

# Encouraging Future Growers; Hydroponic Hops; Growing Better Lettuce



*Greenhouse vegetable news from GrowerTalks magazine*



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# inside GROWER

Controlled Environment Agriculture

## COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Shortage of Skilled Workers  
Get More from Growing Media  
CEAC Lettuce Intensive  
Hydroponic Hops  
Make Time for IPM  
Organic Hydroponics?

Consistency  
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## Worker Shortage in the (Near) Future?

I recently read an alarming statistic related to agriculture, but which has implications in our arena of horticulture as well. [Purdue University teamed up with USDA](#) to get a better view of the employment needs in agriculture versus the graduating population trained to take on those roles. The study estimated in each year from 2015 to 2020, an average of 58,000 skilled jobs would be available in agriculture. Those jobs include everything from management and business-related roles to science and technology. However, only an average of 35,000 graduates are estimated to have the expertise to fill those roles, hence, a knowledge and training gap.

In our corner of the industry, I know there's also a concern about attracting and retaining quality growers in floriculture, vegetable and herb production. There's a need for more education for growers switching from floriculture to yield-based vegetable and herb production, as well.



All of this is why I bring up [Seed Your Future](#), a national initiative designed to drive excitement and interest in a variety of horticulture fields. There are many ways to get involved with this organization, but to me, it seems one of the most important is to become an ambassador of horticulture in your local community. Share your message with area high schools and career technical schools, colleges and even youth groups like 4-H, scouts and boys and girls clubs. You never know where you could spark an interest that results in a life-long love of horticulture.

I'm interested to hear from anyone that has a mentor program or internship program set up to bring in hort students and provide them with experience. Please let me know how this has worked and what the result has been. Email me at [jpolanz@ballpublishing.com](mailto:jpolanz@ballpublishing.com).

Join the conversation. Click [HERE](#) to share your opinion or see what others have to say.



## Get More from Your Growing Media

Growers looking for additional knowledge to improve their plant-growing techniques, listen up: OASIS Grower Solutions is offering a free "GrowPro" webinar to provide details on growing mediums for superior cutting propagation and seed germination, along with info about breakthrough tissue culture technologies. The webinar will run from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. PST (note the Pacific time) on Thursday, August 10. Reservations, which are limited, can be made at: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/4891387866697191681>

Your speaker will be Dr. Vijay Rapaka, Oasis Grower Solutions' chief corporate scientist, who will provide attendees with tips and tricks, best practices and products for superior root and plant development using the company's Rootcubes for unrooted cuttings, Horticubes for seed germination and InVitro Express for tissue culture.

"Anyone interested in growing plants of any type should attend this educational webinar," says Jeff Naymik, global marketing manager, Oasis Grower Solutions. "Attendees will leave with tips and techniques that will enable superior growing, and will also have the opportunity to ask questions during the session."

Join the conversation. Click [HERE](#) to share your opinion or see what others have to say.



## Get Intense With Lettuce Workshops

The folks at the Controlled Environment Ag Center (CEAC) at University of Arizona have increased the number of workshops offered this year due to increased demand for lettuce-growing knowledge. The next Hydroponic Greenhouse Lettuce Intensive Workshops will be held October 13-16 at the CEAC on the University of Arizona's Tucson campus.

The workshops are more than 40 hours of material delivered over four days and include topics like lettuce cultivation from seed to harvest, greenhouse site selection, plant protection, environmental controls, crop layout, lighting, food safety, plant nutrition and deficiencies, integrated pest management and more. The workshops include tours of CEAC's unique facilities, including a vertical farm, off-grid photovoltaic greenhouse, aquaponics greenhouse, mushroom house and more.

[Click this link to learn more and to register.](#)

The CEAC also has announced its fall lineup of speakers for the Covering Environments CEAC Seminars. They're as follows, all at 4:00 p.m. Eastern, 7:00 p.m. Pacific time:

August 25—Joaquin Ruiz, Ph.D, Dean College of Science VP for Innovation: "Interdisciplinary Collaborations"

September 29—Martha Hawes Ph.D, Professor Soil, Water & Environmental Sciences: "Roots—

not just water & nutrients absorption"

October 27—Goggy Davidowitz, Ph.D, Associate Professor of Entomology & Ecology and Evolutionary Biology: "Plant-Insect affairs: good, bad & ugly"

December 1—Gary Nabhan, Ph.D, Professor Southwest Studies Center and School of Natural Resources & Environment: "Biomimicry of old & urban agriculture"

[Click this link to sign up for the webinar series.](#)

[Join the conversation. Click HERE to share your opinion or see what others have to say.](#)



## Hydroponic Hops: Is it a Thing?

The short answer? Possibly. For the long answer, you'll have to tune in to the October *Inside Grower* supplement where I'll take a deep dive into the topic. But for now, I can tell you about a nifty turnkey option [Rough Brothers, Inc.](#), a greenhouse manufacturer in Cincinnati, is developing related to hops.

They started out looking at tomatoes as a display for the Cultivate'17 booth in Columbus, Ohio, but ended up switching to hops. That switch was fortuitous, as the hops took off (quite literally, growing several feet tall in less than two months) and the crew looked deeper into the hops and craft brewing market. What they found is brewers pay more for "wet" hops, or hops that are freshly harvested, because of the flavor profiles those hops offer.

Rough Brothers, Inc. has created a turnkey offering of a 30-ft. by 108-ft. greenhouse or 30-ft. by 60-ft. greenhouse with a minimum of a 12-foot gutter, both of which could expand with more ranges if needed. The house would be equipped with an environmental control system (Rough works with several vendors) and LED top lighting and interlighting modules for optimal growth.



The Rough Bros., Inc. hops demo at the Cultivate'17 booth.

The hops can grow quickly and Keith Bemerer of Rough Brothers, Inc. says research has shown it's possible to turn the crops every three months in the right conditions. The system garnered quite a bit of interest from smaller growers looking to enter into niche markets.

"A lot of people were interested in seeing something different; they're looking for what's next," he says. "There was a really large response to seeing the hops at the show."

Right now the company is looking at a two-pronged approach, working with both growers who are interested, as well as established craft breweries, that might want to add a greenhouse to grow their own hops varieties. We'll keep you updated as we hear more response.

Join the conversation. Click [HERE](#) to share your opinion or see what others have to say.

## Make Time for IPM

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual IPM Symposium at the North Carolina Arboretum will be held Thursday, September 28 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This event, which is held in conjunction with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service for professionals in horticulture and landscape, features two grower tracks that will cover a variety of topics on integrated pest management, including sessions on beneficial insects and biocontrols, identification and management of greenhouse diseases, starting clean in the greenhouse, and more.

You can see the [full schedule here](#) and [register for the event here](#).

Join the conversation. Click [HERE](#) to share your opinion or see what others have to say.

## Can Hydroponics and Aquaponics Be Considered Organic?

There's no telling if or when that question will get answered soon by the USDA, but there's a web conference scheduled for 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Eastern on Monday, August 14 to discuss the development of the proposal on hydroponics.

The National Organics Standards Board will be the group discussing the issue, as the NOSB assists the USDA in creating standards for organic agricultural products. The NOSB, which meets twice a year, is scheduled to meet in person next October 31 - November 2 in Jacksonville, Florida.

If you're interested in listening to the web conference, you can access it through this link: <https://cc.readytalk.com/r/3itgag2r7btt&eom>.

Join the conversation. Click [HERE](#) to share your opinion or see what others have to say.

As always, feel free to email me at [jpolanz@ballpublishing.com](mailto:jpolanz@ballpublishing.com) with comments, questions, news and views.



Until next time,



Jennifer Polanz

Editor-at-Large

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