

The 2nd edition of the international FlowersExpo was successfully held at Moscow's Crocus Expo convention center from September 10-13. The 15,000 m² exhibition gathered 355 companies from 25 countries. Over 13,000 people (of which 75% industry professionals) saw fresh cut flowers, seeds, young plants, greenhouse technology and supplies for garden centers, florists and landscapers alike. Occupying pride of place were the prominent breeding companies which put their latest breakthroughs in the limelight.

by Elena Karpinskaya

FlowersExpo2012 testifies industry growth

Companies such as Rose Garden, Flower Express, Galanthus (Kaluga), Ulyanovsky, Moskovsky, Podosinki (Moscow area), Northern Dream (Saint Petersburg), Chekhov Garden (Tula) and Yug-Agro (Krasnodar) representing all together 20 different Russian regions, showcased premium quality cut flowers, grown with the help of modern technologies. More than 90 international exhibitors from Holland, Colombia, Ecuador presented many beautiful and diverse products in their country pavilions. This year, the Dutch pavilion hosted fifty companies, almost twice as many as last year, while companies from France, the UK, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Turkey, Hungary, Israel, Taiwan, Kenya and Ethiopia were also present. Trade associations, Bloembureau Holland and Asocolflores Colombia provided support for the exhibition as well as Proexport, Colombia's government commerce department, and ProEcuador, the Ecuadorian Institute for Export and Investment Promotion.

Ideally located

FlowersExpo has definitely evolved into a highly professional trade show, which last year started from scratch. Undoubtedly, the venue of the exhibition, ideally located next to the Moscow circular road, in the very centre of the so-called "Golden Triangle" (between the Leningrad and Rublevo highways and home to the richest landowners) will definitely pay off. The exhibition was well presented and visitors could easily register on line. As per usual, the Dutch exposition was very photogenic featuring typical Dutch symbols such as wooden shoes and coloured gum boots with nice contrasts between a black background and much spotlight. Holland is, no doubt, a



Booth of Hilverda De Boer.

trendsetter on the flower market, especially for cut flowers.

Great support

Great support towards the exhibition was rendered by professional associations and unions, such as the National Guild of Florists and the Russian Nursery Stock Association, the Greenhouses of Russia association, the Guild of Professionals in Landscape Industry and the Eurasian Seed Union. Nadezhda Grigorieva, director of "FlowersExpo'2012" said, "All experts agree that the Russian flower market has reached its pre-crisis level and is rapidly developing. We expect further growth, especially in the production and sales of plants and flowers. This is an intensively growing business: new greenhouse complexes are built, new plant nurseries appear, existing companies are expanding, while new technologies are introduced. The business climate in Russia is very good, with the total volume of the Russian ornamental horticulture and gardening industry worth an estimated \$2.4 to \$4 billion. Up to 15% of these flowers are domestically produced while 90% is imported. In plant production the outlook is a little better: 20%

of plants are produced inside the country, while 80% are imported. It is a complete new type of business which will be developing rapidly. Entrepreneurship in this sector is free and open."

Landscaping

"The Landscape Design and Ecology" themed area presented a unique project: "The Red Sales City Park. Built in the city of Voronezh and designed by the famous French landscape architect, Olivier Damee, the park is a prime example of how to blend contemporary design with urban recreation areas. Commenting on his project Damee stated, "This exhibition is interesting for three reasons: it's a meeting place for professionals, it's good to hear new ideas at its conferences and seminars, and it's a chance to meet potential customers, interested in landscape design projects, which will help to expand our presence in Russia. It needs much time before our landscape projects can be really effective here. We are truly pioneers on this market."

Floral design

At FlowersExpo, Russia's national floral design competition was held for the 13th time by the National



FlowersExpo attracted 13,000 visitors.

Guild of Florists, and for the first time at a new venue. Another novelty was the first ever Russian Championship among florist schools. Exciting floral design shows by the world's best florists from Russia, Holland, Germany and around the globe, attracted a lot of spectators. FlowersExpo also 2012 offered many educational opportunities. Its top-notch educational programme included events specifically geared to industry professionals such as the conference on innovations in commercial cut flower production, young plants and liners, organised by the Russian Association of Greenhouses. Also jam packed were the seminars: "How to successfully attract customers to flower stores in 2012", "Online shopping" and "Internet marketing". Many people attended the round table sessions entitled "The current status of the Russian flower market" and "Working with retailers in a changing market".

Rose gardens

Alos new was the competition of roses and rose gardens. The winners of its first round were announced at the exhibition on September 10th, among them the social projects on planting roses in 35 towns of Rus-

sia, in the areas of children's homes, parks and hospitals. Yury Titov, director of "Flower Growers of Moscow" education center said, "The exhibition is much better than it was last year. The assortment is divided between two halls. The different countries are presented very well: the exposition of Holland, besides the long-standing partners of Russia, shows new companies, with new products. New greenhouse technologies are presented by German, as well as by Russian companies. I noticed that many Russian companies started diversification of their business. A very interesting part of the exhibition is the cut flowers and planting stock, produced by the Russian nurseries. No secret that European garden centers are supplied with the plants grown 250-350 km away, while in Russia this distance is usually 2500-3500 km, which is not right, because climatic conditions are different, and the plants suffer. I am glad that new Russian producers of plants have entered the scene, who, together with their foreign partners, have brought to the exhibition new planting stock, and with their common effort, will spread new steady varieties and cultures in Russia".

Perfect timing

Alexander Bezmaternykh, CEO of the Russian Nursery Stock Association said, "The timing of the exhibition is perfect, right in the middle of the planting season, when it is possible to show all the beautiful plants. I am pleased that this year the cut flowers and the nursery stock products are exhibited in different halls, because they have each their specific audience with different needs. But I wish the halls would be more decorative. We are not selling computers or refrigerators, but a way of life, and this should be more accentuated". Vladislav Metelitsa, CEO of Demetra, a company specialised in cut flowers and nursery stock production put it this way, "It's the second year of exhibition, and it's noticeably developing. Last year we didn't take part as we wanted to see what will be the new format. Our impression is ambiguous: there are no crowds of visitors and the halls are somewhat empty. But for the participants the days are amazingly busy. We have a very tight schedule: besides the existing customers, there are many new contacts. Compared to the previous years, this exhibition turned out to be more businesslike, more professional. The results exceeded my expectations with booths being much more customized and rational. Specific products are shown in their specific shipping trolleys, palletes, store stands, containers, including labels and bar-codes. The main idea is to present a saleable product and to do business." III



Novelty competition.



Beauty spreads its wings.