

Pilea's less-cranky look-alike, plus going jumbo, interiorscaping and ethylene



The logo for the Tropical Plant International Expo 2027 is displayed in a horizontal banner. On the left, the letters 'TPIE' are enclosed in a double-bordered orange square. To the right of this, the text 'TROPICAL PLANT INTERNATIONAL EXPO 2027 FT. LAUDERDALE' is written in a dark brown, sans-serif font. On the far right, the dates 'JAN 20-22' are shown in a large, white, bold font against a gradient orange background.



A blue horizontal bar contains the tagline 'News and Inspiration from the world of foliage and tropical plants' on the left. On the right side of the bar are two logos: 'GROWERTALKS MAGAZINE' and 'greenPROFIT MAGAZINE'.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2018

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# TROPICAL TOPICS

## COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- Getting Grounded
- A Less-Cranky Look-Alike Into Interiorscaping?
- One For Your Shelves
- Having Ethylene Issues?



## Ball Culture Guide

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SEED GERMINATION

By JIM NAU

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## Getting Grounded

My travels across the TPIE trade show floor continue. I know, I know—the show has been over for a month. But there are so many cool things left on my list that I want to share with you.

Like what? Like the latest line from LiveTrends. The products in LiveTrends' booths during trade shows commonly draw comments like, "Oh, how cute!" or "That's so adorable!" Known for small tabletop-sized products, their latest line is prompting lines more like, "Whoah! That's huge!" The line of high-end potted cacti and succulents is called Grounded, and rather than being cute items for desktops or walls, these are statement plant-and-pot pieces for urban patios and decks. Well, you could put them on a coffee table but there would be no room for your cocktail!





When I see potted cacti and succulents on the trade show version of an urban roof deck, I get a sense of being “grounded,” don’t you? Like sourcing a full-sized tree, these large specimens are older and are often acquired from specialty nurseries. The response from landscape designers and architects has been very positive, we were told. Are they for the everyday retailer to keep in stock? Probably not. But what LiveTrends is doing is taking a product and making it easier to source for folks who do this high-end design work. And from what I hear and see, they are excited to have it available.



## Pilea’s Less-Cranky Look-Alike

*Pilea peperomioides* was the “it plant” of TPIE. It attracted lots of attention at the booths of the folks currently offering it (Harster and Costa). And it’s been the “it plant” in social media circles for a while. So, why don’t growers offer it?

I spoke to Ken Frieling of Glasshouse Works in Stewart, Ohio, a grower of specialty items who has been growing this particular pilea for many, many years. It’s not the easiest pilea to grow, he said. He even joked that it’s so difficult it makes pilea collectors save *P. peperomioides* for the very last species to add to their collections. It’s likely not in good supply yet because it’s just so finicky to grow. It originated in the cracks of China’s limestone mountains, after all, so it prefers shallow pots and non-acidic, good-draining soil. Plus it’s a slow grower. None of these attributes make it easy to pump out of a greenhouse, unfortunately.



I had heard that *Peperomia polybotrya* looks similar enough to make houseplant-hungry Millennials happy. Also known as the owl eye plant, Ken says *P. polybotrya* has better availability and is a lot less cranky in its growing requirements. It has larger leaves that are a bit more cupped and heart-shaped than the pilea. It's certainly an attractive and available substitute.

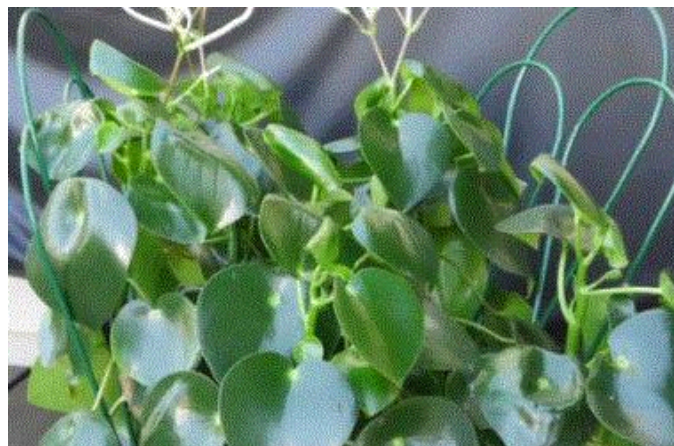


Photo credit: Glasshouse Works website.



2027 TROPICAL PLANT INTERNATIONAL EXPO  
FORT LAUDERDALE JAN 20 - 22


## Into Interiorscaping?

Got something to brag about in the way of interiorscape installations? Whether it's a green wall or holiday display or anything else using plants indoors, you can apply now for AmericanHort's International Plantscape Awards.

The Plantscape Awards recognize outstanding achievements in design, installation, creativity, renovation and innovation. Interiorscaping has been flying under the radar for years, but no more! As Americans begin to understand the importance of indoor plants, it's time to toot your own horn and get some applause.


These merit-based awards are given out in several categories, so be sure to check out the submission details at [AmericanHort.org/IPAwards](http://AmericanHort.org/IPAwards). You've got until April 13 to apply. The awards will be presented during a ceremony at Cultivate'18 in Columbus, July 14-17. I attended the ceremony last year for the first time and it was an eye-opener for what lengths you interiorscapers go to to satisfy your clients.

Questions about the submissions? Contact AmericanHort's [Sherry Johnson](#).



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## One For Your Shelves

I have more proof that houseplants are continuing to be hip: another houseplant how-to book has just been published.



**Don't Repot That Plant!**  
And Other Indoor Plant Care Mistakes

**Will Creed**

"Don't Repot That Plant! And Other Indoor Plant Care Mistakes" (Button Street Press) was

written by Will Creed, a 35-year veteran of the indoor plant care industry in New York City. From lighting and feeding to pests and repotting (think before you do it!), he'll give readers the low-down on some solutions only the houseplant pros know. He also gives details for dealing with 42 of the most popular houseplants on the market.

I received an advance copy and as I do with all books, I turned to page 37 to give it a read. It reads in a matter-of-fact and confident style, as if a person who knew what he was talking about was guiding you along this indoor plant journey. If you do retail, "Don't Repot That Plant!" would make a nice addition to your store's bookshelves.

## Having Ethylene Issues?

We have a webinar for that! "Managing Ethylene Risk in the Supply Chain" is Ball Publishing's next webinar, taking place Thursday, March 1 at 1 p.m. EST. If your flowering plants have yellowing foliage, flower drop or seem to just not last very long, it could be an ethylene problem somewhere in the supply chain. Ethylbloc could be your solution.

The webinar's four experts will discuss:

- The economic risks and potential losses caused by ethylene
- The conditions that create ethylene, how to identify the problem and what the damage looks like
- How and when to apply Ethylbloc, and the expected outcome
- How you can get a free risk assessment by a field expert, with recommendations

Your hosts for this webinar are the indomitable Chris Beytes of *GrowerTalks/Green Profit* magazine and *Acres Online* and Bill Riffey, General Manager, Grower Operations for Americas, Europe & Africa at Oasis Grower Solutions. Register for the webinar [HERE](#).

Don't miss it—this information could save your shipments.

More tropical goodies next time! Meanwhile, have comments, questions, quandaries? If so, just drop me a line at [ewells@ballpublishing.com](mailto:ewells@ballpublishing.com).



**Ellen Wells**  
Editor-at-Large  
Green Profit

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