

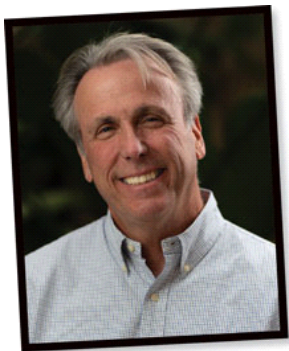
# GROWERTALKS

## Acres & Acres

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### Don't Put it Off

*Chris Beytes*



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November: A month of giving thanks, of transformation and letting go (trees shedding their leaves), of Indian summer and the beaver moon. And it's Banana Pudding Lover's Month!

But November is also a month you can squander away if you aren't careful. December, too.

We humans like the feeling of anticipation—it starts when we're little, awaiting our birthday or Christmas. I played Bronco league baseball in fifth and sixth grade, and I was not a great player (right field, usually 8th or 9th to bat) and I dreaded the games ... but I loved the anticipation of the team getting treated to Dairy Queen afterwards,

win or lose.

As adults, we anticipate the weekend and that sometimes manifests itself in getting a head start on the fun, knocking off work a couple hours early. In fact, Friday itself can become an unproductive day—which we justify by saying, "Well, none of our customers are working today" or "Might as well wait until Monday to start that new project."

And as for holidays, the Fourth of July is one that's easy to start celebrating on the third or second or the Friday before.

But nothing beats the Thanksgiving through New Year's time period for procrastination. Not that we don't work our tails off wrapping up the current year. There are poinsettias to deliver, spring orders to place, the next season's crops to plant ... but at the same time it's so easy to put off big projects, big plans, big initiatives until after the first of the year when we're fresh, staff is fresh, the calendar is turned to a fresh new page—a clean slate! If we start thinking that way in mid-November because of the pending Thanksgiving holiday, and then continue the procrastination due to Christmas parties and then Christmas and New Year's, we can waste six weeks of valuable time for planning and action. Six weeks is more than 10% of the year ... and that's not accounting for all the other days we wasted here or there!

I'm as guilty of this as any human and so, curious, I asked an expert (Copilot AI) this question: "Historically, why do we as a species like to put things off until Monday or the New Year or some other point in the future?"

The answer is multi-faceted and fascinating, including the battle between our limbic system and our prefrontal cortex (the former seeks comfort and avoids pain, while the latter plans and sets goals); emotional regulation (we delay tasks that trigger anxiety, self-doubt or boredom); and “temporal motivation theory” (how much we believe we can succeed with how we devalue future rewards). There are even evolutionary reasons, including risk aversion (acting impulsively without enough information could be dangerous) and energy conservation (if something isn’t urgent or immediately rewarding, we’re wired to delay it).

As for putting things off until later, “Mondays, new months and New Year’s Day are culturally framed as clean slates—psychologically powerful moments to reset and commit,” said Copilot, adding that these are “mental bookmarks that help us separate our past self from our future self—it’s easier to imagine a ‘new me’ starting fresh on a symbolic day.”

And this last one definitely hits close to home: “Saying ‘I’ll start Monday’ feels like a plan, but it’s often a socially acceptable way to delay without guilt.”

This little treatise isn’t about procrastinating until Monday. No, it’s about that six-week period between mid-November and the first of the year. That’s too much of the year to squander, especially when your competition may be seated around a conference table or off on a retreat, brainstorming new ideas for the new year. While you’re just barely getting started on January 5, gathering the whiteboard and markers and trying to find a date when all your staff is available (which they won’t be because there’s so much to catch up on after the holidays), your competition is already putting their plans into motion, making calls and placing orders and launching social media marketing and ...

So while it’s tempting to slow down at the end of the year, don’t—in fact, do the opposite: get a head start on 2026. You’ll feel invigorated going into the Christmas holiday, and when January arrives, you’ll be months ahead of your competition.

Oh, and if you need help breaking the “it’ll wait until Monday” habit, Copilot says it can help. **GT**