony season was forgotten by many. The mild temperatures led to a buying mood. Herbs and young vegetable plants did disproportionately well at the wholesale flower markets. TASPO also surveyed the situation at businesses regarding the course of spring business: 55% of respondents stated that it was "good to very good", 35% rated it as "rather mediocre" and 10% as "sluggish". A look at the "hub of the flower and plant trade" in the Netherlands confirms that May felt strong. Royal FloraHolland's balance sheet for May 2023 shows an excellent result compared to April 2023. Both the volumes of the top ten products and the prices were higher than in the same month last year, resulting in higher sales.

Mother's Day business up and running

Mother's Day business - the busiest time of the year for the flower trade - was generally satisfactory in 2023. According to the FDF, 90% of specialist stores were satisfied. The wholesalers affiliated with the BGI were also satisfied to very satisfied with sales, with sales on Mother's Day 2023 at the same high level as in 2022. The so-called repeat order business was also very good. The marketers Landgard and Veiling Rhein-Maas point to the good weather on Mother's Day as a reason for brisk sales. The political uncertainties, the overall economic situation and the cost increases did not dampen end consumers' enthusiasm for Mother's Day. In terms of their assessment of the season, suppliers were more unsettled than consumers.

Tree nurseries are satisfied

A survey conducted by the Schleswig-Holstein Tree Nursery Association and the North Rhine-Westphalia Tree Nursery Association among its members in summer 2023 shows that the strong surge in demand during the pandemic is over, but that the market has picked up momentum after a quiet start at the beginning of the year and is at a good level. Spring sales of nursery plants in the garden center segment are highly dependent on the weather in the respective sales region.

Satisfied into the second half of the year

At the end of the first half of 2023, Veiling Rhein-Maas announced a very good performance for the first six months. Despite the less than ideal weather for the gardening season, product sales increased by 4.2% compared to the same period in 2022. Fears of a sharp slump in sales in the flower and plant trade therefore did not materialize in the first half of the year. At the very least, declines in demand were often offset by higher prices.

In the first half of 2023, many companies in the horticultural sector noted that consumers feel that the value of flowers and plants is increasing, but that not everyone can or wants to afford them. In discussions with specialist retailers, it became apparent that, according to them, flowers and plants are becoming more relevant to many customers in economically and socio-politically uncertain times. They are deliberately bought to beautify their own homes and to create a kind of "feel-good atmosphere", according to the experts.

And again the pots are getting smaller

Similar to primroses, the AMI also kept a close eye on pelargoniums as a key item in German horticulture (second place in the top ten) and examined their development in the retail sector. For 2023, the start of the season for pelargoniums showed that they were characterized by very weak prices. Similar to primroses, the shift in supply towards smaller pots is responsible for this development.

Summer gets off to a quiet start

As expected, the second half of 2023 got off to a quiet start. Many consumers were on summer vacation, which - as is usual every year - depressed demand. When asked about anomalies at the time, many market players reported that prices for plants were slightly higher than usual, which is correct in view of the failure to adjust prices to actual cost developments over the past two decades. The statements about the perceived higher prices are verified by the monthly balance sheet of Royal FloraHolland for the month of July. A look at the top ten garden plants shows a clear increase in prices. On average, prices were 26% higher than in the previous year.

Third quarter better than expected

Contrary to expectations, the third quarter of 2023 also went better than expected. According to reports from Veiling Rhein-Maas, product sales increased year-on-year in the third quarter of 2023 despite the difficult market environment. The increase in sales is due to good demand coupled with lower supply and the resulting high average prices. However, the high prices alone are not an indicator for assessing the 2023 season. If we look at Dutch flower and plant exports cumulatively over the first three quarters, the export value of around EUR 5.3 billion shows a decline of 4% compared to the previous year. Cut flowers show a decline of 5% to 3.2 billion euros; plants a drop of 3% to 2.1 billion euros. The three top export countries Germany (approx.

-3%), England (approx. -8%) and France (approx. -10%) are responsible for the declines.

2023 is a difficult year

In line with the decline in flower and plant exports in the Netherlands, the VGB is already predicting a recession in autumn 2023, not least because the costs for transport, energy and personnel are continuing to

rise and suggest that times will remain difficult in the future. In addition to the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine, the conflict in Israel is increasingly exacerbating the situation. Dutch wholesalers alone have purchased flowers and plants worth more than 15 million euros each year from more than 200 producers in Israel. Conversely, the Netherlands also used to export goods to Israel. According to trade experts, the current economic damage is difficult to estimate. There are great fears that the conflict will spread to other regions - with far-reaching consequences for the trade in flowers and plants.

For 2023 as a whole, the VGB expects a decline in sales of -4% - the final figures are still pending. Observations at wholesale flower markets in Germany suggest that the predictions of declining sales in the flower and plant trade will be of this magnitude and can no longer be reversed by the Advent business. Sales at the beginning of the Advent season were lower than in previous years.

Discussions with logistics companies for flowers and plants also confirm the observations. According to "sound bites" in the forwarding industry, trade has fallen sharply and capacity utilization has slumped significantly compared to previous years and even before the Covid-19 pandemic. In her view, it was far too quiet for the time of year and a clear indication that consumers were saving. We will shed light on whether consumers are really saving later.

And again to observe: The pots are getting smaller

The classic product for the Advent and Christmas season is the poinsettia. In 2022 alone, it achieved a sales volume in Germany of around EUR 100 million at retail prices, making it a star among flowering houseplants. If we take a closer look at the pot sizes and which plants are mainly advertised in the trade, we can also see that smaller pots are increasingly being advertised and the standard sizes of the past are disappearing more and more into the background.

Special features and outlook for 2024

It should be noted that in 2023 the garden market has remained relatively stable compared to other sectors despite a challenging environment characterized by the energy crisis and consumer caution among customers who are uncertain about inflation and politics. The declines predicted in advance did not materialize as strongly as feared.

This suggests a combination of a growing interest in gardening and greenery in general, as well as an increasing awareness of the importance of nature and green spaces for health and well-being. More and more people are recognizing the benefits of gardening, whether as a hobby or as a way to grow their own food. In the current "Industry REPORT Garden Living, Gardening and Living Green - Prospects up to 2030", the garden market is said to have great potential.

According to the forecasts for the German garden market, the report's best-case scenario predicts significantly better development than the long-term trend. Accordingly, growth potential of around 21% to EUR 17.7 billion is seen by 2023, provided that the most popular communication and information sources of the target group can continue to be used and consumers remain enthusiastic about flowers and plants. Current studies promise that this can be achieved.

More time in the garden

Even after the coronavirus pandemic, consumers are still interested in flowers and plants and are spending more and more time in the garden, according to a recent survey by power tool manufacturer Stihl. It is interesting to note that this observation was made primarily among younger garden owners. The reasons given by the majority (multiple answers) for spending more time in their own garden are that they see the garden as a "place of relaxation and tranquillity" (77%) and that they enjoy "being together with friends and/or family" (63%). In the study, 59% state that they want to "spend time in nature" or "get creative and implement projects themselves" (41%).

Gardening for my life

Einhell's Do-It-Yourself Study 2023 built on the Delphi Study "The Home 2030" conducted in 2021. The current study analyzed consumer behavior within their own four walls and in their own garden in even greater depth. The key finding is that 69% of respondents agree with the statement "I like gardening for my life". According to the 2023 study, the main motives for this activity are independence, relaxation, self-realization and self-affirmation.

Healthy snacking is booming

Edible plants are still a big hit in the range. In 2023, vegetables and herbs that grow reliably and produce a tasty yield will continue to be very popular with hobby gardeners. The trend towards self-sufficiency is unbroken, as long as the plants are tasty and aromatic. Grafted cucumbers in particular are in high demand. However, there is also a trend towards true-to-seed tomato varieties and even historical varieties.

According to individual specialist retailers, sales of vegetables are stable to rising. In 2023, for example, increases of +10 % were often recorded for this range compared to 2022. The increases were often due to higher-quality varieties or pot sizes.

Strong products for a strong market: "The new nature"

Innovations in the plant market are presented every year at IPM ESSEN. In 2023, the "green climate heroes", plants that cope particularly well with drought, heat and heavy rain, were offered. The topic of climate change has become noticeable after another hot summer. According to evaluations by the German Weather Service, the summer of 2023 was too warm on average for the 27th time in a row. To put it bluntly, this means that a person under the age of 30 has basically never experienced a "normal" summer. Accordingly, according to a study by Stihl AG, the issue of drought is already an important topic for consumers. 62% take the issue into account when selecting new plants, 29% even strongly or very strongly.

Native wild perennials and native shrubs as well as natural-looking plantings with a meadow character attracted attention, according to trade experts. It has also been observed that more and more consumers are willing to redesign their gardens in a more natural way. At IPM ESSEN, solutions were offered with perennial plant combinations that offer ecological added value for the preservation of biodiversity and at the same time thrive in gardens and cities.

Easy to care for and bee-friendly

Easy-care and bee-friendly are two requirements that customers will continue to increasingly demand at the point of sale in 2023. Plants should often be robust and, if possible, prevent the ongoing extinction of species. For example, "Insect joy with regional wild plants", a project in the Federal Biological Diversity Program, is an important component in promoting regional wild plants and transforming gardens and green spaces into more biodiversity. The new products are often based on promising concepts: From the "Dry Artist" or the "Professional Bed" to "Future Nature", "Green Conquerors", "Fitness Partners", "Wild Aunt" or "Hero Qualities", there is a lot on offer. What all the concepts have in common is that they make consumers strikingly aware that they can make their own small personal contribution to climate and nature conservation with living greenery and are offered ready-made solutions.

Ecosystem services are becoming more important

Futurologist Max Thinius ascribes ever greater social significance to gardens. In his view, plants and gardens are important for both the environmental climate and the social climate. The ecosystem services provided by flowers and plants in particular are a relevant topic for the future, which the German government has also recognized as worthy of support. For this reason, the federal government decided in mid-2023 to provide around €790 million in urban development funding in 2023 and 2024. The budget will be used to finance investments in green and blue infrastructure in the municipalities.

At the 15th Association Congress of the German Federal Association of Garden, Landscape and Sports Field Construction in late summer 2023, politicians once again emphasized the importance of urban greenery. The aim is to make cities more climate-resilient in the future. As a result, more and more cities, such as Munich, Berlin, Trier, etc., are significantly expanding their budgets for planting trees in the city. The so-called "tiny forest", in which many trees are planted in a relatively small area in the city, is just one of many manifestations of the growing importance of greenery in the city. At times, the question arises as to how the increased demand for trees and shrubs can be met.

In terms of making a positive contribution to ecosystem services, the German government has a major lever with horticulture, but not all decision-makers have yet recognized this. According to the latest evaluations by the Federal Statistical Office, the vegetation area in Germany is the largest area in Germany in terms of proportion, at around 29.8 million hectares. The potential is therefore huge.

The need for research is correspondingly great. One example of this is the INUGA project. In 2020, the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture published the "Announcement on the promotion of innovations in urban horticulture" as part of an innovation program. The aim is to strengthen the horticultural sector as an economic sector in general and with regard to its contribution to green infrastructure, sustainable plant production and social aspects in urban areas. As a result, twelve forward-looking joint projects have been set up with a total of 31 private companies and research institutions involved, which are researching various issues relating to urban horticulture.

Digitalization and smart gardens are becoming increasingly important

The trend towards more digitalization in the home garden is progressing in parallel with the move towards natural gardens. Almost 7% of all garden owners are already using smart gardening solutions. Automatic watering systems (83%) and robotic mowers (63%) are particularly popular.

Purchasing power: less money available

Regardless of the importance and relevance of flowers and plants, the question is to what extent consumers can afford flowers, plants and other horticultural products in times of inflation and crisis. Despite rising wages, the purchasing power of Germans is falling, according to analyses by the Institute of Economic and Social Sciences (WSI). Wage increases of 5.6% on average in the first half of 2023 were offset by price increases for consumers of 7.4%. The result is a decline in average real wages in Germany. Seemingly high wage increases will be offset by cold progression. According to the experts, the mood is still characterized by uncertainty and worry, which is putting the brakes on carefree consumption.

E-commerce weakens

The poor consumer sentiment in Germany is also reflected in online retail in mid-2023. Sales in the first half of 2023 fell by around 14% compared to the first half of 2022. In 2022, e-commerce also suffered an unexpected and significant slump for the first time in years. If you compare the value with the entire half-year 2019, i.e. with values before the coronavirus pandemic, you can see that the supposedly poor values from 2023 are still around 15 % above the standard. In the HDE Online Monitor 2023 published by the German Retail Association, the association describes clear shifts: While online food retail is growing significantly, sectors relating to home, garden and DIY are shrinking online.

Traditional retail is not dead

In view of the weakening online sales, it is interesting to see how sales in over-the-counter-retail are developing. Although sales in the DIY and specialist garden centers (DIY sector) will fall by -2.7% by the end of the third quarter of 2023, the decline will not be on the same scale as in other sectors. In this respect, the sector still appears to be relatively stable.

As is generally known, inflation, consumer anxiety, price increases in all food sectors and political uncertainties are responsible for the declines in the DIY sector, which have significantly dampened consumer sentiment in the "Leisure and seasonal goods" range with -15.7% compared to the previous year. The long-standing sales driver "garden equipment" also recorded a drop of 11.4%. Contrary to the general trend, the "pesticides, soils and seeds" segment developed positively at +8.8%.

According to industry experts, many consumers spent their vacations at home on the balcony or in the garden again in 2023, which benefited the stationary garden market. The analysis of average receipts in specialist retail confirms this assumption. The purchase amount per customer increased in the summer months, although customer frequency decreased.

This means that bricks-and-mortar retail is also weakening, but no more than online retail. This means that bricks-and-mortar retail is far from dead - even if this is often prophesied.

Inflation puts the brakes on sustainability

According to a recent representative household survey by Konzept & Markt GmbH, the topic of sustainability is relevant for eight out of ten garden center customers, but is clearly behind quality and value for money as a

decision criterion when making a purchase. According to GfK research, inflation is currently putting a significant brake on sustainable consumption. In the study, 48% of respondents now state that they cannot afford sustainability (compared to 31% in 2019 who stated that they could not afford sustainability financially). According to the study, the current situation clearly shows that sustainable consumption is increasingly becoming a question of income and that people with a net monthly household income of EUR 4,000 or more are particularly willing to make sustainable purchases and 65% of consumers do not want to do without a certain level of comfort despite their ecological awareness.

Change in the flow of goods is recognizable

AMI's newly published product flow analysis describes the marketing channels for flowers, ornamental plants and woody plants. It is very interesting to note that the flow of goods is becoming increasingly dynamic. Increasingly, bulk consumers, retailers, service providers in the gala and cemetery construction and interior greening sectors, as well as end consumers, are organizing themselves differently when procuring their flowers and plants. They are increasingly relying on direct imports or shortening the supply chain. This shift was also observed by the Netherlands in its 'Market Potential Export Position' matrix at the beginning of 2023.

Cocooning is strong again

Many retail experts assume that consumers will focus even more on their own four walls in 2024 due to uncertain global politics, accompanied by energy cost increases and rising inflation. The cocooning effect is back on the starting blocks, although the market for garden plants will no longer grow in the same way as in the last three years due to the garden projects that were largely completed during the pandemic. Nevertheless, it is clear how important living greenery is, especially in times of crisis, even when consumers' budgets are tight.

Minimum wage continues to rise

The industry is somewhat concerned about the development of wage costs. After several increases in the statutory minimum wage in recent months, most recently to 12 euros gross per hour, the wage will rise again on January 1, 2024. 12.41 euros will be the new statutory minimum wage, which is to be increased to 12.82 euros from 2025.

These wage increases will pose challenges for many companies in horticulture, as labor costs generally account for 20 % to 25 % of costs in ornamental plant cultivation. In view of the considerable competitive pressure from abroad due to plant imports, rising wage costs will increase the risk of a lack of competitiveness.

"Confidence is an entrepreneur's duty!"

Regardless of how costs will change in 2024, it is important to seize the opportunities that horticulture offers with confidence. The opportunities are numerous, as we saw in 2023 alone that topics such as "Barbie" and digitalization are surprisingly inspiring customers.

Conclusion

Looking back: 2023 was a difficult year for horticulture and demanded a great deal of commitment and nerves of steel from everyone involved at the various market levels. However, production and trade proved to be much more resilient and up-and-coming than was expected at the start of the year.

The negative forecasts were heavily influenced by high energy prices, which eased over the course of the year. Product price increases were implemented and cultivation methods and product ranges were adjusted. Whether these measures will be enough to bring operating profitability up to the previous year's level will be revealed by the next evaluation of the key business figures of the Center for Business Management in Horticulture (ZBG). Germany remains a strong production location.

Society has become aware of the climate crisis and extreme weather events. Measures for the necessary climate and environmental protection open up new opportunities and marketing potential for horticultural products.

Private demand over the course of the year is always determined by the weather; however, in 2023 it is clearly influenced by inflation and the amount available for private household consumption. The relevance of flowers and plants for the population remains high.

Horticulture sells emotions and ecosystem services - coveted products with great significance. But the sector should also clearly demonstrate this to consumers.

Andreas Löbke, CO CONCEPT, on behalf of Messe Essen for IPM ESSEN 2024

Sources

- | Statistical Office of the European Union (EUROSTAT)
- | Agricultural Market Information Company (AMI)
- | Association of the German Flower Wholesale and Import Trade (BGI)
- | Flower agency Holland (BBH)
- | Society for Consumer Research (GfK)
- | Association for Wholesalers in Floricultural Products (VGB)
- | Publications of TASPO - Haymarket Media GmbH
- | Garden Industry Association (IVG)
- | Publications from the horticultural portal GABOT
- | Various expert discussions with those responsible for the sale of flowers and plants:
- | Tree nursery production companies,
- | Ornamental plant production companies,
- | Gala construction companies,

- | Retail nurseries,
- | Marketing organizations,
- | Wholesale flower businesses,
- | Advisors to the florist retail trade

22.01.2024

Ornamental plant market shrinks - German production tends to remain stable (ZVG)

Just below the pre-coronavirus level

(ZVG) The overall market for flowers and ornamental plants in Germany shrank again in 2023, by just under 4% to around 8.6 billion euros (at retail prices). This is just below the pre-coronavirus level. According to estimates by Agrarmarkt Informations-Gesellschaft mbH (AMI), almost all market segments recorded declines compared to the previous year 2022.

"Sales in the overall market for flowers and ornamental plants were significantly lower last year," emphasised the president of Zentrverband Gartenbau (ZVG), Jürgen Mertz. These appeared to be at the expense of imports. Sales of German production remained comparatively stable.

Although prices for flowers and ornamental plants rose in 2023, in many cases it was not possible to cover the additional costs. Inflation led to falling consumer spending, while uncertainty among end customers continued. Production companies continued to struggle against the shortage of skilled labour and increased minimum wages in addition to the inflation-induced high operating costs. In addition, the weather did not play along in 2023: The first quarter was too wet, the second too dark and the third too hot.

Per capita spending on garden plants fell to less than 49 euros. Bedding and balcony plants remain by far the most important segment within garden plants, although in arithmetical terms each German resident only spent just over 20 euros on them. Per capita spending on perennials fell to less than 7 euros. Fruit and ornamental shrubs were also down, with German residents spending an average of just over 16 euros on woody plants. Herbs almost maintained their previous year's result, but with a low market share of less than 3%, they were unable to contribute to the stabilisation of garden plants overall. Flower bulbs lost around 5 % on the previous year for the second time in a row, meaning that per capita expenditure only just exceeded the 3 euro mark.

The indoor plants and cut flowers segments, which are not nearly as dependent on the weather, performed slightly better than garden plants in 2023 compared to the previous year. Per capita spending on green houseplants, which experienced a real boom during the pandemic, was still moderately above 6 euros. This was just above the pre-pandemic result. The previous year's decline in flowering houseplants was smaller, with per capita spending still exceeding the €11 mark.

Although cut flowers, which remain the largest market segment, remained below the 2022 result, every German resident still spent more than €35 on cut flowers. The value of flowers and ornamental plants imported into Germany up to and including September 2023 fell more sharply year-on-year than the value of exported plants. Proportionately more German goods are traded in the shrunken overall market.

22.01.2024

FDF-Information

Happy Birthday IPM Essen!

22.01.2024

FDF Stage Programme 2024

22.01.2024

Nominations for Show Your Colours Award IPM 2024 announced

Wide range of plants

Eleven plants have been nominated for the Show Your Colours Award IPM 2024. All of the exhibitors at IPM Essen with woody plants and perennials were able to submit plants or plant concepts for this award. Ultimately, 11 of the plants/plant concepts entered were nominated. The Show Your Colours Award IPM 2024 will be presented at 3.00 pm on Thursday 25 January in the BIZZ Holland stand, hall 8, stand number 8A31.

The Show Your Colours Award IPM was introduced to encourage participants in the trade fair to put their products with added value under the spotlight. The nominated plants distinguish themselves from other products in terms of (leaf) colour, shape, name, the fruit they bear, tolerance to drought and heat, and sustainability.

Nominations for Show Your Colours Award IPM 2024

- Loropetalum chinense 'Pearl' BLACK PEARL- Kwekerij Roos
- Haworthia and Gasteria Mix - LiveTrends Design Group Europe ApS
- Leucothoe 'Rant01' (FIRESTAR) - Joh. Stolwijk & Söhne
- Hydrangea macrophylla 'Bailmacseven' EUPBRAFF - Bailey Nurseries International
- Camellia 1001 Summer Nights® Jasmine - Diderk Heinje Pflanzenhandelsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG
- Botanical name: Helleborus x Ericsmithii - Cultivar name: ViV® Olivia - Microflor
- Ilex Verticillata Jingle Bells® - De Jong Plant b.v.
- Cherry Tomato Brown - Solanum Lycopersicum - Vreugdenhil Young Plants
- Le Profumatissime della Riviera dei Fiori® - NIRP International S.A.

- Discover nature's elegance with Garden Beauties® - Gebr. Seuren Kwekerijen B.V.
- Garden rose, Rosa Hybrid Plant'n'Relax - Roses Forever Aps

Judging

The plants nominated will be presented in the BIZZ Holland stand, hall 8, stand number 8A31. On Tuesday 23, Wednesday 24 and Thursday morning 25 January, all visitors will be able to vote for their favourite plant using coins. On Thursday afternoon, the plants and their stories will be judged by a professional jury. The verdict of the jury together with the visitors' votes will ultimately produce a winner.

The Show Your Colours Award IPM 2024 is a collaboration between trade fair organisation IPM and BIZZ Holland.

22.01.2024

Innovation Center Horticulture Technology

Overview of all dates

19.12.2023

IPM ESSEN and Association of German Nurseries continue on their common path

Climate-resilient greening is one of the top topics at the world's leading trade fair

Climate-resilient greening is one of the top topics at the world's leading trade fair

IPM ESSEN, the World's Leading Trade Fair for Horticulture, and the Association of German Nurseries (BdB – Bund deutscher Baumschulen) are extending their cooperation agreement for a further three years. The contracts were signed by the new BdB President Hajo Hinrichs and the CEO of Messe Essen Oliver P. Kuhrt during the last IPM Advisory Board meeting, which took place at the end of November. The next IPM ESSEN, from 23 to 26 January 2024 at Messe Essen, will increasingly focus on nurseries and their products. This is because they make a decisive contribution to achieving climate targets. More and more municipalities are investing in urban greenery.

"We are very pleased that with the BdB we continue to have a partner at our side who supports us in the content orientation of IPM ESSEN," says Oliver P. Kuhrt. "Through the cooperation with the BdB, IPM ESSEN is emphasizing its importance as a high-caliber knowledge and networking platform. Especially at a time when climate protection through greening is more relevant than ever!"

On the second day of IPM ESSEN, 24 January 2024, the BdB will once again be hosting a forum on the topic of "Big Trees for the City". It is aimed at municipal decision-makers from green space authorities, climate officers and garden and landscape gardeners and will present strategies for greening urban spaces sustainably.

In 2014, the BdB celebrated the premiere of the European Nurserystock Reception at IPM ESSEN in cooperation with the European Nurserystock Association, thus contributing to the further internationalization of the trade fair. The tradition will be continued at IPM ESSEN 2024 on 24 January. The BdB stand in Hall 7 will then once again be the informal meeting place for nurseries from all over Europe.

Hajo Hinrichs: "Since the very beginning, IPM ESSEN has been a trade fair where German nurseries are given their stage. This is where we meet our customers of tomorrow. More and more local authorities are focusing on tree planting in order to achieve climate targets. This requires knowledge and innovation. IPM ESSEN provides an ideal setting for combining the two. We therefore very much welcome the extension of the cooperation."

Climate trees and biodiversity in practice

The tours on the topics of "Climate trees" and "Insect-friendly perennials", which were already a great success at IPM ESSEN 2023, offer the opportunity to find out about sustainable plant ranges. The Meeting Point in Hall 6 is the starting point for the guided tours to exhibitors with corresponding climate-resilient plants in their portfolio and was organized in cooperation with the BdB, Association of German Perennial Gardeners (Bund deutscher Staudengärtner) and the Perennial Circle (Stauden Ring). The offer is valid for all days of the fair at

11 a.m. (except Tuesday following "Great Trees for the City" at around 1 to 1.30 p.m.) and 4 p.m.

Also new are the joint stand of the Oldenburg tree nurseries in Hall 7 and a special area on the subject of commercial vehicles in horticulture.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.ipm-essen.de/world-trade-fair/>

21.11.2023

IPM ESSEN and HortEx Vietnam enter into partnership

The International Plant Fair is breaking new ground

The International Plant Fair is breaking new ground

As of now, IPM ESSEN will exclusively take over the marketing of the Vietnamese horticultural trade fair HortEx in the DACH region and other nations. The world's leading trade fair for horticulture is thus expanding its international network to include another future market. Due to increasing urbanization, the demand for flowers and plants in Southeast Asia is also growing.

The Dutch company Nova Exhibitions B.V. and its Vietnamese partner Minh Vi Exhibition & Advertisement Co., Ltd. are the organizers of HortEx Vietnam. The next edition will take place from 13 to 15 March 2024 at the SECC Saigon Exhibition & Convention Center in Ho Chi Minh City. IPM ESSEN will exclusively manage the acquisition of exhibitors from the DACH region and other nations with high relevance in the global horticultural market, such as Italy and Ecuador. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding states that the parties are aiming for a long-term partnership beyond 2026.

"We are very pleased that we have succeeded in taking a further step towards the internationalization of the world's leading trade fair for horticulture. With this cooperation, we are demonstrating our presence in a rapidly growing market and enabling companies from Germany, Austria and Switzerland in particular to establish new contacts and business relationships," said Oliver P. Kuhrt, CEO of Messe Essen, at the signing of the cooperation agreement. Thanks to increasing environmental awareness, a growing middle class and an increased demand for fresh, local produce, numerous opportunities are opening up for the horticultural industry in Vietnam. The horticultural market in Vietnam is growing at an average annual rate of eight percent, and the export rate of horticultural products from Vietnam has doubled in the last five years.

The contract was signed as part of a business delegation trip on the occasion of the Metalex metalworking trade fair, which was also attended by the Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Messe Essen, Thomas Kufen: "The course has been set for a fruitful, long-term cooperation between IPM ESSEN and HortEx. Messe Essen is once again expanding its global network and carrying the name of the city of Essen into the world. I therefore support the new partnership out of conviction."

About the HortEx Vietnam

Vietnam, a country known for its breathtaking natural beauty and rich agricultural culture, is well on its way to becoming one of the emerging forces in the horticulture industry. The new cooperation between IPM ESSEN and HortEx comes at the right time to promote this development and create growth opportunities for the industry. HortEx has been held in Vietnam's economic centre Ho Chi Minh City as an important horticultural trade fair since 2018. Most recently, it attracted 200 exhibitors and around 5,700 trade visitors to the SECC. In addition to plants and horticultural technology, the range also includes fruit and vegetables.

The trade fair provides access to a market with a future: Vietnam has significantly increased its exports of horticultural products in recent years. These include fruit, vegetables, flowers and ornamental plants. Exports to countries such as China, the USA and Japan have grown strongly. The demand for organic horticultural products, especially fruit and vegetables, has also increased. Consumers in the Southeast Asian coastal state are increasingly looking for healthy and sustainable food, while at the same time there is a growing awareness of environmental issues and sustainable horticulture. This is also reflected in the increased use of environmentally friendly cultivation methods and technologies.

17.11.2023

Everything about the 40th world's leading trade fair for horticulture at a glance

Digital brochure enables ideal planning of the trade fair visit

Digital brochure enables ideal planning of the trade fair visit

Informative, convenient, interactive – for the 40th IPM ESSEN, Messe Essen is publishing an e-book on the event for the second time. On 20 pages, reviews about the origins, information on the special areas and the large supporting programme of the world's leading trade fair are presented interactively. Links and video clips round off the offer. This gives everyone who is interested the opportunity to gain a comprehensive overview of IPM ESSEN, which will take place from 23 to 26 January 2024, and to plan their visit to the fair in the best possible way.

Around 1.7 million trade visitors, 44,000 exhibiting companies and around 193,600 innovations presented – these are impressive figures that IPM ESSEN can boast after more than four decades of existence. Since it was first held in 1983, the trade fair has grown continuously and is the only trade fair in the world to cover all areas of horticulture - from plants to technology and floristry to garden features. With more than 1,400 exhibitors from around 50 nations, the event will once again live up to its claim to be the world's leading trade fair for the industry in its anniversary year 2024.

"With the e-book we want to offer a good service for trade fair planning. Videos, photo galleries and further links provide a review of the past 39 trade fairs and at the same time an outlook on what awaits us," says Andrea Hölker, Head of Project of IPM ESSEN. "We are looking forward to the anniversary edition of IPM ESSEN."

Comprehensive supporting programme for trade fair visitors

What once began as a pure product show has long since become an established trade fair where trade visitors and decision-makers can look forward to a professional exchange and an exciting supporting programme. This creates optimum added value. One example of this are the various special shows, which focus on important topics in the horticultural industry and present new products, facets and innovations. The inspiring "Green City" meeting point in Hall 1A is one such example. In addition to the IPM Innovations Showcase and the FDF World, the IPM Discovery Centre will also be located there for the first time. The POS experience world will focus on the latest sales concepts for green products. At the Show your Colours Award, visitors can vote for products with that certain something. In addition to the IPM Concept Store, a premiere will also take place in Hall 5: The Best Practice Award in the floristry sector will be awarded for the first time. For the technology sector, exciting presentations are once again waiting in the wings at the Horticultural Technology Innovation Centre in Hall 4. Daily guided tours by industry experts on the topics of sustainability through climate-resistant trees and insect-friendly perennials round off the programme.

All of this is just a small insight into the numerous offers that the anniversary IPM ESSEN has in store for visitors and which are presented in the e-book.

The e-book is available for browsing as an interactive online version with numerous links on the website <https://www.ipm-essen.de/world-trade-fair/e-book/>

28.09.2023

Premiere in anniversary year: IPM ESSEN and FDF announce "Best Practice Award" for the first time

New award for practice-oriented products for the floricultural retail

New award for practice-oriented products for the floricultural retail

IPM ESSEN is innovative and the starting point for new things in the green industry. The world's leading trade fair for horticulture will prove this for the 40th time from January 23 to 26, 2024. Messe Essen and the German Federal Association of Florists (Fachverband deutscher Floristen e. V. - Bundesverband - FDF) are taking the anniversary year as an opportunity to announce the "Best Practice Award" for the first time. A jury of experts will evaluate products for the floricultural trade in eight categories. The winners will be selected on the basis of their high practical relevance and sales potential. The awards ceremony will take place on the first day of the trade show.

"Together with our long-standing partner, the FDF, we have the goal of strengthening the exhibition area floristry at IPM ESSEN. With the new 'Best Practice Award', we put the focus on sales-boosting and practice-oriented products. The retail industry will thus receive valuable orientation and the participating companies will be more visible," explains Andrea Hölker, Project Manager of IPM ESSEN.

The "Best Practice Award" is a non-material marketing prize and is awarded in the following eight categories: Design & Trend; Price-Performance; Technology & Tools in Florist Practice; Accessories & Gifts; Deco Indoor; Deco Outdoor; Sustainability; and "The Floral Container." During the trade fair, all participating products will be presented in one area in Hall 5. The official honouring of the award-winning companies will take place in Hall 5 on the presentation area at 5 pm on the first day of the fair.

Submissions open immediately

The prerequisite for applying for the "Best Practice Award" is participation at IPM ESSEN as an exhibitor with floral requirements. A maximum of two products can be submitted to the FDF. The application must contain at least three product photos, a short description and a reason why the company recommends its product for the "Best Practice Award". Deadline is November 30, 2023 by email to: info@fdf.de.

Further information at www.ipm-essen.de. www.ipm-essen.de

27.01.2023

The world's leading trade fair for horticulture inspired the international green sector

Climate plants and resource-saving production took centre stage

Climate plants and resource-saving production took centre stage

"The joy that IPM ESSEN could finally take place again could be felt in every hall and at every stand", Oliver P. Kuhrt, CEO of Messe Essen, sums up. The reunion of the green sector turned out to be more international than expected. Over 40,000 trade visitors from more than 100 countries came to Messe Essen to exchange information and to place orders. There was a wide range of products: 1,330 companies from 46 nations presented their innovations and new products in the fields of plants, technology, floristry and garden features from 24 to 27 January. Climate plants, environmentally friendly packaging and peat alternatives were particularly on trend.

"The importance of IPM ESSEN for the global green industry remains high even after the pandemic. The internationality of the trade audience is close to the 2020 level. In view of the dynamic market situation of the last few years and the travel restrictions that are still noticeable, this is a great result", continues the tradeshow CEO Kuhrt. The proportion of trade visitors from abroad was 33 percent (2020: 40). At 66 per cent, the proportion of exhibiting companies from abroad was even four percentage points higher than in 2020. Eva Kähler-Theuerkauf, President of the North Rhine-Westphalia Horticultural Association and Chairwoman of the IPM Advisory Board added: "IPM ESSEN 2023 was a complete success. It was good to meet again in our gardening family. The fair also met with great interest internationally. Anyone who was there neither as an exhibitor nor as a visitor definitely missed out a lot."

The 39th International Plant Fair in Essen once again proved to be a high profile ordering platform: around 30 percent of visitors placed orders directly, and more than two thirds plan to conclude deals after the fair on the basis of the contacts made and information received.

"We look back on intensive and successful days at the fair. In all halls, one could vividly experience what horticultural entrepreneurship is all about – be it new technology, new varieties or new business ideas. This is how we can tackle the challenges of the industry. For the ZVG, after the pandemic break, it was an absolute must to be there. The reunion was important for everyone", summarises Jürgen Mertz, President of the Central Horticultural Association (ZVG), the conceptual sponsor of IPM ESSEN.

From production to addressing customers: climate change concerns horticulture

Sustainable production is playing an increasingly important role in horticulture, i.e. the responsible use of energy, water, fertilisers, substrates and plant protection. Various start-ups presented projects and solutions in this regard both in the new Horticultural Technology Innovation Centre and at the Young Innovative Companies stand. For example, CO₂-storing plant charcoal made from biomass was presented, which stores water and releases nutrients. In the area of pots, recycled plastic and compostable materials dominated. Also on display were smart transport and logistics solutions as well as software.

In the area of plants, "green climate heroes" that can cope with drought, heat and heavy rain were in high demand across all assortments. Special themed tours of sustainable plant ranges provided guidance. The increasingly warmer climate also allows actual houseplants and Mediterranean plants to thrive in the garden. Here, too, a trend for the point-of-sale emerged.

The IPM Discovery Center provided further input with innovative sales concepts and the Speakers' Corner, where the topics included marketing and social media in the green industry. What was striking this year: IPM ESSEN was more present than ever in the social networks. Numerous influencers and podcasters posted and reported on the world's leading trade fair. During the runtime alone, the fair's Instagram channel achieved an increase of 34 percent, its LinkedIn channel of 16 percent.

Preview of the floristry year

IPM ESSEN 2023 was once again the top meeting place for florists from all over the world. Lots of flowers, few leaves, colourful retro looks and powdery pastel brown tones in floral design were the predominant trends. "IPM ESSEN 2023 has presented itself green, ingenious and with a fantastic, innovative floriculture programme. The exhibitors in Hall 5 have reached their customers and in the FDF World we have incited the floricultural world. The sector is inspired, motivated and very well positioned. What is also particularly remarkable is the great interest and motivation of young people: a great many vocational school classes took part in our guided tours this year", says a delighted FDF President Klaus Götz. The rousing live shows on the unique revolving stage also included the preliminary competition for the international championship of young florists "Eurofleurs 2023" in Slovenia. Newcomer Anian Friedrich from Bavaria qualified as the German representative. The industry competition for the IPM Trade Fair Cup also enjoyed a large number of entries. Tanja Korsak, florist at Blumen Westerheide in Mettmann, was the overall winner in the combined bouquet and container planting category.

Further award ceremonies were on the agenda at IPM ESSEN: On the first day of the fair, the best new plants were awarded prizes in the IPM novelty showcase: in the category "Spring Flowering Plant" the Primula polyantha hybrid POLLYANNA, in the category "Flowering Houseplant" the Anthurium andreanum ANTHFYSAN, in the category "Green Houseplant" the Philodendron erubescens 'Pink Bikini'®, in the category "Woody Plant" the Acer campestre 'Street Pillar', in the category "Tub Plant" the Mangave Mad about Mangave® 'Blazing Saddles' and in the category "Cut Flower" the Chamelaucium 'Ever Flowering Wax'. The Audience Award went to the Erysium hybrid RYSI TM 'Winter Spirit' on the Thursday of the fair.

The best storytelling was honoured with the Show Your Colours Award. With its unique colour gradient from red to purple and its fragrant flowers, the hardy rose "Rosa Rosy Boom Colours Change" by Diderk Heinje won the award.

Anniversary in 2024

90 per cent of the trade visitors were satisfied with the range of products and services at IPM ESSEN 2023. 91 per cent are planning a repeat visit, 92 per cent recommend IPM ESSEN to others. On the part of the exhibitors, 95 percent plan to participate again. The next opportunity will be from 23 to 26 January 2024, when the 40th IPM ESSEN will be launched at Messe Essen with a special anniversary programme.