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# GrowerTalks

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**Perennials** p. 36–40

**Irrigation** p. 66

**Hurricane Insurance** p. 76

**Trip Report:**  
**Cheshire,**  
**Connecticut** p. 80

2006 Young Grower Award Winner

**Noah Schwartz**

p. 48

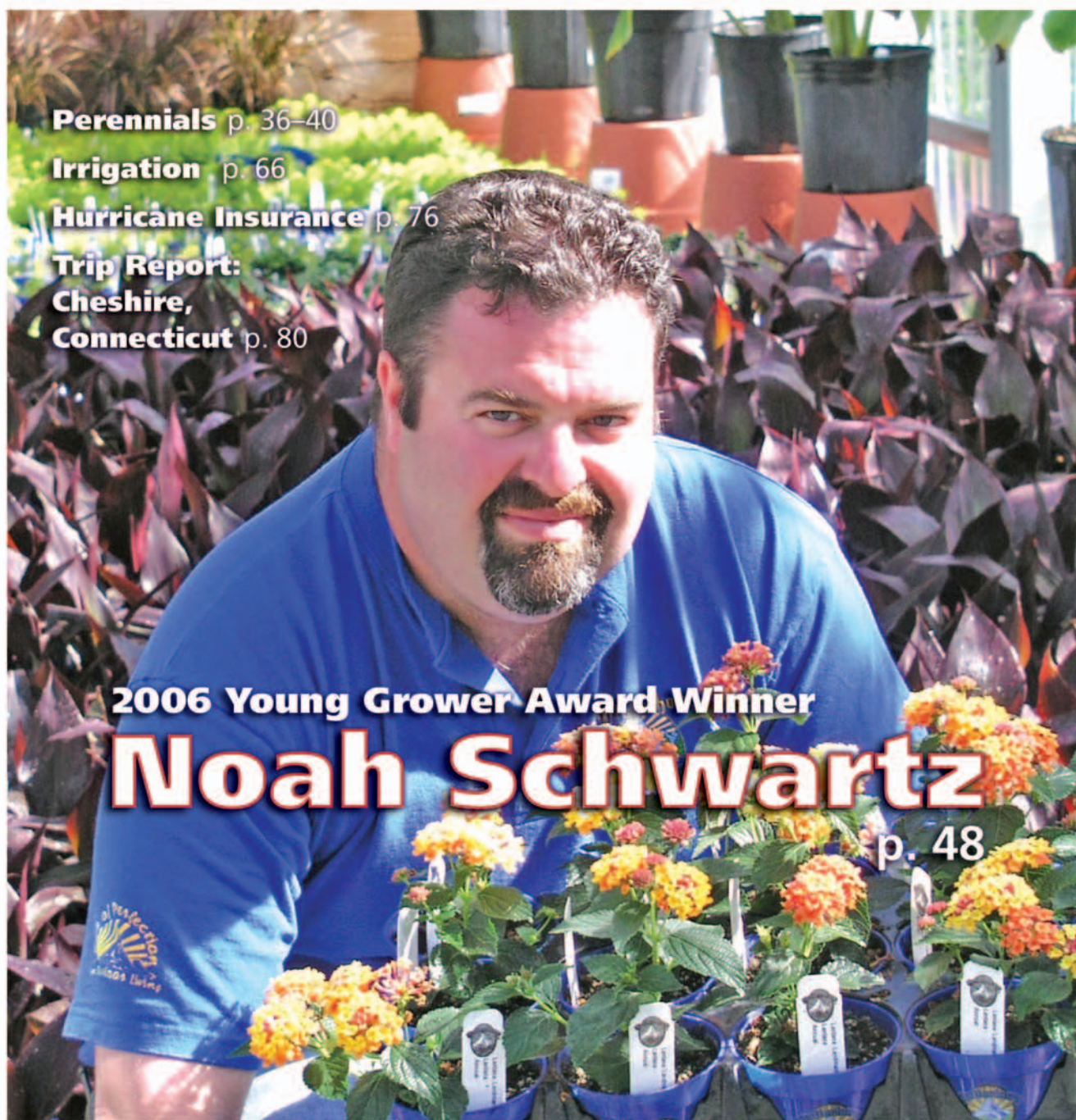




Photo Courtesy, Matterhorn Nursery



# Congrats, Noah!

GROWERTALKS' 2006  
young grower  
AWARD

Meet Noah Schwartz of Matterhorn Nursery, *GrowerTalks'* second Young Grower Award recipient

**M**att Horn, owner of Matterhorn Nursery in Spring Valley, New York, isn't easily impressed, and, as a grower himself, he's not the kind of boss who would turn over the growing end of his business easily or lightly. Then again, he also wouldn't write about his head grower, Noah Schwartz, "His poinsettias, mums, cabbage and kale and other annual offerings are of the highest quality and act as living tributes to his abilities," if he didn't mean it.

Praise like that is just one reason our judges selected Noah Schwartz to receive the second annual *GrowerTalks* Young Grower Award. We caught up with Noah a month after he received the accolade, to see how he was handling the fame.

**GT: Why do you think Matt nominated you?**

NS: "If he hadn't nominated me, he'd have had to give me a raise instead." (Laughs) "No, I think he was hoping it would bring more recognition to the nursery for our plants. Since I came on board, he's more involved in the landscape and the garden center part and not so much the growing end. He's been able to step away [from growing] since I got here. So I think he wanted me to be recognized because it's one area [of the business] that he

doesn't really have to worry about or think about."

**GT: What drives you to be your best as a grower and as an employee?**

NS: "I think it goes back to when I was with the New York Botanical Garden, working with the staff gardeners. They were nothing fancy—nothing but glorified laborers, you could say—but to see the perfection that they put into everything they did ... that's something that I've never forgotten. Anything that I try to do, I try to do 100%; I try to finish it, and I try to do it to the best of my abilities. And I try to find the quickest, best, most economical and most efficient way to do it."

**GT: How would you convince somebody to make horticulture a career, like you have?**

NS: "It's what Matterhorn is all about: everything for outdoor living. There are so many young people who are entertaining, even on a 5 by 10 balcony ... everyone wants to make their surroundings more beautiful. And that's how I try to promote our industry, even to the employees I have. This is a feel-good business, and nobody shows up at the nursery dreading buying flowers. They're doing it because they want to."

**GT: At our reception you talked with Anna Ball, Kerry Herndon, Allen Hammer, Gary Mangum and Jack Bigej (of Al's Garden Center). What was it like**

**discussing the industry with such notables?**

NS: "Wow, it was great. But it was definitely humbling, and it was definitely proof that we're all in the same boat, and that we all need to be a little worried—we need to try to find new ideas. We can all rely on a few years of success, but the bottom line is that we have to look outside to see what other industries are doing and copy them."

**GT: Matt is going to expect a lot from you now, with this fancy new honor bestowed upon you. What do you do for an encore?**

NS: "I think we're going to continue to try to expand our brand. That's something I've been doing the last few years. What I would like to do is have it be a national brand, a Matterhorn brand from Matterhorn [currently they sell on QVC]. We don't have a platform like they do, with 80 million viewers, but just to try to continue to get our name out there."

**GT: We were hoping you'd say, "I'm going to Disney World!"**

NS: "Funny, many people call Matterhorn the 'Disneyland of horticulture.' But I prefer the shorter lines at Coney Island." ■

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