

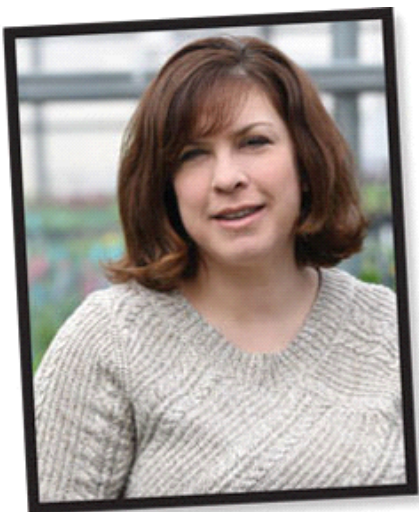
GROWERTALKS

Inside Look

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A Small Contribution to 1,000 Issues

Jennifer Zurko



JENNIFER ZURKO

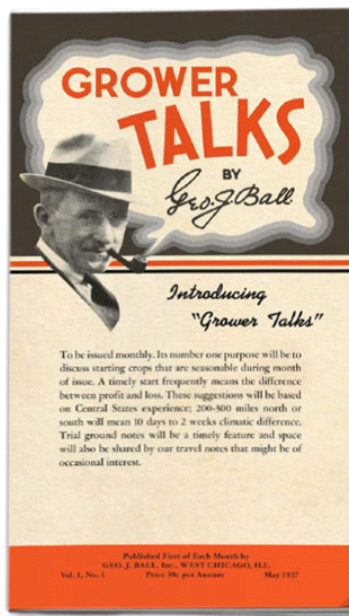
Do you ever notice that when you're a part of something that's old and steeped in history, you find yourself feeling very small?

Like the first time I was in Amsterdam. Many buildings had the years they were built etched on their walls, some dating as far back as the early 1600s. While I stood in front of the house whose attic was Anne Frank's hiding place from the Gestapo for two years, I couldn't help wonder at the fact that I was on a street where the Nazis marched and WWII raged. I've told my European friends that it's easy to take that history for granted ... after all, my country is only a couple hundred years old (officially)—a baby compared to others.

And if you've been lucky enough to visit the pyramids in Egypt or The Great Wall of China ... well, that must have made you feel as small as a mouse.

When I stop and think about how long my employer has been around, it amazes me and makes me feel small. Not many companies can say they've been in business for 115 years. Or feel like they could be around ANOTHER 115 years. (I think a lot of us at Ball feel that way.)

George J. Ball not only founded a still-thriving plant company, but he's also the reason I'm penning this column for you right now. Thirty years after he started his wholesale cut flower business, he created his own publication so he could share his growing and technical knowledge with his fellow seedsmen. The first issue was printed in May of 1937 and he called it "Grower Talks."



Now, 83 years later, this month we're celebrating the 1,000th issue of *GrowerTalks*. From a small pamphlet-sized guide to a full-fledged magazine complete with ads, *GrowerTalks* has been a staple of our industry, continuing George's vision of sharing information.

I like to think that we've done a pretty darn good job of that over the years—at least when I look back at old issues in the archives and see how we've evolved. And I feel a lot of pride in being able to play a part in continuing that success. I've been with Ball Publishing for 11 years, but that's a drop in the bucket when you've been around for over 80. And that makes me feel small.

But when I say "small" I don't mean insignificant; what I really mean is humble. I'm grateful and humbled that I've been able to contribute to *GrowerTalks* (and its VERY CLOSE sister *Green Profit*). This sportswriter-trained editor wouldn't have the career she does without the lucky accident of falling into the deep end of horticulture and becoming a big fish in a small pond. It's been really rewarding and fun.

And I like when I can brag to people outside of the industry that I'm a trade journalist for a magazine that's 83 years old. I find the surprise on their face personally satisfying.

It's amazing how a number like that makes even the biggest ego feel small. **GT**

Pictured: The first "Grower Talks," printed May of 1937.