

GROWERTALKS

Inside Look

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Always a Work in Progress

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I've been an avid reader all my life. When I finish one book, I immediately start another. I couldn't begin to figure out how many books I've read since I picked up my first "real" novel. It's in the hundreds, for sure.

Many of those books have faded into the recesses of my mind. They were fine, and I'm sure I got some enjoyment out of them, but they weren't memorable enough for me to recall them now. When you read 12 to 15 books a year, it's unrealistic to think you could remember every single one.

But one I've read recently had an interesting line that stuck with me: "The problem was that she'd thought that at a certain point she would be a finished product."

What the character in the book was trying to say is that she never thought of herself as a work in progress. After each major life event—becoming a wife, a mother, a famous photographer—she thought, "Okay, this is it." Never realizing until later—after her marriage ends, her son grows up and her career is in the toilet—that life continues to move the goalposts.

Nothing is ever "done," whether it's in your personal or professional life. When something happens, that's not the end of it. Do you ever notice that once you solve one problem, there's always another one ready to take its place? Or when you implement a new process, there's still always room for improvement?

I thought about this as we were working on this month's cover story. The adoption of LEDs in the greenhouse continues to be more commonplace as research evolves and growers learn how to capitalize on their benefits. They've allowed for some notable advancements when it comes to young plant propagation, shaving off weeks of production time. But it's also shined a light (sorry) on some gaps in the process. LEDs are 3.5 times more efficient, but the amount of supplemental light is causing the foliage of some crops to become purple or appear chlorotic.

Luckily, we've got researchers and interested parties who got together to figure out how to fix this new issue. Ball Horticultural Company, Signify and Michigan State University partnered to conduct studies on how to prevent the undesirable foliage color, and you can read the results.

Another aspect of greenhouse production that's been progressing is the world of growing from tissue culture. Although it's not a new technology, the breadth of crops offered in TC form is widening. If you've been dipping your toe (or jumping in with both feet) into growing from TC, you can learn the keys to success.

You may have been growing for years and years, but that doesn't mean that you can do without some reminders

once in a while. Long-time plant expert Lynn Griffith gives us some common propagation mistakes to help you keep improving your growing practices.

Recently, I've found myself at an interesting crossroads in my life. I just celebrated 20 years at Ball, which makes you look ahead to the next 20 years. My daughter is well into her first year of high school, which makes me think that she'll be leaving for college in just a few short years. I've taken more of a leadership role at Ball Publishing, which makes me think about how hard I've worked to get here and how much more I still have to do.

I guess what this means is that I'm constantly a work in progress. **GT**