

GROWERTALKS

Inside Look

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Don't Advance Into Autopilot

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Complacency is something that happens to all of us. Once you get used to doing the same thing all the time, after a while it just becomes second nature. Like riding a bike or brushing your teeth. I mean, you originally had to learn how to do those things. But now that you've done them for a long time, you don't even have to think about it anymore. Your brain and body go into autopilot.

Driving is kind of like that, too. Have you ever found yourself zoning out while driving to work? You remember pulling out of your driveway, but the next thing you know, you're in the parking lot. You don't seem to remember the time in between.

That's happened to me a couple of times, especially in the morning when I'd rather be in bed. For the life of me, I don't know how I can get to work on autopilot and not

get in an accident.

But now I have to pay more attention because my daughter starts driver's ed this month. I'm so used to just getting in the car and driving. All of the rules of the road are baked in after decades behind the wheel. Now that I have a kid that's going to be driving, I'm revisiting the same things I learned when I first started driving, especially the stuff they didn't teach you in class that you only learn when it actually happens.

I'm finding myself quizzing her: "Why can't I pass this car right now?" Or pointing things out: "See this idiot? Don't do that."

It's been a good chance to revisit my driving acumen and be better about some of the things I've been complacent about (although I ALWAYS use my turn signal).

Kinda like this month's issue, which is all about pest management—not that I think you guys are EVER complacent about the prevention and control of insects and diseases. But we thought it would be a good idea to provide some reminders, updates and re-visits on some insects and diseases that have caused (and continue to cause) so much havoc.

Last year, we all learned the name of a new thrips that was causing quite a few headaches, especially for growers in Florida. As with many pests, it found its way to other parts of the country. Researchers in the U.S. and in Canada have been conducting research on detection and control of *Thrips parvispinus*, including the subject of this month's cover story. Dr. Sarah Jandricic from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs and her team have been studying how to use "trap plants" as a tool to control *T. parvispinus* in tropicals and houseplants.

Remember impatiens downy mildew? Well, I guess we'd rather forget it, but that would be foolish! Especially since this disease has stuck around for over a decade and, as long as there are still susceptible varieties in the marketplace, it will continue to be. But there are some bright spots, like newer resistant series. Still, be complacent at your peril, particularly if you're in an at-risk area. Read my Q&A with some IDM experts.

We also have some refreshers on in-house disease testing and using sticky cards to detect insect outbreaks in your crop.

Controlling pests in the greenhouse may not be like driving on cerebral autopilot, but you always run the risk of going through the motions, doing the same thing you've always done, and eventually, it stops working. Just like driving a car, you don't want to suddenly snap out of your reverie and ask yourself, "How did I get here?" **GT**