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FEATURES

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New Tech for CEA

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Though the show was in the summer, the tech is still new for 2026, which is why we're bringing you a roundup of what we saw at Cultivate'26 in Columbus. Our editors walked the show floor for three days to find the latest in grower solutions—here's what we found. Take a look and see if you can incorporate any of these options into your growing operation.

Dramm

As always, Dramm had numerous innovations for helping you irrigate your plants. And the least expensive of all only costs about 30 cents! It's a new design of labyrinth drip stake that's quick and easy to clean. A labyrinth drip stake is designed to help even out the pressure among different lengths of tubing coming from one pressure reducer. But the labyrinth, which does the pressure-evening work, can easily clog and they're a pain to clean. The Easyclean Labyrinth Stake just unscrews for easy flushing/cleaning.

Of course, you need to control that irrigation and Dramm offers a new unit called the Villa Smart Irrigation Controller that can be controlled via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, so you can see and program all your irrigation zones from your laptop, tablet or phone. You can even link multiple Villas together. It's just $500 for the 12-output version.

FloraTrack

Think of FloraTrack's new AI glasses as a personal assistant that follows you around the greenhouse taking notes, capturing images, putting them in the computer and helping you do your job, especially when it comes to scouting. As an example, while wearing the glasses, you can say the words "scout mode," look at yellow sticky cards, tell it to take a photo and it will automatically count the insects on the card and tell you what you have in the greenhouse. It doesn't just diagnose pests, though, it can also identify diseases and nutrient deficiencies and offer recommendations. It can create tasks on the fly along the way and send a text to an employee's phone of what needs to be done. If you're interested in a demo of the technology, visit floratrack.ca.

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iLiving

If you've got a spot that needs ventilating, but you don't want to hardwire a fan, consider a solar fan from iLiving. Powered by a first-gen Tesla electric motor connected to a solar panel (not included), the fan is great for remote spots where hardwiring would be a challenge. They showed a 54 in. model, but said there was interest in something smaller, perhaps 36 in. You can control up to 100 fans via an app; you can also add a battery backup and even 110V AC backup if you need it running even when the sun ain't shining.

Prospiant

Prospiant, a major greenhouse manufacturing company, recently announced a partnership with Novavert and is now the premium partner for the company's line, which includes a retractable roof system for greenhouses, nurseries and other structures in Canada and the U.S. This retractable roof has a surprising number of features that make it fundamentally different from other retractable roofs.

With weight-holding capacity of their aluminum frame touted at above 1,000 kg/sq. m, in theory you could drive a Mazda Miata across one as an example; snow, hail and high winds just aren't a concern with this system. In addition, the installation was another huge factor. The system can retrofit into most existing retractable roof systems and be installed without impacting the crop itself. The panels mount with plates riveted to the film rather than hooks that perforate it and with no sewn-on straps, so water and dirt don't accumulate. If your last roof got blown off, this is ideal to slap on without impacting work and without having to worry about it getting blown off again.

Wadsworth Controls

Wadsworth Control Systems showed off the latest addition to its Juniper family of control systems at Cultivate'26 this year. The family of control systems debuted last year, and at Cultivate they previewed Juniper Precision, the next addition, which joins Juniper as a straightforward staged control primarily for heating, cooling and other climate equipment, and Juniper Flex for systems that need more configuration flexibility. Precision expands the platform further, bringing lighting and irrigation into the same control system.

"The idea behind the Juniper family is that growers can choose the level of control that fits their greenhouse and budget today, while having a platform that can grow with them as their needs change," explained Wadsworth CEO Patricia Dean. "Rather than replacing the entire control as an operation becomes more sophisticated, they can add functionality to the platform."

Juniper bridges a much-needed gap, especially in urban greenhouse production where large, multi-acre ranges are infeasible. The system is simple, managing temperature and humidity in a sophisticated way without being prohibitively expensive for small greenhouses. Two stages of heating, four stages of cooling and modulating outputs for vents or curtains cover the essentials, and a color-coded touchscreen shows at a glance whether the house is heating, cooling or sitting on target. **IG**