

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Quick Q&A with Amazon

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Unless you've been on sabbatical in Bali for a few years, you already know that Amazon has started offering live plants. The company's acquisition of Whole Foods opened the door to selling fresh food and produce direct to consumers, so it's not surprising that Amazon would venture down the path of live goods. Whether you welcome the competition or are a wary watcher, you have to admit that it's something our industry is paying close attention to.

We reached out to the Seattle-based company with a handful of questions to get a sense of what their goals are for this new category.

GrowerTalks: Amazon has been selling live plants for a little while now. What have you learned about the category that has surprised you?

Amazon: As a company, we are always listening to customers and innovating on their behalf to not only offer them the widest selection possible, but to also bring them products we think they will love.

We have learned there are industry-specific considerations that must be factored into our approach to offering live plants. For example, we have to think through things like: How long has the plant been in the box? How is the air circulation in the box? What are the various climates the box may travel through? We work closely with our growers to ensure that our growing and shipping methods are resulting in the best possible experience for customers, avoiding any stress on the plant before it's delivered.

In addition, we have been pleasantly surprised by how many Amazon Business customers are interested in purchasing live plants. Oh, and we sell more Chia Pets than we ever would have imagined ...

GT: What categories of plants are working out well in the Amazon model and which ones are you finding challenging?

A: Indoor plants—including succulents—bonsai trees and leafy foliage are currently among the best-selling live plants on Amazon. This holiday season, we expect to see an increase in holiday décor as one of our emerging categories.

GT: Ultimately, why did Amazon decide to enter into the live plants category and what are the primary goals?

A: Our primary goal here is to offer a wide variety of live plants, at great prices and the most convenient shopping experience for customers. For Amazon Business customers specifically, we are focused on offering additional features that businesses need, such as quantity discounts and purchasing analytics.

GT: How do you handle the knowledge gap? Did you hire new staff with horticulture/floriculture backgrounds to help

with the introduction of this new category?

A: We have a passionate team of vendor managers who constantly listen to customers, learn from our plant vendors and continue identifying ways to best serve customers.

GT: What's the plan for working with growers and plant breeders?

A: We work with wholesale growers and plant breeders across the U.S. to reliably source live goods to meet the growing needs of customers.

GT: Will specialty retailers—both online and brick & mortar—be able to keep up with, or even outperform, Amazon in the live plants category?

A: There's room for a lot of players in this space and Amazon offers a great opportunity for wholesale growers, nurseries and sellers to reach new customers with our open marketplace. **GT**