GROWERTALKS

Inside Look

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Doing the Doable

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Almost every month while making this magazine and managing all of our supplements and proofing our newsletters and supporting my Ball Publishing colleagues and collaborating with the leadership team and squeezing in trips to see you lovely growers, while also juggling my home and personal life, I think to myself, "This is impossible. How can I do all of this?"

I didn't realize it, but the way I've been managing all of it is I've been prioritizing what's "doable" and what isn't.

I've written about Melissa Kirsch, an editor for *The New York Times*, before on this page. Recently, she launched a weekly newsletter called "The Good List," where she writes about random things to provide inspiration, kindle some ideas and offer a general sense of goodness. In a world where there's a lot to fret about, we need to find things that make us fret less. The pursuit of joy, Melissa said, needs to happen with "discerning curiosity."

In her last newsletter, she wrote about *The Times'* profile on German filmmaker Werner Herzog. His films can be described as daring and ambitious, and if you're an enjoyer of foreign or independent films, you've probably seen at least one of them. To get an idea of how challenging his film sets are, one of his films was shot on rafts while floating on the Amazon River; another had his crew drag a 320-ton ship over a steep hill.

Herzog recently told a group of 50 film artists attending an 11-day workshop in the Azores: "People think I do the impossible things, but no. I do the doable."

So Melissa challenged her readers with: What does it mean to "do the doable"? When faced with an immense task or when the tasks continue to pile on top of each other, we often hesitate to tackle them because, well, they're hard. Or perhaps you have an idea on how to handle that big task, but you're afraid of failing. If we think like Werner Herzog, the question changes from, "Will it be hard or a hassle?" to "Can it work?"

We can get stuck in a hamster wheel of worry about all of the things we have to do, but if we step back a little and focus on how we can make them more "doable," we can ease that stress and get that rare glimpse of accomplishment.

Most likely, a lot of you have been growing poinsettias for ages. And following the same routine every year can be fine if everything goes smoothly. But what if it isn't as smooth as you think? What if you deal with whiteflies or heat delay or Botrytis every year and you're just in reaction mode? Do you memory-hole what happens because everything worked out in the end?

What about keeping up with trends? Sure, poinsettias are ubiquitous and will always be part of the holiday season, but do you just grow the same ol' red ones because that's what you've always done and no one's complained? How hard would it be to branch out to other colors or sizes?

Maybe you haven't taken the time to sit down and figure out better prevention regimes so you can be more proactive than reactive because you can't wrap your head around it. Or you're worried doing something new won't work and then you'll really be screwed. Or convincing your customers to buy more novelty varieties that you know would be well-received in your market. Instead of focusing on how difficult it would be, you could look into how doable it is.

To help you get there, we've got everything you could want and need in a poinsettia issue. Make your insect and disease-control measures more doable with articles on preventing early stage problems, whitefly control and Botrytis blight. Figure out how to combat nutrition issues and heat delay. And learn about new cultivars and trends. You might get a couple of ideas that are doable.

On the flipside of that, there will certainly be times when what you thought was doable, isn't. And that's okay. Changing the way you approach things also includes learning to accept that sometimes you just can't make it work.

Again, we can learn a lesson from Werner Herzog. After two days of trying to convince a cow to walk into a church for a specific scene, Mr. Herzog gave up. "It doesn't seem doable," he said.

Best to you! **GT**