

German trade fairs look to the future

Focus in Essen and Berlin on innovation, start-ups and upcoming talent

The German trade fairs IPM Essen for ornamentals and Fruit Logistica for the fruit and vegetable sector have both been leading the way in Europe and the rest of the world for years. But there's no resting on past laurels, with both events shining the spotlight on the future in their 2019 editions. Innovation plays a big part in this, of course, but what stands out more this time is the focus on new, young companies and up-and-coming talent. In Essen, even school students are being invited along to discover more about the green sector.

Essen

The 2019 exhibition year kicks off with IPM in Essen from 22 to 25 January. With 1,600 exhibitors from 50 countries, this trade fair is seen as the leading meeting place for the international green sector. Belgium will be the partner country at this edition. Exhibitors from this neighbouring country have supported the trade fair from the very beginning. With an 80 percent share of European azalea production among its achievements, Belgium is at the forefront of the European greenhouse horticulture sector. The Belgians will be going all out at the upcoming edition. Belgian ornamental growers will be exhibiting their plants on a joint stand in hall 2, and tree nurseries will be represented in halls 6 and 8.

There will be an informative programme of talks on the stand in hall 2 on all four days of the fair. Belgium will also be shining the spotlight on sustainable horticulture at the international horticulture forum.

Root environment

The focus in the Discovery Centers in hall 8A will be on sales concepts for garden centres. Under the creative direction of Dutch green stylist Romeo Sommers, IPM exhibitors' products will be combined and incorporated into attractive POS concepts. No matter whether in the lectures at Speakers' Corner, during guided tours or off their own bat, visitors will be able to explore the Discovery Center and experience and learn how to reach their customers of tomorrow and arouse their enthusiasm time and time again.

This year's Teaching Show, which is all about roots and the root environment, can be found at the information centre in hall 1. Under the motto "Underground Good!", the spotlight will be on optimising the root environment. Research and advice organisations will provide information on the many aspects of this often invisible but essential part of plant production.

Future

IPM is also the international platform where professionals can gauge themselves against



Fresh herbs in pots: the dividing line between ornamental and vegetable production is blurring.

each other. The popular Showcase will be there for the twelfth time, offering a selection of exhibitors' very best plant innovations. The recently introduced Show Your Colours Award will be awarded to the best marketing story about woody plants and perennials. For the Fair Cup, young, upcoming florists will demonstrate their creativity with presentations on the subject of "Wild things – natural, original, cheeky and free".

IPM is also aware of its responsibility for the future and presents itself as the number one platform for attracting new talent to the horticulture sector. On Wednesday 23 January, the Essen trade fair will be opening its doors to secondary school students to enable them to find out more about careers in the green sector. This taster day is being organised in partnership with several trade associations.

Berlin

Early February sees the next event in the trade fair calendar, this time in the German capital Berlin. Fruit Logistica will be taking place there from 6 to 8 February.

This international fruit and vegetable trade fair has also set its sights on the future. On Friday 8 February, the trade event will provide a boost for young, creative and innovative companies. The theme of this first



With an expected increase in consumer spending on fresh fruit and vegetables, the importance of specialist trade fairs is also growing.

Start-up Day will be “Disrupt Agriculture”. There will also be a Network Hub for start-ups and established businesses from all sectors of the value chain. Visitors and exhibitors will be able to rub shoulders with newcomers and perhaps even do some business at the same time.

On the Start-up Stage, the young companies will be presenting their forward-looking business ideas, technologies and visions for the future. This day is open to all start-ups developing smart solutions for improving efficiency and sustainability in the fruit and vegetable sector. Particularly popular are B2B business models and innovative technologies from the agritech, digital farming, crop science, postharvest technology, logistics and supply chain management, packaging and packaging technology sectors.

Business platform

Almost 80,000 visitors from 130 countries across the globe, about 83 percent of which came from outside Germany, visited this exhibition in Berlin in February 2018, making it not only the biggest but also the most international meeting place for buyers, suppliers and service providers in the world.

The bigger the market, the bigger the demand. With consumer spending on fresh fruit and vegetables set to increase to € 800 billion in Europe by 2030, the importance of this trade fair also continues to grow. Buyers, distributors and importers, who attend in greater numbers every year, are under increasing pressure to secure sustainable production while developing ever more reliable, technologically sophisticated distribution chains to bring their products to market.

Effective showcase

The companies attending have to constantly keep track of new opportunities, innovative products and technological trends. And that’s why they come back every year, according to visitor surveys. The trade fair is seen as a



Belgium is the IPM Essen partner country this year. It has been a major supporter of this ornamentals event right from the start.

hugely effective showcase for the entire fruit and vegetable chain.

And the budgets involved are by no means small. Eurogroup, for example, which sources fresh fruit and vegetables exclusively for Rewe (Germany) and COOP (Switzerland), recently revealed that hundreds of millions of euros’ worth of fresh fruit and vegetables pass through its procurement centres in Germany, Italy, Spain and Switzerland. That’s just one of the many customers who come to Berlin in search of new business partners.

A survey of visitors to the fair in 2018 showed that around 86 percent were involved in decisions on procurement and supply, while some 44 percent were directly responsible for decision-making processes within their companies.

Netherlands next

After Berlin, the focus for the trade fair visitor shifts to the Netherlands: first to HortiContact (see page 43) and then, in early

summer, to GreenTech in Amsterdam, the international event which from this year is being held annually instead of every two years. The main theme of the upcoming edition will be digitalisation and the Internet of Things. Developments around cannabis growing will also be on the agenda in Amsterdam.

The organization is expecting 11,000 professionals from all over the world to come to Amsterdam in search of the latest innovations the sector has to offer. Once again there will be three knowledge-sharing theatres on the exhibition floor this year. Over the three days of the fair, there will be a total of more than 75 knowledge sessions on all relevant horticultural themes worldwide. There will also be specialist pavilions on the subjects of Cannabis, Vertical Farming and Organics. GreenTech Amsterdam runs from Tuesday 11 to Thursday 13 June.



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Summary

Three trade fairs, IPM Essen (ornamentals), Fruit Logistica (fruit and vegetables) and GreenTech (horticulture technology) have been at the forefront in their disciplines for many years. New initiatives should help boost the position of these events. In 2019 the trade fair programme is once again being expanded with pavilions, theatres and events aimed at revitalisation and innovation. Technological developments are giving rise to new companies in the sector, while this year the spotlight is also being shone on new talent to ensure a healthy future for the sector.