

## Outstanding Eastern Region Conference Tour & Dinner

If you skipped the IPPS Eastern Region Conference last October because you thought, "What new things could I learn in Grand Rapids?" consider this remark by new member Eric Waterman. Eric said, "The highlight so far was seeing the trial garden of Spring Meadow Nursery. It was so impressive! Every corner displayed something new. There was so much passion that went into building it!"

The tour went to: Walters Gardens, Spring Meadow Nursery, and Hortech and wrapped up with an exceptional dinner at Spring Meadow.

### Hortech

The Hortech tour featured a walk through of their production facilities with perennials, groundcovers, ferns, ornamental grasses and climbing vines. They grow bareroot, plugs, cuttings and by seed. We saw the latest in biocontrol practices and an impressive trial garden in which they evaluate for hardiness, beauty and sustainability. They take time with the trialing to ensure that customers get the best possible results. [www.hortech.com](http://www.hortech.com)



### Walters Gardens

At Walters, they demonstrated their dry fog system for propagation, explained their tissue culture program and how they decide which plants are reproduced this way. The tissue culture lab produces over 750,000 plants per year. Mike Emmons, Nursery Manager at Prides Corner Farms in CT was very impressed with the cleanliness at Walters and the fog system. We also saw field equipment which removes flowers and foliage from the tops of the plants prior to digging (flail chopper), and advanced digger for pulling bare root plants and a harvester that collects, shakes and drops their perennials plants into cribs. [www.waltersgardens.com](http://www.waltersgardens.com)



## Spring Meadow Nursery

At Spring Meadow, we saw new technology that stuck and sorted cuttings and pruned liners in the greenhouse. They have some of the latest innovations in the nursery world. The automated grading machine grades and sorts plants into four categories according to quality and the ISO sticking machine sticks 2,000 stems per hour. Their 700,000+ square feet fully automated greenhouse growing space has a unique rail system that facilitates trimming and moving liners. As is well known, Spring Meadow Nursery, Inc. is a market leader in flowering shrubs, potted liners, plant breeding and breeder representation, including 275 varieties marketed under the Proven Winners® brand.

[www.springmeadownursery.com](http://www.springmeadownursery.com)

Some of us were lucky enough to be greeted on the tour bus by Spring Meadow's General Manager Jeremy Deppe. Jeremy spoke from the heart about IPPS saying that like most of you, Spring Meadow can name countless ways they have saved money and otherwise benefitted from attending IPPS tours.

## Dinner at Spring Meadow Nursery

The tables were set for a memorable evening as we enjoyed the warm and generous hospitality of Spring Meadow. A delicious buffet dinner was followed by a lively auction with Brian Decker as auctioneer and Dale Pierson assisting and arm twisting! As with all IPPS get togethers, new friends and acquaintances were made and old friends' and colleagues' connections renewed. Everyone received a Plant Geek cap and an epic photo was made to remember the occasion. The warm glow of the evening carries forward. Thank you, Spring Meadow!



Liz Dunham (l) & Patty Steinhauer



Keff Kurtz (l) & Chad Vanden Bosch

