



2873 Saber Drive • Clearwater, FL 33759-1122 (727) 724-0020 • FAX: (727) 724-0021

NEWS RELEASE

For more information, please contact:

Jeff Morey, GCA Executive Director

(888) 376-4784, e-mail: Jeff@GardenCentersofAmerica.com

March 14, 2013

**GCA Announces Summer Tour Lineup:
First-Ever Stops, New Openings Drive Fresh Focus in Ohio**

CLEARWATER, FL – **Even more best practices, emerging trends, proven strategies than ever before - this year’s GCA Summer Tour heads to not one but four major metropolitan areas in Ohio**, giving IGC retailers the unprecedented opportunity to see first-hand what puts the host garden centers at the top of their markets. The guided bus tour will visit a full roster of garden centers in Cleveland, Dayton, Cincinnati and Columbus for a behind-the-scenes look at the best practices that drive their profits. **This year’s garden itinerary includes six locations that have never been toured by the IGC industry, and three retail locations newly opened within the last four years.**

The tour, open to GCA members and non-members alike, kicks off with an opening reception and dinner at Sheraton Cleveland Airport Hotel, where attendees will have the opportunity to network and enjoy dinner. After the tour wraps Wednesday afternoon, attendees will have the choice of departing from Columbus or taking a complimentary bus back to Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

GCA SUMMER TOUR ITINERARY:

MONDAY, JUNE 24

Gale’s Westlake Garden Center, Westlake, OH

Serving its loyal customer base for more than 40 years, Gale’s Westlake Garden Center sells garden lifestyle. It is part of the Gale’s Garden Centers/Donzell’s Flower and Garden Center group, which operates five stores in the Greater Cleveland area. The Westlake location is led by Pam Donzelli, daughter of founder Sam Donzelli. Fifty miles northwest, in Akron, Pam’s sister Julie Donzelli Difeo heads up Donzell’s. The sisters grew up in the garden center business, watering petunias alongside their parents. The Gale’s Garden Centers/Donzell’s Flower and Garden Center group ranks No. 21 in *IGC Retailer’s* IGC 100 report with \$22.8 million in annual sales. www.galeswestlake.com

Willoway Nurseries, Avon, OH

Willoway Nurseries, family owned and operated for 60 years, is constantly seeking out new, more efficient ways to do business, like testing robots from Harvest Automation as a cost-effective method of moving plants in the greenhouse and nursery yard. It is one of the largest wholesale growers of nursery stock in the Midwest, with approximately 550 acres of field production, 450 acres of container stock and 6 acres of greenhouses. Nationally branded programs grown on-site include American Beauties, David Austin Roses, Drift Roses, Endless Summer, Knock Out Roses, Novalis - Plants That Work, Proven Winners, Raymond Evison and Star Roses. Lunch provided. www.willowaynurseries.com

(more)

Petitti Garden Centers, Avon, OH

Brothers Angelo and Dominic Petitti started their landscaping business out of a garage 42 years ago; today, the leading independent, ranked No. 7 in *IGC Retailer's* IGC 100 report with \$45.1 million in sales, operates nine garden centers in Ohio. The Avon store, opened in 2007, covers 14 acres and features a 420-foot-long cathedral-style Thermoflor main avenue and a glass atrium facade. Angelo continues to lead the garden center business, which will eventually transition to son AJ and daughters Lisa and Andria as the second-generation leadership. Currently, AJ serves as Vice President, and Lisa is a buyer for home accents, Christmas, Vera Bradley and Trollbeads. www.petittigardencenter.com

Casa Verde Growers, Columbia Station, OH - FIRST-EVER INDUSTRY TOUR STOP!

Get a behind-the-scenes look at one of Petitti's two growing centers, Casa Verde Growers, a wholesale supplier of annuals, perennials and tropicals whose greenhouses span more than 895,000 square feet. During a special management-style workshop on-site, attendees will learn how Petitti green goods buyers and company management use their growing operation to "upscale" or "rescale" ordinary products. In this guided tour format, you will learn how the company uses color, plants and containers together to create items that can be sold for higher margins during every season. www.cvgrowers.com

Green Circle Growers, Oberlin, OH - FIRST-EVER INDUSTRY TOUR STOP!

Green Circle Growers operates more than 100 acres of eco-friendly greenhouses, including a 20-acre production facility for phalaenopsis orchids. Last year, it produced 5.5 million 5-inch mini-orchids, and it is currently testing anthuriums and bonsai plants. As part of its green mission, water used by the plants is returned back to holding tanks, where it is filtered and used over and over again. Throughout the facility, high-efficiency energy curtains retain heat and reduce energy costs. In addition, the use of radiant heat cuts down on the use of natural gas by about 40 percent. The heat is produced by a wood boiler, fueled by refuse from local tree-removal companies. Dinner provided. www.greencirclegrowers.com

TUESDAY, JUNE 25

Berns Garden Center & Landscaping, Beavercreek, OH - NEWLY OPENED! FIRST-EVER INDUSTRY TOUR STOP!

Walk down paths overflowing with colorful annuals and perennials and among acres of trees and shrubs at Berns Garden Center & Landscaping. Opened just two years ago, the Beavercreek location is newest for the company, which introduced its first store 25 miles away in Middleton in 1996. This newest store is about 10,000 square feet and sits on 6 acres of land. It is owned and operated by the Berns family, employing 50 to 135 people seasonally. When customers get hungry checking out all Berns has to offer, they buzz over to the Busy Bee Cafe on-site, where soups, sandwiches, coffee, tea and baked goods are served on the weekends. www.bernsgardencenter.com

Dorothy Lane Market, Springboro, OH

Dorothy Lane Market operates three gourmet stores stocking all the staples, with an emphasis on healthy and specialty foods. Each location features bakery, deli, meat, produce, seafood, floral, cheese and wine departments. The supermarket spotlights its own line of DLM-branded foods. Dorothy Lane Market was started in 1948 by Frank Sakada and Calvin Mayne as a fruit stand in South Dayton, OH. As a family owned business deeply rooted in its community, it prides itself on working with local farmers to provide customers with the freshest food. Lunch provided. www.dorothylane.com

Grandma's Gardens, Waynesville, OH

Remember the fragrance of a fistful of fresh-picked lilacs from Grandma's garden? It's that nostalgia of sweet memories in the garden that inspired the Rhinehart family to choose the name "Grandma's Gardens" for its retail operation back in 1979. Today, the garden center focuses on an old-time feel with its 1880s Victorian farmhouse, lovingly restored by Doug and Paulette Rhinehart and friends. A 2008 purchase of the land adjacent to the garden center brought Grandma's Gardens' total acreage to 14. That expansion has been used for more display gardens, a pond plant and supplies department, more educational events and family activities and additional parking. www.grandmasgardencenter.com

Delhi Flower & Garden Center, Liberty Township, OH - NEWLY OPENED! FIRST-EVER TOUR STOP!

Delhi Flower and Garden Centers began serving the public as a year-round garden center in 1960, owned and operated by William Krueger and Robert Maddux. The newly updated garden center features approximately 42,000 square feet of glass greenhouse, which once served as a carnation growing facility. Today, the store continues to be owned and

(more)

operated by the Maddux family, focusing on providing the highest quality plant material and service for its customers. The garden center is home to award-winning landscape designers, as well as creative home decor designers, who work with a wide variety of plant material, ranging from trees and shrubs to annuals and houseplants. www.delhigardencenters.com

Natorp's Nursery Outlet, Mason, OH - NEWLY OPENED! FIRST-EVER TOUR STOP!

Natorp's Nursery Outlet is a new selling concept introduced last fall. Located on 150 acres in Mason, it gives gardeners the chance to select from 1 million plants on the land where they're grown. The operation's 3-acre enclosed greenhouse allows shoppers access to the plant collection in all weather conditions. Visitors also get to see the working nursery, where more than 150 employees plant, maintain and grow 740 cultivars of annuals, 200 varieties of trees and 800 varieties of perennials and shrubs. Natorp's ranks No. 92 in *IGC Retailer's* IGC 100 report with \$6 million in annual sales. www.natorp.com

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26

Baker's Acres Greenhouse, Alexandria, OH

Baker's Acres, started by Nancy and Chris Baker more than 30 years ago, began with one greenhouse beside the couple's old farmhouse in Alexandria, 20 miles northeast of Columbus. At the time, business was 95 percent wholesale, 5 percent retail; over the years, that percentage reversed, so that retail is now the emphasis. Since opening, Baker's Acres has expanded to 15 greenhouses. The owners attribute their success, in part, to a humorous, light-hearted approach toward customer service that sets their garden center apart. The garden center's "Man Cave" restroom won the gold in Garden Centers of America's Best Garden Center Bathroom Awards last year. www.bakersacresgreenhouse.com

Wilson's Garden Center, Newark, OH

At Wilson's Garden Center, the guesswork is taken out of gardening for customers of all skill levels. The IGC retailer uses its display gardens as a lab, of sorts, where new plant varieties are tested and trialed to determine what will grow best for its Central Ohio customers. The display gardens double as outdoor classrooms, where most plants are labeled so customers can identify them in their mature or near-mature state. In its 28 greenhouses, Wilson's has thousands of plants to choose from, including annuals, perennials, herbs, roses, vegetables, trees, shrubs and more. The business is currently led by the second generation of Wilsons. www.gardencenterohio.com

Scotts Miracle-Gro Corporate Headquarters

Lunch provided. www.thescottsmiraclegrocompany

A Proper Garden, Delaware, OH

When A Proper Garden opened more than a decade ago, its first customers could tell it was unlike any other garden center from the moment they walked in the door. The philosophy is simple - this IGC sees the garden as an accent to the home rather than a botanical collection. This basic approach to selling is what keeps thousands of customers coming back season after season. Experienced gardeners come in to "talk the talk" and exchange knowledge with experts. Novices take to the retailer's unintimidating environment, and begin to learn just how easy great gardens can be when they have a little help in creating the plan that best fits their lifestyle. www.apropergarden.net

Oakland Nurseries, Dublin, OH - FIRST-EVER TOUR STOP!

It's not hard to see why Oakland Nurseries was voted Best Garden Center by Columbus Monthly in 2012. In its quest to become a complete horticultural hotspot, this IGC retailer provides services like landscape design and construction, irrigation installation, wholesale services and interiorscape design and installation. For green goods, Oakland taps its sister business, Acorn Farms, which operates growing sites that total 800 acres over four towns, producing thousands of plants for customers throughout the Midwest. The retailer's newest division, Oakland Pottery, spotlights imported home decor ceramics. Oakland ranks No. 19 in *IGC Retailer's* IGC 100 report with \$23.8 million in sales from its four locations. www.oaklandnursery.com

For more information or to register for the GCA Summer Tour, visit GardenCentersofAmerica.com. Those registering before June 3 qualify for a special early-bird discount.

####