



Customer Profile

Ebert's Greenhouse Village - the pinnacle of plant quality

Gardeners around Ixonia, Wisconsin, want more than great plants – they expect superior plants, plus a retail experience that delivers plants as clean as your kitchen counter.

That's just one reason why Ebert's Greenhouse Village began using Bioworks. "People ask what products we use and what we're using to grow," says Assistant Grower Jared Putz. "By using BioWorks products, we can cater to an audience that wants a more organic plant."

An early adopter of biologicals and softer inputs, the 3-acre operation produces annuals, fall mums and asters, fruits, vegetables, herbs, greens, perennials, roses, trees and shrubs, sold through their rustic Gift Shoppe.

Built from the ground up on a mission to be at the pinnacle of plant quality, Ebert's production team says Bioworks products fit perfectly into that vision. Everything they grow receives at least one application of RootShield® PLUS⁺ when the plugs come in, and RootShield on all annual plug flats. They were one of the first to test and trial the Verdanta® plant nutrition line – and they stand by the benefits of early application too.

They used Verdanta N-Vita® to provide increased nitrogen and promote foliar growth on calibrachoa baskets, and were so pleased with the results that they'll expand use next year. They applied N-Vita at 2 tbs per 10 inch basket.

"We applied when the foliage hadn't covered the surface of the basket, and we saw results as soon as we saw blooms, within four to six weeks of application," says Jared. "There was a night and day difference between them. Getting it on early really helped."

Customers and management alike took notice. "We saw awesome results, a noticeable difference, those baskets were twice as big with lots more blooms," says Jared. "We sold them all by Mother's Day, and sold a bunch for Easter, which was bizarre."

Their fall crops also benefited from the Verdanta product line, in the form of EcoVita® topdressed on mums, and they're trialing it on tomatoes and peppers this year.

That included EcoVita applications on 6 and 8 inch mums outside. They used EcoVita at 2/3 tablespoon for the 6" and 1 tablespoon per 8" in combination with a liquid feed program. "We applied to mostly plants with the potential to break or collapse, where branches are too weak to take the rain," Jared explains. Applications were seven weeks after planting, topdressing onto the weaker varieties and also some mum hanging baskets a bit later in September.

"We saw a marked difference in their color," says Jared. "They grew tighter and looked stronger. It really helped strengthen them. Next year we're going to apply two to three weeks after planting."

The results have them asking, "If it made a nice, tight plant seven weeks after planting, what could it do two to three weeks after so the bloom is stronger?"

Another benefit: They were able to integrate the Verdanta products into their current fertility regime, using the same equipment. "We went into this with the understanding that we didn't want to switch past 200 ppm on injection—we'd have to get a different injector," says Jared.

While Ebert's is pleased with their results, their mission keeps them constantly moving forward. The next frontier for these forward thinkers? Trials for N-Vita incorporated into their soil media. "If it stays blended well in the soil as it goes through the flat filler, we could incorporate it into our soilless mix," says Jared. "That will make it even easier"

In tandem with that progression, they're expanding usage of Verdanta as a whole. They'll be using it on more baskets and combos and are looking at trialing it on 4 ½ and 3 ½ inch peppers and tomatoes.

Says Jared, "When the results are right in front of you, it's hard to ignore."

Snapshot

Location: Ixonia, Wisconsin.

Production Team: Head Grower Jason Wenninger; Assistant Grower Jared Putz.

Acreage: 3 Acres.

Crops produced: Annuals, fall mums and asters, fruits, vegetables, herbs, greens, perennials, roses, trees and shrubs.