



Essen, 23 January 2024

40th World's Leading Trade Fair for Horticulture from 23 to 26 January 2024:

Anniversary edition of the International Plant Fair IPM ESSEN opens

Forward-looking plant novelties honoured

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.



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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 Hoogveen 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 Dümmlen 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.