

## New Jersey Area Meeting Shines

by Matt Palmieri

The local area meeting held in southern New Jersey on August 17<sup>th</sup> was an informative and fun day attracting growers, horticulturalists and students for a tour of several sites in the area. Attendees were shown around Medford Nursery, Pleasant Run Nursery and the Rutgers EcoComplex, each stop offering a unique perspective as well as an opportunity for education and the exchange of ideas.

Bright and early the group started off at Medford Nursery with a two-part tour. Propagator Matt Palmieri gave a walking tour of the Propagation area; showcasing their practices, current construction projects for an expanding perennial program, and cutting operation. For the other portion of the tour, General Manager Alex Salvi led a van tour which allowed attendees to see the rest of Medford's 400 acre container nursery and discuss the operation as a whole.

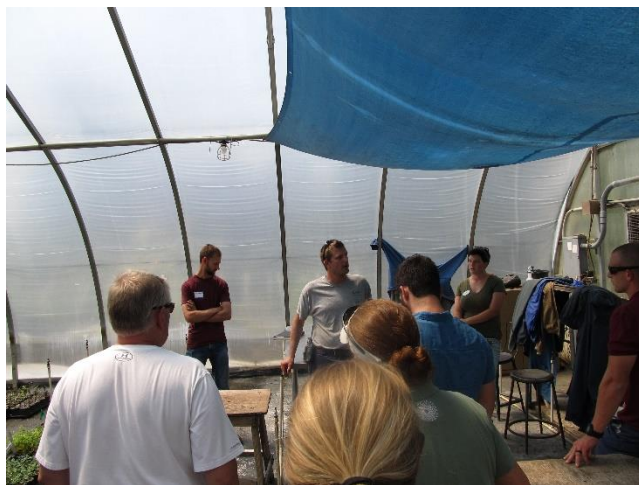


After Medford it was on to the Rutgers EcoComplex in Bordentown NJ for a tour of their greenhouse complex led by Assistant Director for Bioenergy Technology and Controlled Environment Ag Dave Specca. Outside of the greenhouses, attendees got a firsthand look at several of the Bioenergy projects on site and discussed the EcoComplex's mission of pioneering technologies for the agriculture and greenhouse industries. Inside the complex, the group toured through several of the greenhouses rented out to tenants who were doing everything from growing basil to green walls and



pillars, to kosher strawberries. Many of the locals in attendance were quite excited to see the exact basil they purchase in their neighborhood grocery store being packaged up for distribution right there on site! *Photographs were not allowed to protect the privacy of the research of their start-up tenants.*

The final stop of the day was Pleasant Run Nursery where Rich and Heidi Hesselein greeted the group and provided an excellent lunch and talked with the group about the history of Pleasant Run as well as their ongoing sustainability and environmental efforts. Once the group was sufficiently fed, Daryl Kobesky led a walking tour of the nursery, starting in propagation before moving on through their growing areas. The group discussed Pleasant Run's growing practices as well as many of the different cultivars they are currently having success with. The tour concluded as the group looked at Pleasant Run's bio-swale which was beautiful in full bloom with dozens of varieties of ornamental and native flowers.



With about 30 attendees and a nearly even split between members and non-members the day proved to be a great opportunity for new connections as well as education. Thanks to our tour hosts as well as the event sponsors, Medford Nursery, Pleasant Run Nursery and Mt. Cuba Center, the event was a big hit. Thanks to meeting organizers Matt Palmieri, Rich Hesselein, Shelby French, Terri Struve and Naomi McCafferty.