

Welcome to Tech on Demand!



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Ball Seed® Technical Services Team

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Cultural and Technical Information for Greenhouse Professionals



FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2021

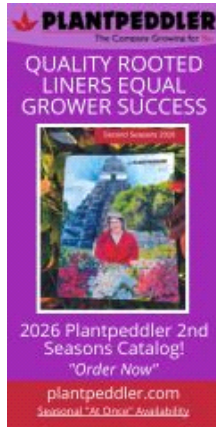
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TECH ON DEMAND

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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- Your NEWSletter!
- Risky Videos
- PourThru Basics
- Nick's Tip
- Chase on Fusarium
- Group Chat
- Finish Line



Your NEWSletter

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Tech On Demand newsletter! I'm really excited to kick off what is intended to be a timely and helpful resource geared for greenhouse professionals who focus on the day-to-day production of plants. Every week is different in your greenhouse, some more fun than others, and with the diversity of activities comes tremendous opportunity for education. The plan here is to share technical and cultural information on a weekly basis covering immediate needs and alerts, ongoing research, common production challenges and solid resources for your toolbox.

A little bit about me, your humble editor of this newsletter. I'll start by admitting that I have no greenhouse production experience. Hopefully, you're still reading ... What I *do* have is more than two decades of experience in our industry, and a holistic appreciation and understanding of what you do to bring plants to market. No need to go through my résumé, but let's just say I live and breathe horticulture.

My current day job puts me squarely in the greenhouse technical space, working with the technical services team at Ball and moderating a global peer-to-peer group (more on that later). This not only keeps me in the loop on current research and timely greenhouse solutions, but also provides me with a well-educated sounding board and group of advisors to help vet newsletter content. I'll work hard to deliver fresh and timely content to you in each edition of the Tech On Demand e-newsletter. Let's get started.



Minimizing Risk: A Video Series

Risk Management: Understanding and Minimizing Crop Failure

- Use only tested seed & URC
- Clean production facility
- Optimum cultural protocols
- "Right chemical-right time"
- Monitor and control pests

The diagram shows a central green box labeled "Plant" at the top. Below it are two boxes: a red box labeled "Pathogen" on the left and a blue box labeled "Environment Culture" on the right. Arrows point from "Plant" to both "Pathogen" and "Environment Culture". A double-headed arrow connects "Pathogen" and "Environment Culture".

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At-risk crops are the ones you know and love. Well, maybe "love" is a bit strong, but no one can argue they're widely produced and in great demand. From spring crops like geraniums and canna to vegetables and herbs, these are popular crops with inherent risks. Risky crops extend to seasonal big sellers like garden mums and ornamental peppers, too.

Many of you grow them and encounter some of the same challenges year after year, and have battled pest and disease issues on them for years. Well, the technical services team at Ball answers questions on many of the same crops year after year and recently took some time to develop a multi-media package of resources to help you minimize headaches and hopefully avoid common problems with major crops so you can send the highest quality possible out the door to your customers.

The full bundle of information is available at www.ballseed.com/QuickCulture/ProductionGuides—scroll down the page to the At-Risk Crops information. But since you're no doubt quite busy (it's Week 10 after all ...) maybe just start with [this overview video](#) and move through the rest of the information as time permits.



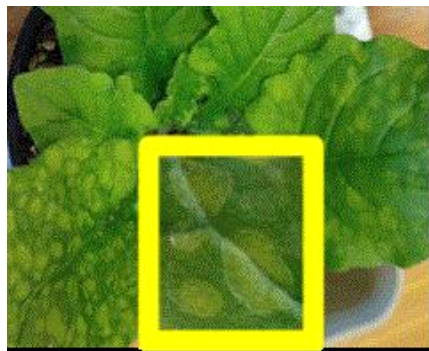
Executing the PourThru Method



Have you ever wondered how to successfully execute the PourThru Method to determine whether or not your crop nutrition is on point? The experts at e-GRO recently released an alert for growers detailing the steps required to effectively monitor nutrition in large container production, such as mixed combos, perennials, tropicals and nursery crops. Dr. W. Garrett Owen, greenhouse extension and research expert at the University of Kentucky, shares an in-depth, but understandable, step-by-step guide complete with photos to illustrate the entire process. [Save this PDF](#) and share it with your team to keep everyone on the same page.



Nick's Tech Tip of the Week



Each week, I'll work with my partner in crime Nick Flax, one of the newest technical services experts at Ball, to share a concern that's come up during one of his numerous calls with growers across North America. You may know Nick from his time with Penn State Extension—he's a greenhouse jack-of-all-trades with degrees from Iowa State and greenhouse experience from prop to finish. And he's an all-around great guy. We're planning some more fun stuff when he can get out and travel more (think videos ...). This week, someone raised a concern about some odd spotting on foliage. Here's his answer:

So why all the spots on just this one variety? It's not uncommon to find specific varieties that are sensitive to chemicals or other sprays that sit on the leaf surface. So ... are the spots phytotoxicity or disease? It's definitely not a nutritional issue—note the blown-up area of the spots. There's a distinct border around the spot that suggests a phytotoxicity issue and not a disease problem.

Nick's recommendation: Review the chemicals applied when these leaves were first unfolding in the last 10 to 14 days.

Chase on Fusarium: What can you do?

Fusarium is a challenge just about every grower will have to deal with during the course of producing

many crops. Unfortunately, it's also one of the most difficult to control. In the February issue of *GrowerTalks*, Ann Chase covers this disease with great detail starting with the critical nature of sanitation and considerations related to fertility and pH before tackling control and solutions. Ann's deep dive into fungicides is of particular importance, sharing chemistries and biologicals most effective in trials.

Bottom line: start with clean inputs, take special care in propagation, stay on top of sanitation, minimize plant stress and rotate fungicides between FRAC groups. For the full story, [click this link to the digital article](#).

Community Engagement

Did you know there's a global group of more than 2500 greenhouse professionals online asking questions, answering questions and discussing daily issues related to plant production? I mentioned at the beginning of this newsletter that I moderate a group and this is it.

[The Greenhouse Tech Team on Facebook](#) is a closed group (meaning you need to answer some questions to prove you're a grower before you're approved as a member) that's intended to provide a forum for working through challenges. You'll find tips, tricks, resources, and most importantly, likeminded growers and technical experts happy to share experiences and solutions. Check it out! I approve new members, so now you have an "in."

Finish Line

I'm a writer and would love to just go on and on because I'm so psyched to start this newsletter, but instead, let me close for now and save some content for next week. Thank you so much for opening up this first edition and I look forward to many, many more!

I hope this edition of *Tech On Demand* helped your production team and offered information to help you grow your best crops ever. My email is bcalkins@ballhort.com if you have any comments, suggestions or challenges we can help solve.



Bill Calkins
Editor - Tech On Demand

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