COVID-19 resources, online sales and what’re your top houseplants?



News and Inspiration from the world of foliage and tropical plants

GROWERTALKS MAGAZINE greenPROFIT MAGAZINE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2020

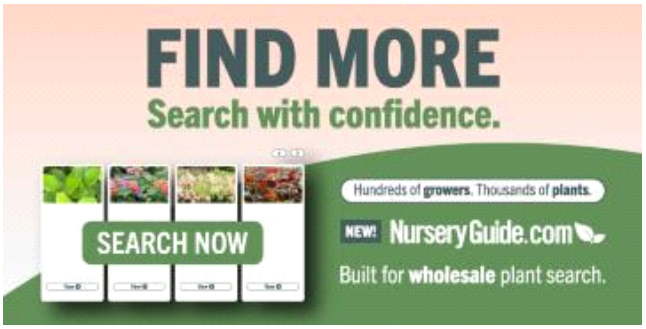
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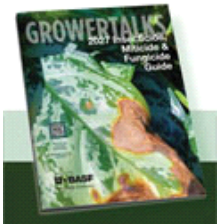
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COMING UP THIS WEEK:
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Knock Knock
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COVID-19 Resources

Well, a lot has happened since my last *Tropical Topics*. I had prepped the March 3 edition of this newsletter way back during the last week in February knowing I'd be out on a week's vacation to Belize. Beautiful country, by the way, and I'll discuss it briefly later on. But there is a way more pressing issue to discuss at the moment: COVID-19 and its ongoing and unpredictable impact on … well, everything.

As you know, this situation created by the spreading pandemic is changing daily. I want to give you some links to resources that you should keep front and center so you and your teams can get the latest news ASAP.

BREAKING! There's an AmericanHort webinar taking place TODAY at 1 p.m. EDT that will discuss how coronavirus will impact taxes and legislation, specifically the Families First Coronavirus Response Act passed just last night. Register for it HERE. But if you miss it, I'm pretty sure you will be able to view it as an archived webinar. Webinar open to non-members, too!

CDC Comprehensive website: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's comprehensive website gives you all the factual information as well as a site dedicated to businesses and employers.

FNGLA's Coronavirus/COVID-19 Resources: This site has two dozen or more links to everything from the CDC site and CDC's list of approved antimicrobial cleaning agents to OSHA workplace guidelines and Florida bridge loan programs.



Coronavirus Resource Center: AmericanHort's resource site has everything from news on legislation and foreign labor to communication tips and infographics on the benefits of plants. It's a good place to keep up with news that impacts your horticultural business. Updated often!

The Society of American Florists: While it may be a floral organization, they offer education and webinars that translate easily from one hort specialty to another. From communications to HR to financial stuff, they'll have it all. They're adding recorded webinars as well as offering live ones, too. And the best thing is they are opening them up for everyone—you don't have to be a member. Check it out at https://safnow.org/events-education/webinars/.

COVID-19 Small Business Resources: Found by our Digital Editor Bill Calkins and from America's Small Business Development Center. Everything you need from the CDC, SBA, OSHA and Facebook for Business.

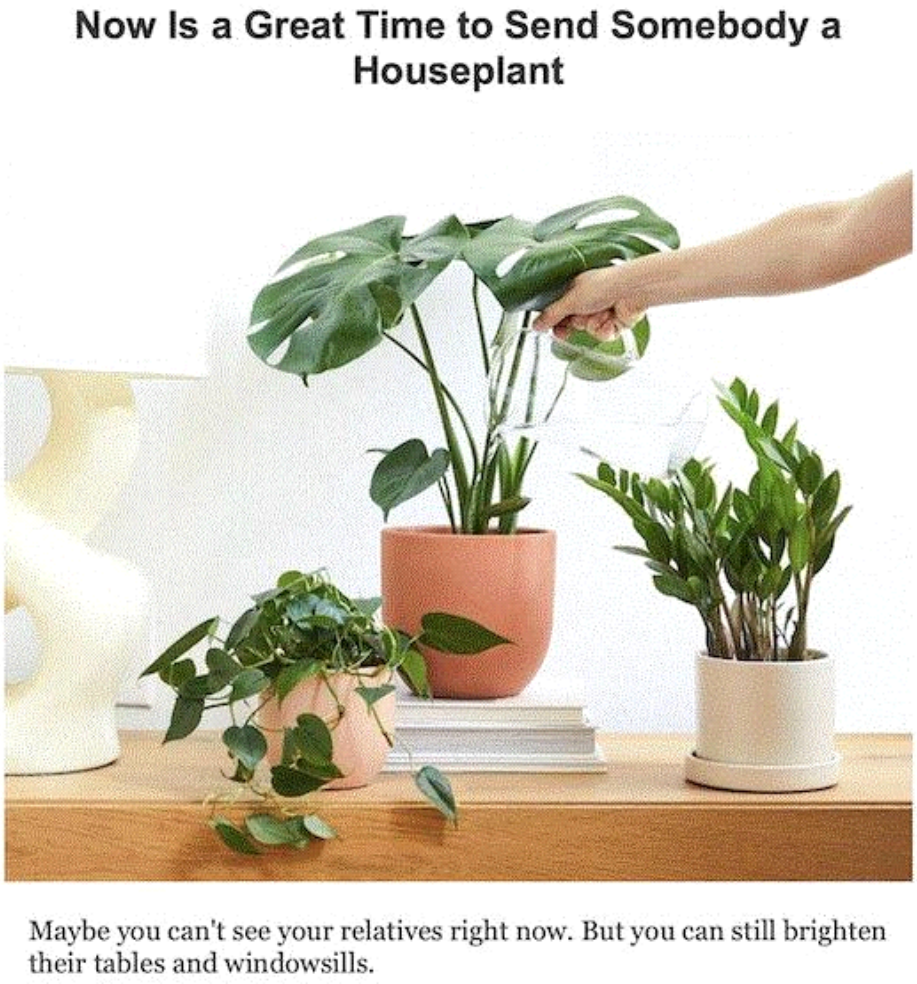
Lastly, Ball Publishing is working on a resource page which will be ready within a day or two. Stay tuned—I may have the info about that in my *buZZ!* newsletter this Friday.



Send Plants If You Can't Send Yourself

I received a curious email on March 21 from a food, cooking and kitchen supplies e-newsletter I subscribe to, *Epicurious*. Right there in the subject line it said, "The best houseplants to order online." What's a cooking newsletter got to do with houseplants?

Well, good question.



Love that their caption implies you can send loving thoughts with plants.

Turns out the author was slated to do a story on bringing a no-hassle flower bouquet hostess gift to a dinner party. And since no one is doing that sort of thing for the foreseeable future, she set her sights on houseplants. They'll last for the duration, too, if we're all stuck inside for as long as it looks.

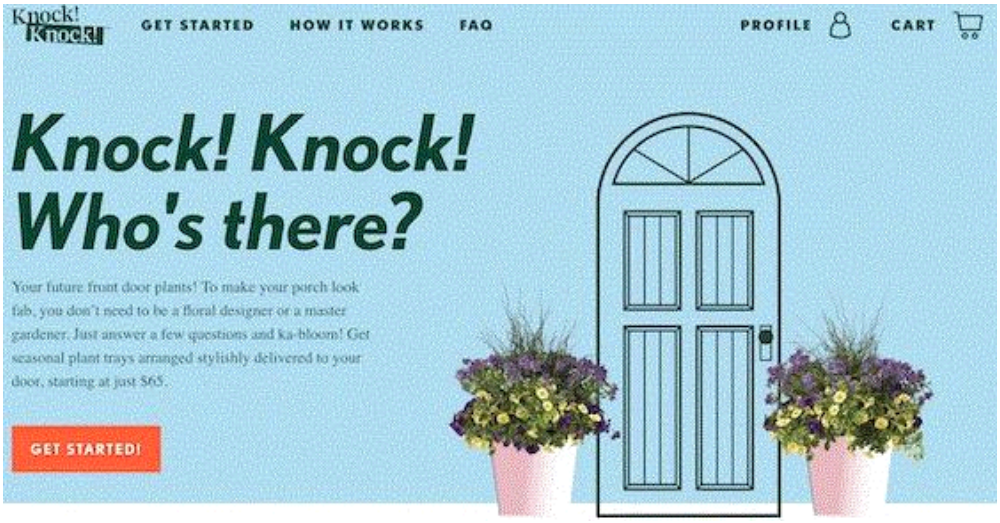
The author proceeds to share her favorite online houseplant sources—The Sill, Bloomscape and Urban Stems (although that last one is mostly flower bouquets)—with a few suggested (and easy-to-care-for) items from each source. Bossman Beytes harrumphed and said something like "they mention the only online plant companies that anybody mentions …" Now, sure. That's true. But does the author know of others? Maybe when business is back to normal and people are back in their offices, those of us with online stores or those we supply can send a few boxes of samples to the *Epicurious* offices.

Here's the LINK to the article. I'm curious—would you have suggested those houseplants as easy-to-care-for items? Drop me a note about that at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



Knock Knock

Speaking of online plant sales, a month or two ago my social feeds were flooded with an ad for an online flower container company called Knock Knock. The premise is you answer a few questions about where your planting containers will be situated and they'll prep and send you pre-planted trays which you place into your own soil-filled 14-16 in. containers.



Set aside the fact that this service is for pre-planted flower containers for a moment. Here's the subsequent "good news" I found. A gardening Facebook group I belong to (regular consumer types) with a majority of folks being women 45 and younger basically said "No way, Jose" to the concept. They'd prefer to pick their own plants, thank you very much. The original poster included a screen shot of an ad she'd received in her feed that said "Skip the garden store." Her response? "Skip the garden store? They obviously have mistargeted this ad. Why would anyone ever want to skip the garden store?"

My comment of something like "I'm in the horticulture business and I'm glad to hear you say that!" brought this response:

"[The garden store] is my favorite place to over-shop and the most effective burst of dopamine for my dollar. Take my money!" Others weighed in similarly.

What's my point? Well, we need both: At times like these we need robust online sales offerings. And when in-store shopping picks up again, we need our products in stores to provide that hit of dopamine and to take that woman's money. Our gears may be turning now about how we can ramp up online sales. But there will be that need for people to immerse themselves in the greener things life offers.



Got a Question For Ya

Actually it's my *GrowerTalks* colleague Jen Zurko who has a question for you tropicals and houseplant growers out there. She's working on an article for the May issue of *GrowerTalks* and she's wondering what your top "must-grow" houseplant varieties are and why.

Send your top plants to Jen at jzurko@ballpublishing.com. She's eagerly awaiting your responses!

You know, I'll talk about Belize next time around. Meanhile, suggestions, comments, questions

or news to share? Just drop me a line at ewells@ballpublishing.com.



Ellen Wells
Editor-at-Large
Green Profit

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