

# GROWERTALKS

## Columns

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### Is TMI That Bad?

*Jennifer Zurko*



**JENNIFER ZURKO**

I saw another news report this morning that made me sigh and my shoulders droop: Two mom bloggers have posted an online petition asking Kraft to stop putting yellow dye 5 and 6 in their macaroni and cheese products. The two moms said the food coloring can cause hyperactivity, migraines and allergies—which they say is also made with known chemicals derived from petroleum.

Great, I thought. My kid eats macaroni and cheese. I'm a bad mom.

This is not the first time I've had this feeling. No, sir. Since I found out I was expecting, I've been inundated with gloom-and-doom information. Like how eating soft cheeses, sushi and bean sprouts will harm your unborn baby. Get BPA-free bottles, I was told. Don't give your newborn

aspirin or honey, I read. Don't give your kid apple juice—there's strychnine in there. Oh, and they may add aspartame to milk, didn't you know, you horrible mother, you? As if being a mom isn't stressful enough.

But—there is a benefit to all of this information. Because of the research and technology available to me compared to my mom, I have a better chance of having a healthy baby and raising a more health-conscience child. Unlike our mothers, my friends and I have a better handle on what to expect during motherhood. And our husbands are well informed, too.

I wonder if you get the same feelings of inadequacy when you walk into the greenhouse and see whiteflies. Or when one of your staff informs you that there's been a *Xanthomonas* outbreak. And aren't you totally sick of hearing about impatiens downy mildew already and spring isn't even really here yet?

But fear not! There are people who make it their life's work to stare at greenhouse creepy-crawlies and scrutinize weird splotchy things on leaves so that you can avoid seeing them on your crops. This month is our annual pest management issue, so we've asked many of our valued insect and disease experts to give us the latest information. First, we have a run down of pests you'll need to watch for (and yes, impatiens downy mildew is included). Syngenta's Marla Faver offers prevention tips for mites, thrips and leafminers.

Also, are you thinking about adding beneficial insects to your pest battlement? Brent Troost, Zylstra's Greenhouses' head grower, gives us insight on how he runs a successful IPM program with biological controls. And like that aspartame-laced milk, pesticides do expire. So Dr. Raymond Cloyd discusses pesticide shelf life in our monthly Pest Management department.

Hopefully, all of these articles don't fall into the category of TMI (too much information, for those not in the know). Just like my plunge into parenthood, you'll feel better equipped with more knowledge going into the spring season. **GT**