

Train pollinators with caffeine, plus learn from a passive solar greenhouse



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Caffeine-Trained Pollinators
Passive Solar Greenhouse
IPM Conference
SaniDate for Coronavirus
Consumer Reports Rates
Veggies
The Fires, Round 2

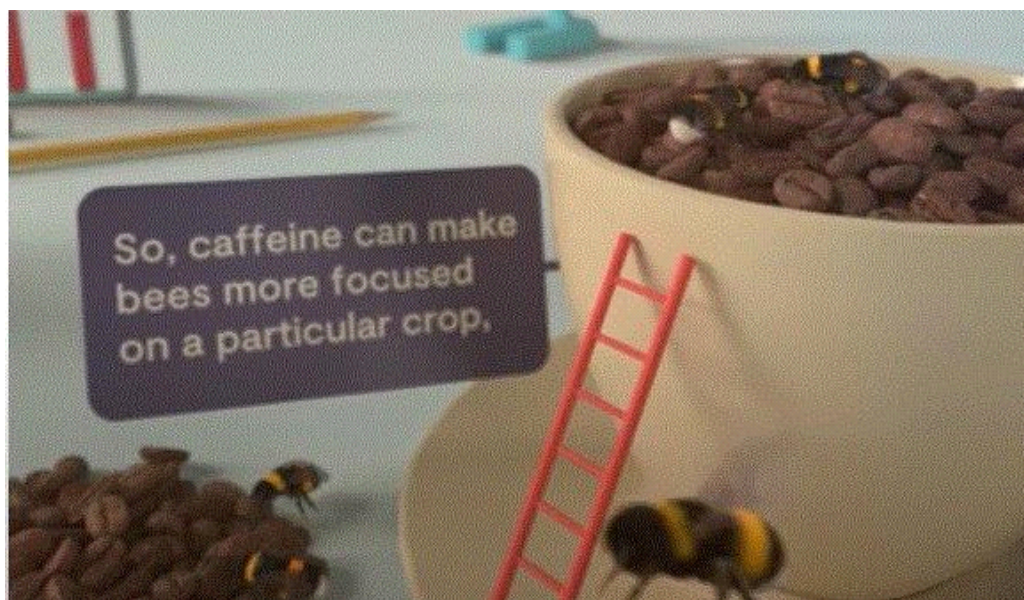
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Use Caffeine to Train Your Pollinators

Here's some super neat research out of the U.K. that's helping strawberry growers pollinate their crops more effectively. The background is that some plants have low levels of caffeine in their nectar, which entices bees to their flowers. Prior research has shown that caffeine can improve a bee's memory. But the new research shows that by giving commercial bees caffeinated nectar next to the scent of strawberry flowers, you can make them more focused on strawberries and improve the pollination.



Researchers at the Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, worked with BioBest and Berry

Gardens on this study.

Full research summary is available [HERE](#). And you can watch a 40-second animated video on the findings [HERE](#).



Passive Solar Greenhouse Webinar

Passive solar greenhouses might seem like a fantasy to the commercial grower, but up in Alberta, Canada, there's a small grower making it work. Dong Jianyi is growing tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, spinach, and other crops under cover, year round, powered entirely by the sun. No supplemental heat. Freshpal Farm's 328-ft. long greenhouse features an insulated energy curtain and a thick clay wall on the north side of the greenhouse that holds and then releases the heat.



Curious? Lucky for you, this grower has been partnering with Rural Routes to Climate Solutions. He'll present a free webinar on passive solar greenhouse design on September 24 at 2:00 p.m. MT. Register [HERE](#).

You can also hear Dong talk about his greenhouse in [this podcast](#).



IPM & PGR Conference

AmericanHort is putting together the DIG Conference: Disease, Insects, and Growth Regulators, online November 3-5, 2020. They'll have multiple tracks and will cover everything from biocontrols to IPM strategies and more. They're offering both live and on-demand sessions. And in an attempt to keep it fun, they even have a Jeopardy!-inspired social event on the schedule.

Learn more at AmericanHort.org/DIG.



SaniDate Kills Coronavirus

If you're looking for a disinfectant, there's good news. BioSafe Systems' [SaniDate All Purpose Disinfectant](#) is now labeled to kill human coronavirus. SaniDate made its way onto [List N](#), meeting the EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Of course, it still works against *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Salmonella enterica* and can be used against both plant and human health pathogens. It's OMRI-listed, which means it can be used in organic production, and because no harmful residue will be left behind, you don't need to rinse, either.

Consumer Reports' Produce Ratings

So, remember how every year the Environmental Working Group (EWG) releases its annual "[Dirty Dozen](#)" and "Clean 15" lists for produce? Well, *Consumer Reports* has taken the same EPA data on pesticide residues that EWG uses, and they've come up with their own pesticide ratings for 30-plus fruits and vegetables.

Now, to give you a little background, there's always been a lot of "Yeah, BUTs" on the EWG lists. That's because they consider any level of residue a negative, while the EPA contends that 99% of produce samples tested are below the allowed limits of residue.

Consumer Reports got a little fancier on their version and did some of their own math. They say they factored in the level and number of pesticides detected, as well as frequency. And they did their own calculations on toxicity, using "the EPA's chronic reference dose for each pesticide (the amount it considers not likely to cause harm over a lifetime), then applied the FQPA safety factor to known neurological toxins or suspected endocrine disruptors—even when the EPA doesn't." (View their full methodology [HERE](#).)



The result is that 31 out of 49 nonorganic fruits and vegetables earned ratings of good or higher.

Now, I don't know how much consumers will pay attention to these ratings, or if it will affect their purchasing habits. (I hate to say it, but the simple infographic and list probably get a lot more play time than an in-depth article.) But if you're curious, check out the full [Consumer Reports article](#).

Outpost Report: The Fires, Round 2

In the last issue of *GreenTalks*, I talked about [fire-wise landscapes](#) and how here at my home in Montana, living in an old burn, we think about fire and defensible space on a regular basis.

I feel as though I jinxed it. Things have taken a turn for the worse since then. I'm fine; our place is fine. But a fire in nearby Bozeman steamrolled through the hillsides and valleys last weekend, burning down 28 homes, including that of a colleague, and several ranchers and growers lost major infrastructure, as well. Since then, family and friends in three other states have been evacuated due to large fires.

The irony is that Monday night was 25F at my house and it snowed all day Tuesday. It wasn't enough to put local fires out, but it slowed them down, and it was cold enough to spur me to harvest most of the garden while lamenting the short growing season. As it warms back up and dries out, we're all keeping our fingers crossed. (And I'm juggling boxes upon boxes of green tomatoes.)



I'll say this: while the media and general public have short memories, the trauma and memory of this fire season will leave a lasting impression on a large swath of the western U.S. Again, I'll reiterate: come next spring, you owe it to your retail customers to talk about fire-wise landscaping. Defensible space is important. Just yesterday, I saw a stark photo of a house in Bozeman, surrounded by a green lawn, and rimmed by scorched trees on the perimeter of the lawn, the house untouched. That, my friends, is fire-wise landscaping.

Until next time,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer".

Jennifer Duffield White

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