

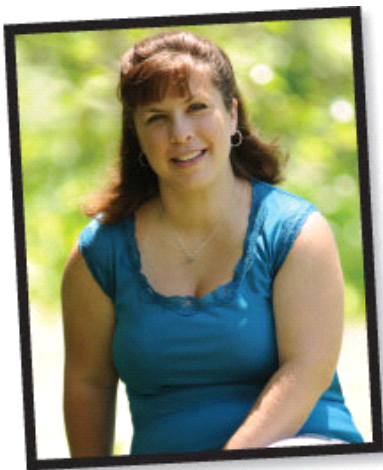
GROWERTALKS

Columns

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Obsession vs. Diligence

Jennifer Zurko



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Many of you have heard the definition of insanity as “doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results.” According to many sources on the Internet, no one really knows who came up with it—Benjamin Franklin, Mark Twain and Albert Einstein are some of the people given credit to this gem—but it gives me pause when I think about what the person meant.

Maybe the term “insanity” should be replaced with “obsession.” Example: You’re trying to stand a book on a shelf and it keeps slipping and falling no matter how many times you try to stand it up. You do it 10 times before you throw up your hands, say, “Forget it!” and leave the book to lie on the shelf ... until you go out and get some snappy-looking bookends to solve the problem.

I’ve learned through experts and growers that scouting and monitoring for pests can become like an obsession. You’re constantly looking at the undersides of leaves and on the soil surface with a magnifying glass like a gigantic Peeping Tom scouring for movement. People outside the industry may consider this obsessive, but I say it’s more like diligence. Hey, those nasty pests are on *your turf*, so it’s up to you to protect it. Shipping a subpar plant is not an option, so growers have their local extension specialists and breeder technicians on speed dial. (If you don’t, you should.)

Our annual Pest Management Issue allows us to report the newest information from the people that make it their life’s work to be “obsessed” with plant insects and diseases, and find ways to help you keep your crops pest free. The nice folks at Agdia, a company that conducts tests for plant pathogens, give us some of the basics on common plant viruses.

A new type of whitefly is starting to be a real problem in Florida ... and has the ability to spread to other areas. Read Dr. Catharine Mannion’s article about spiraling whiteflies.

I’m sure you’ve read about the recent outbreaks of impatiens downy mildew on *Impatiens walleriana*, but don’t take those gloom-and-doom reports from other industry outlets to heart—our goal is to help you be

proactive rather than over-reactive. Dr. Colleen Warfield provides a follow-up piece to her article from our [January issue](#) about knowing the risk factors involving impatiens downy mildew. We've got the real facts on the disease that will allow you to grow the same beautiful impatiens you do every year.

Plus, John Creedon, a former grower from Connecticut, tells us about his experience with beneficial nematodes, and we learn how the industry used to handle pests back in the day in this month's "A Look Back" segment.

So, next time a co-worker teases you about your "obsession" with pests, tell them your diligence puts food on their table. Hopefully, all of your fellow employees and direct reports share the same level of diligence.