

a new state-of-the-art facility in Oxnard will help us continue raising the bar in the orchid market.” And let’s talk about just how state-of-the-art this facility will be: They are aiming for carbon neutral production, 100% recycled water and solar panels. The timeline for build-out is three years.



Westerlay owner Toine Overgaag.

Meanwhile, Westerlay’s 14 acres of greenhouses in Carpinteria are still churning out the orchids. And once the Oxnard facility is up and running, they plan on keeping the 14 acres at their Carpinteria site, too. They are projecting producing as many as 3 million orchids there in Carpinteria next year alone.

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Who Are These Guys?

A few weeks back, I received a press release from the folks at Loxahatchee-based Garden Industries proudly announcing that their booth brought home the first place prize for the 10 ft. by 20 ft. category at The Landscape Show, which was held in early October. Their display, the

release said, had an Italian courtyard theme with all sorts of luxurious plantings—succulents, aroids, tropicals and such—positioned before a red suede backdrop. Just take a look. Not bad for first-timers at the Landscape Show, I'd say.



Just who is Garden Industries, you ask? I had the same question. The company provides plant material to landscape contractors and wholesale buyers. That's the short answer. For the longer answer I replied to David Bache, their sales director, to find out.

Here's the scoop: The Garden Industries nursery was previously Life Force Nursery, which produced big, immediate-gratification plants for hedging and screening purposes. Think palms and Green Island ficus-type items. "Nothing wrong with that, but not very exciting," David wrote. David, who had been with Boynton Botanicals as their sales director, came to Life Force after the Boynton Botanicals owners retired and closed the nursery at the end of last year. In fact, a bunch of Boynton Botanicals folks came along.

Life Force began a rebranding process in January that included, in addition to a name change, refocusing on their products. "The rebranding was based on the expectation that there would be a gap in the industry for impeccably grown, weed-free, properly fertilized and pruned material," David explained. "In other words, we declared that we'd build a world-class nursery to serve the needs of the industry."

Since rebranding, they've expanded the nursery by clearing about nine acres of land, built more shade houses, added drip irrigation and expanded their offerings to about 425 varieties.





Garden Industries' Amydrium zippelianum from Papua New Guinea (above) and Philodendron warszewiczii (below). According to David, "These were mercilessly handled during the show."

"We are fortunate in that we have long-standing relationships with clients who bring us cuttings of plants that are not commercially available, and have a large network of suppliers who offer us some unusual items," David continued. "We've been able to use these to propagate many plants that we would otherwise not have access to, some of which would likely be lost to the industry." Like what? How about a color-changing stachytarpheta or a hybrid bird nest-type anthurium? "We continually trial plants from out of our area (California, mostly) to see how viable they would be for South Florida. Some have been very successful, some not so."

So, there's your answer. I'm looking forward to possibly seeing them at TPIE this coming January.

Vista Farms Celebrates 30

The folks at Vista Farms are putting on a bougainvillea bash to celebrate their 30 years in business. While we've seen their bougainvillea at Spring Trials for many years, they produce other young plants, too; specifically hibiscus and ixora.