

# GROWERTALKS

## GT in Brief

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### On the Move

*Jennifer Zurko*

#### AMERICAN FLORAL ENDOWMENT

The American Floral Endowment's (AFE) new website ([endowment.org](https://endowment.org)) reflects the organization's commitment to providing easy-to-use, accessible resources and programs supporting research, internships, scholarships and education for the floral industry. As AFE's initiatives have grown over time, adapting to the industry's ever-changing needs, the website housing all of the resources has been reshaped as well. Industry members can find resources and programs specific to their business segment, including tailored-specific news, research findings, opportunities and more. Key highlights of the website redesign include streamlined navigation, comprehensive resources, enhanced accessibility and a new, more-vibrant aesthetic.

AFE has also recently hired Michelle Van Norden as its new Manager of Development and Donor Engagement, where she'll be promoting AFE's many ways to give, such as named funds, legacy gifts, recurring donations and designated donations. Michelle is a seasoned fundraising professional, bringing over a decade of experience in crafting and executing impactful fundraising strategies. In addition, Michelle brings experience securing impactful government grant funding that could provide new opportunities for AFE's programs to expand.

#### BAILEY

Bailey recently announced new Territory Sales Representatives joining its sales team. Johanna George joins the team at Bailey with over 20 years of experience in the industry, many of which were spent working in retail, managing employees, growing perennials, and selling trees, shrubs and evergreens. Johanna will partner with customers in southeast Minnesota, eastern Iowa and Missouri.

Paul Hassing started at Bailey 25 years ago, working in many areas across the company, including container inventory, bareroot production, and most recently, in Planning and Administration with plant production and purchasing. Paul will partner with customers in the Twin Cities, northeast Minnesota and western Ontario upon the retirement of Ken Banaszewski.

#### BALL SEED

Joshua Cardin has joined the Ball Seed Sales Force, representing Central and Northwestern Wisconsin. Joshua has a bachelor's degree in plant and soil sciences from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. His prior experience includes a role as a Vegetable Breeder Technician at Pan American Seed in Elburn, Illinois, and as a Research Assistant in the Premier Seed Lab at Ball.

#### DRAMM

Jason Grimmett has joined the Commercial Team as Dramm's new Northeastern Technical Representative, after a long career in the greenhouse industry in both growing and sales roles. He'll be responsible for managing distributor relationships and supporting those sales in the Northeastern United States. He'll also work with commercial customers involving products focused on hand-watering tools, complete irrigation systems, chemical application, horizontal airflow systems, humidity management tools and complete water system integrations. Jason has worked for large ornamental and nursery growers, as well as in hydroponic production. In a sales capacity, he's worked with growers on different systems and equipment.

## **EASON HORTICULTURAL RESOURCES**

Jesse Stretch has joined the Eason Horticultural Resources (EHR) sales team, servicing accounts in both Virginia and Eastern North Carolina. Jesse has spent the last 15 years in the horticulture industry, most recently running the operations at Field Station Farms in Virginia, a wholesale nursery.

Phil Perry is now part of EHR's national sales team, joining forces with Steve Maddox in servicing customers across New York State, through Western and Central New York, eastward into the Adirondacks. Phil will also service customers throughout Northwestern Pennsylvania.

Wendy Moore has also joined the national sales team, bringing nearly 30 years of experience to EHR with service to customers in Eastern Ohio. With an Associate degree in Landscape Contracting & Construction from Ohio State Agriculture Technical Institute, Wendy also has extensive experience in sales, landscaping installation and maintenance, garden center management, and wholesale growing. She's been committed to the industry beyond her dedication to serving customers through years of active participation in the Ohio Landscape Association, where she held roles as committee member and educator. Additionally, she was a past board member for the Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association.

## **ENVU**

The Envu Ornamentals business has added Janna Beckerman, Ph.D., to its Green Solutions Team (GST) to provide technical support for greenhouse and nursery growers across the country. Prior to joining Envu, Janna served as a professor and extension specialist at Purdue University for 20 years and University of Minnesota for four years.

Janna received her Ph.D. at Texas A&M University, a master's degree from State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and bachelor's degree from Syracuse University. She's widely known for her presentations on botany and plant pathology, her nearly 80 refereed publications, and her role as Editor-in-Chief of the Midwest Fruit Pest Management Guide.

## **GRIFFIN**

Griffin announced the promotion of Tami Van Gaal to the position of Director of Sales. In her new role, Tami will lead the sales team with a strategic vision, leveraging her extensive experience and proven track record of success in driving revenue growth and fostering strong customer relationships. Tami joined Griffin 11 years ago and has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership skills, dedication and a deep understanding of our industry.

## **MYCORRHIZAL APPLICATIONS LLC**

Mycorrhizal Applications recently welcomed three new team members to support its product development, research, trade events and marketing.

As the Senior Product Development Manager, Dr. Anissa Poleatewich will lead research projects, coordinating efforts to develop new products and support existing product lines. She will also provide technical support to

customers and sales, while overseeing in-vitro and in-vivo mycorrhizae manufacturing. Before joining Mycorrhizal Applications, Anissa served as an Assistant Professor of Plant Pathology at the University of New Hampshire. Her work also included projects at the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre.

As a Product Development Specialist, Dr. Alison Reeve is responsible for conducting efficacy tests on newly produced arbuscular mycorrhizal isolates, assessing compatibility with other biostimulants and providing product support for current formulations. Alison's experience includes three years as the Assistant Vineyard Manager in the Umpqua Valley of Oregon, where she managed 700 acres of wine grapes.

Katie Gustafson joins as the new Marketing Communications Manager, where she'll be responsible for leading the development and execution of marketing and communications strategies, as well as advertising, public relations, branding and supporting company growth. Katie is well known in the green industry, having joined Mycorrhizal Applications from AmericanHort.

### **PANAMERICAN SEED**

Todd Cavins has joined the PanAmerican Seed Production Team as the Seed Production Technical Manager after many years of a successful career on the Ball Tech Team for Ball Seed. As PanAmerican continues to invest in new greenhouses, technologies and research, Todd will be working to ensure the company capitalizes on these new investments.

Before joining Ball, Todd worked as a Technical Specialist at Sun Gro Horticulture and before that he was Assistant Professor at Oklahoma State University. Todd has a Ph.D. in Horticulture/Soil Science and a M.S. in Horticulture from Oklahoma State University.

### **RIDDER**

Ridder North America announced the appointment of Rob Hanifin as the new Product Specialist for Climate Screens. Based on the U.S. East Coast, Rob will play a crucial role in supporting growers across North America and globally, enhancing their capabilities in greenhouse climate management.

Prior to joining Ridder, Rob was with Svensson for over six years as a Climate Consultant. He also amassed significant experience in agricultural research, conducting crop trials in Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) and field settings for various private, government and academic institutions.

### **STAR ROSES AND PLANTS**

Star Roses and Plants announced Jack O'Donnell has joined the company as Sales Development Manager. Jack brings over 25 years of experience in horticulture sales and business development, and in his new role, he'll work closely with each member of the sales team to provide advice and solutions, improving the customer experience.

Jack most recently worked as Southern Region Sales Manager at Dümmer Orange where he directed the Southern Region in retail program integration, new product development and corporate marketing strategies with growers, brokers and retail partners. Prior to that role, he worked as Business Development/Grower Group Manager at Plant Development Services, Inc., and as Business Development Specialist at Bailey Nurseries. **GT**