

GROWERTALKS

Features

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New Hardgoods Highlights

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Beaver Plastics: Lettuce Raft

Interest in hydroponics continues to be on the upswing. And in order to meet this expanding interest, Beaver Plastic offers three sizes of their lettuce raft. This product was developed for growers who are involved in the floating market and is ideal for leafy greens and basil. It's specifically designed for hydroponic, deep irrigation (deep water) and is ideal for drought situations, as it will use less water than traditional field production.

Features:

- Sealed surface technology
- Range of sizes from 18 to 36 cavities
- Durable and cost effective

Dramm: Brass Hose Swivel

Hand watering can be a bit of a battle—either you're fighting the kinks in your water line or you have a hose that won't easily move in the direction that you want it to. But no longer. Dramm's Brass Hose Swivel (pictured above) will allow growers to move their hose with ease.

"A swivel is nothing new at all, but as far as a piece for a gardening hose, there aren't really any out there," said Dramm's Kurt Becker. "That's why we developed this product. It made hand watering easier, especially for the people that are doing it a lot."

The brass hose swivel is placed between the end of the hose and whatever attachment you choose to add. The swivel works by allowing the hose to rotate with the wand. It makes hand watering a lot more comfortable because the hose now readily moves in the direction that the grower wants it to. Essentially, the swivel allows the hose to twist and untwist with the motion of the grower's hand, helping to alleviate the frustration of watering.

Features:

- No flow restrictions

- Made in America
- Works for all standard garden hoses
- An option to purchase a brass swivel to fit European threaded hoses

Dramm chose brass as the base material to increase the product's longevity. The reception so far from growers has been extremely positive. The only regret, said Kurt, is they wish they had thought of the piece sooner.

ParSource: Commercial Double-Ended Greenhouse Lighting System

With ParSource's commercial double-ended greenhouse lighting system, growers can now have the advantage of a double-ended lighting system with the benefits of an open-wing design. Driven with an electronic ballast, the overall design permits a more efficient and longer lamp life.

Essentially, having the double-ended light offers the advantage of a higher output, while the electronic ballast provides several efficiency advantages, including smart technology and a silent operation. The ballast is programmed to shut down if it's in danger of being damaged—perhaps in the case of an electrical surge or if the system itself was missing a bulb. The main difference in this piece of equipment to others in the market is the open-wing design reflector.

The advantage to having an open-wing design is that the light provides a uniform spread. Additionally, the system itself runs cooler, extending the life of the lamp. Each reflector is made from premium aluminum, further increasing both the efficiency and the reflectivity of the light. Ron James of ParSource states that their goal was to design the reflector to bring as much of the non-targeted light back towards the light. This design also has the flexibility of being both an attached and a remote system, allowing the grower to put the ballast and the reflector in different locations.

Features:

- Double-ended lamp
- LED indicators with Smart Alert Technology
- More lumen output compared to magnetic or single-ended ballast
- Open-wing design
- Premium European aluminum
- Light weight—approximately 11 lbs.

RapidTek: Rapid Water Logic

A common plight of automatic watering systems is that, despite each basket being watered equally, some get too much, while others remain dry. Although automatic basket watering systems are extremely efficient, they're not designed to check for inconsistencies in watering needs. The reality is a greenhouse environment isn't fully uniform and so the watering needs of plants vary.

So RapidTek set out to design a piece of equipment that could gauge the watering needs of a plant. Rapid Water Logic is essentially a mechanical counter balance that a grower attaches to an overhead basket watering system. The grower simply makes a manual adjustment based on the estimated wet weight of the

basket. If the basket is heavy enough, it won't be watered and if the basket is lighter than the set weight, it will be watered.

"It basically eliminates the unnecessary watering of baskets based on where the grower sets that weight," said Quinn Denning, president of RapidTek. Easy to install, the balance is simply inserted into the existing overhead basket watering system and, because it's a weight/balance system, there's no programming or electronic settings.

In addition to improving the overall consistency in plant products, using the Rapid Water Logic will result in both a reduction in the amount of water used and the overflow of wastewater.

Features:

- Prevents overwatering
- No electronics required
- Weight can be easily set and changed when needed
- Waters plants consistently

Nature's Source: Plant Probiotic

In order to reduce pathogens and other challenges, growers generally use a sterile mix. The challenge with this is that these mixtures aren't only missing the pathogens that will harm the plant, but the beneficial microbes that feed the soil. By adding Nature's Source's Plant Probiotic, growers are now able to offer their plants a living growing media versus a sterile inert soil.

The benefits of microbes are fairly well known. They not only improve the overall health of the soil, but will also hold more nutrients and water. However, most probiotic applications are restricted to one or two varieties of microbes. The challenge with this is that if the environment isn't ideal for that microbe, that variety could die, leaving your soil without a microbe. Nature's Source's Plant Probiotic aims to resolve this problem by offering growers a complex package of 10 microbes—so that if one strain dies, another is there to fill its place.

"Adding probiotics to the soil will improve overall plant stress and strengthens the plant's root system," said Chance Finch, GM of Ball DPF. "And the healthy soil also carries over to retail, and by that, the consumer also has success with it."

Features:

- Feeds the plant/the soil
- Reduces leaching
- Helps with nutrient breakdown and absorption
- Reduces shock when transplanting
- Encourages root development and helps plants cope with environmental stress
- Includes 10 live beneficial bacteria
- Can be used as a bio-stimulant
- Helps break down existing nitrogen in the soil
- Product can be applied in a mix tank with fertilizer
- Soon available in single serve

To prolong the life of biologicals and the plant itself, Nature's Source recommends using an organic fertilizer, like Nature's Source's fertilizer product. This way, growers will give the plants what they need, while also feeding the biologicals, improving both the soil condition and the overall plant health.

Bartlett Instrument: Radio Link

Tired of all of the wires between the radio link and computer? Bartlett Instrument's radio link is now wireless. This improved system eliminates the cable and excess wires, while greatly reducing the overall installation time. The radio link is attached to each controller, allowing growers to virtually communicate through their office computer. Growers can wirelessly monitor and change settings on their controller through their office computer.

Features:

- Compatible with Bartlett's CIS system, allowing you to monitor up to 50 greenhouses through a wireless system
- Multiple channels and encryption for added security
- Eliminates wires **GT**

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