

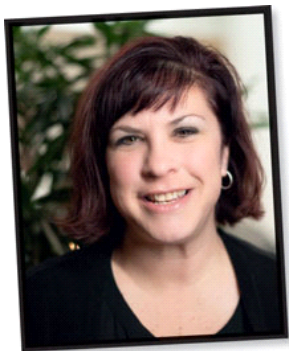
GROWERTALKS

Inside Look

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In It For the Long Haul

Jennifer Zurko



JENNIFER ZURKO

As I was staring at the blank Word doc on my screen, trying to come up with some brilliant prose for this column, I was thinking about the common thread in this issue: products with longevity.

Shrubs, trees and perennials are all plants that, once established, adorn our gardens for the long haul. And with this being the Nursery & Landscape Issue, we focus on these types of crops to go with our theme.

I got the idea of focusing on longevity from a friend while I was complaining at the lunch table in the Ball cafeteria about how stressed I was that I had to write this column and I only had two days to do it and it had to be done before I left for Cultivate and I have no idea what I'm going to write about and please feel sorry for me!

So she inspired me to think about how shrubs, trees and perennials are all ornamentals that offer long-term benefits.

It also got me thinking about how much *GrowerTalks* has evolved to cover more on these crops. When I first started, we hardly talked about perennials. Out of curiosity, I looked back at our coverage of my first California Spring Trials in 2010 and counted six perennials over two issues. They were mixed in with annuals, combo ideas and marketing concepts. In this issue, we've got over four pages of coverage from CAST ... just on perennials! Now, almost every major breeder and distributor offers perennials.

And trees and shrubs? Forget it. We barely scratched the surface back then. But since, we've created a bi-monthly newsletter, have dedicated a whole issue to it, our parent company Ball Horticultural Company has acquired a woodie ornamentals breeder (Star Roses & Plants), and we have quite a few other woodie shrub breeders as editorial and advertising partners.

I'd say that we've come around to these segments pretty well and that we're in it for the long haul.

If you're wondering what's new out there in woodie ornamental breeding, see our friend Dr. Matthew Chappell's annual foray into gathering the new and interesting cultivars in shrubs and trees.

If you do dabble in shrubs and trees (or have been in it for a while), contributor Wendy Komancheck spoke with a handful of breeders for some best practices advice on selling these types of crops to retailers.

With nursery stock, unfortunately, a lot of times you deal with nasty weeds. Broch Martindale debunks five myths on using herbicides on nursery container production and herbaceous perennials.

In his column this month, our esteemed perennial expert Paul Pilon answers the question, “Are First-Year Flowering Perennials Worth the Hype?” And for those in the landscape arena, Lowell Halvorson explores the different types of salvia in his Field Notes column.

Another thought that popped in my head when I thought about longevity is that July 7 was officially my 20th year at Ball. How does that saying go ...? “The days are long, but the years are short.” That certainly describes my time in the hort industry. When I started here, I never thought I would be here for 20 years. But now that I have, my plan is to spend another 20 covering the industry and hangin’ out with you guys at events. Hopefully, you’re not sick of me because it looks like I’m in this for the long haul. **GT**