

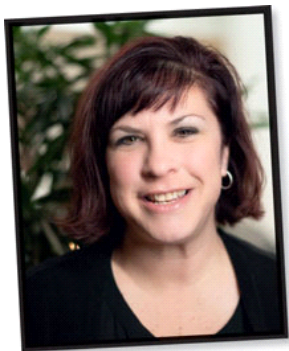
# GROWERTALKS

## Inside Look

9/1/2023

### “Mike” on the Strong Side

*Jennifer Zurko*



**JENNIFER ZURKO**

My sports journalism days are behind me, but I’m still very attuned to the world of sports, especially for the teams I root for (for better or worse).

Chris teases me when I try and insert a sports reference in my articles, and I don’t do it as much as I used to, but old habits die hard, so the occasional pun or lingo will make its way into my prose.

So imagine how excited I was when I learned that Matthew Tyson won our Young Grower Award this year. Matthew is a former football player, who played in high school and college, and those experiences served as a foundation as he was trying to figure out what he wanted to do with his life. I realized I’ve missed writing about sports, so it was fun to talk to Matthew about his background and insert some sports

lingo that’s been lying dormant inside my writer’s brain.

Matthew was a middle linebacker. For those who don’t know, the middle linebacker is considered the quarterback of the defense. They’re often the ones who relay the plays from the defensive coordinator to the rest of the defense.

If I rattled off the names of some NFL Hall of Fame middle linebackers, you’d recognize a lot of them (including Mike Singletary and Dick Butkus, the two I’m especially fond of, being a life-long Chicago Bears fan). The middle linebacker is the glue that holds the defense together.

And now that he’s a grower for one of the biggest operations in the country, Matthew has been playing that role again. Relaying the growing plans, making sure everyone is on the same page, keeping the team together. And as someone who was coached almost his whole life, he was able to retain a lot of what he learned from his coaches and mentors, and is now using it to coach his own team of growers. Read all about Matthew and what he’s been able to accomplish in such a short time.

Also in this issue, we have lots of highlights from our annual pilgrimage to Columbus, Ohio, for Cultivate’23. See what we saw and heard on the trade show floor.

We also have an extended Culture Notes section that includes technical growing information for some of the new varieties we saw at the California Spring Trials. We’ve packed quite a bit over many pages this month.

Oh, and if you were wondering what the heck my headline means, middle linebackers are often referred to as “Mike” and line up on the strong side to stop the run. I would say, through all of his ups and downs, Matthew Tyson has earned a spot on the side where leaders are meant to be. **GT**