

# GROWERTALKS

## GT in Brief

6/30/2025

## Organizational Changes at Ball FloraPlant

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After a 36-year career at Ball, Dr. Mike Klopmeier, President of Ball FloraPlant, retired in June 2025. Mike began his journey at Ball as a corporate plant pathologist, quickly establishing himself as an educator and a leader who always prioritized the best interests of the business.

Throughout his career, Mike has cultivated lasting relationships with industry organizations such as AmericanHort and USDA, contributing to significant positive impacts on Ball and the broader industry. He's well known and respected not only within Ball, but in the industry, as well.

In 1990, Mike helped launch the vegetative annual division of Ball FloraPlant. His vision and leadership enabled Ball FloraPlant to achieve state-of-the-art production techniques and facilities in a very young field. Mike was key in developing the vegetative segment of horticulture for our industry.

In 2008, Mike spearheaded the launch of the Darwin Perennials business unit. His focus on perennials not only expanded Ball's product offerings, but also brought greater structure and professionalism to what was once considered "The Wild West" of the product category.

For the past seven years, Mike has led Ball FloraPlant, highlighted by his leadership in building YecaFlora, a state-of-the-art production farm in Mexico. Mike led the search for a location, oversaw the design and construction of the facility, and led the partnerships with local government and other officials.



Cat Blaney has accepted the role of President of Ball FloraPlant. Cat has been an integral part of the company for nearly 12 years, having led the vegetative operations team and transformed it by optimizing team performance and resources for both Darwin Perennials and Ball FloraPlant. Prior to her current leadership role, she worked as a regional supply manager for Ball Seed and as the operations manager for Darwin Colombia.

Eric Pitzen (right) has been promoted to Director of Operations for Ball FloraPlant and Darwin Perennials. Eric will continue to oversee production planning and pricing, and will add the operations and logistics team to his responsibility, including the backfill for Cat's previous role. With over seven years at Ball, Eric started as a territory manager, serving key accounts before relocating from North Carolina to Illinois, where he expanded his expertise in production planning and pricing strategies.



Leland Toering will be promoted to Sales Director of Ball FloraPlant, taking on additional reports of product management and international sales of Ball FloraPlant. This new role will allow him to bring a closer alignment between product management and sales, while broadening Ball FloraPlant's global perspective and continuing to build his team to drive growth. Leland started with Ball almost 16 years ago in Ball Seed as Regional Supply Manager. He worked as head of customer service for Ball Australia before returning to the United States and taking on the role of Darwin Perennials Sales Manager. In 2020, he was promoted to Sales Manager for Ball FloraPlant, where he's managed a team of territory managers and marketing professionals. **GT**