

# GROWERTALKS

## Inside Look

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### Adjusting the Plot Twist

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My regular scroll through Substack brought me to an essay about welcoming change and embracing the unknown. Yes, I know I've written about those two topics a bazillion times. But I like the unique way the author looks at both of these things: As a kind of plot twist that drives your story forward.

She wrote: "You're not always standing at a crossroads, flipping a coin; you're already down the road you chose, looking back at the version of you who made the call, still a little amazed they did it."

She quoted Leonard Cohen ("How can I begin anything new with all of yesterday in me?") to argue that, in her mind, our one life on this earth is made up of many "past lives." In this instance, she's reflecting on the times she's reinvented herself by trying something new. Her examples include the summer where she got into lap swimming at 6:00 a.m. The spontaneous move to the city she'd never been to (Philadelphia). The fabulous year of bleached blonde hair. (Followed by the year of the fried-out bob.)

All of them myriad ways that she moved along the plot twists of her life—either with a small coax or a huge shove, depending on the decision.

Some of these plot twists involve a good amount of bravery, but there are some opportunities that present themselves where you think, "Why don't I just do that?" Or even, "Why didn't I do this sooner?"

Like, investing in that new transplanter, re-arranging your sticking line to be more efficient, turning that catch-all storage spot into a shipping area, growing a new crop you've never grown before—how would the story of your business change for the better if you adjusted the plot twist by trying something new?

It just so happens that we've got lots of new stuff for you to try in this month's issue. Our California Spring Trials coverage continues with all of the new perennials we saw in March and there were plenty! In fact, we've noticed that this category continues to get a lot of attention.

One of the reasons we're seeing more of a focus on perennials is because consumers are buying more of them. How do we know? The 2024 Census of Horticultural Specialties showed that perennial plant sales have increased 47.4% since the 2019 Census, which equates to an average of about 9.48% per year during that period. Friend of

the magazine and longtime perennials expert Paul Pilon gives his reasons why he thinks we're seeing this increase.

For more new stuff—this time on the woodies side—read Dr. Jeb Fields' rundown of the newest shrubs. And he noticed something while he was compiling them: a lot of them are natives, too.

We also have new research on using PGRs in nursery container production, evaluations of new varieties from "citizen scientists" and getting new perspectives from the different generations represented in your staff.

We're presented with plenty of chances when we can pivot and steer our story in a different direction—we just have to pay attention and be willing to make the leap. Even the smallest of changes can make a big difference in providing a new plot twist you weren't expecting. And after doing it a couple of times, you may surprise yourself at how easy it is.

At the end of the essay, the author ends with: "Sometimes change begins with just adjusting the frequency. Seeing how the tools you've been relying on aren't the only ones available; how commitment is different from passive continuation. You are, almost certainly, more adaptable than you think." **GT**