

Metrolina Makes National TV Debut, Vaccine Facts and Spring's Arrival



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THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021

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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- Spring is Nearly Here
- Them Darn Rodents
- Walmart Features Metrolina
- The Great Grow Along
- COVID-19 Vaccine Facts
- RIP Ramsey Yoder

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Spring is Nearly Here

Our snow is nearly gone and the weather is improving with each passing day. I love spring and all the flowers it brings. Here are several of my favorite early spring flowering perennials. This is just a sampling of the spring color I'm looking forward to in the weeks ahead:



Aquilegia Earlybird Purple Blue

Aubretia Glacier Red



Dicentra Valentine

Doronicum Little Leo



Iberis Sunsurfer Forte

Phlox subulata Pink Sparkles



Them Darn Rodents

It seems damage to perennials from rodents occurs most frequently as we come out of winter rather than during the middle of it. Perhaps this is only what it seems as we're likely spending more time observing the crops now than we did only a few weeks ago. Unfortunately, their presence often goes undetected until significant damage has already been done, particularly when crops are covered with protective blankets. Regardless, it's amazing the amount of damage field mice, meadow voles and other rodents can cause.



Field Mouse



Meadow Vole

Rodents often go nearly undetected as they scurry between the containers, burrow into the pots and feed on the crowns, rhizomes and stems of dormant perennial crops. The injury they cause can be very significant and often leads to unsaleable plants. In fact, many growers attribute nearly one third of all of their overwintering losses to injury caused by rodent feeding.

Rest assured, there are some steps you can take to control rodents and minimize crop damage.

Repellants

Chemical repellants can be applied over crops and the surrounding areas. They work by giving off offensive odors and/or have repulsive flavors, both of which discourages feeding on the perennials. Products containing capsaicin or thiram are often used as repellants. Repellants generally have little residual activity and would need to be reapplied with some frequency. This can be challenging in scenarios where protective blankets are also being used, but can be effective once the coverings are removed.

Baits

The most common strategy to reduce rodent feeding entails using anti-coagulant baits containing the active ingredients chlorophacinone or diphacinone. Anti-coagulants are slow acting, requires

multiple feedings and takes five to 15 days for them to be effective. Many growers will observe what is referred to as "bait shyness" where the rodents avoid the baits or only consume non-lethal doses of it.

There are more toxic single dose baits available that can kill mice and voles with a single feeding. Effective single-dose baits include products containing brodifacoum, bromadiolone, bromethalin or zinc phosphide. With either type of bait, it's beneficial to begin baiting about a month before the beginning of the overwintering period.

Use great caution when using commercial baits, as they're toxic to all forms of animal life. Pets such as dogs can become extremely sick and even die when they consume rodent baits. I suggest placing all baits in containers rather than placing them in heaps, piles or broadcasting them around the production site.



Many growers use homemade containers, such as 1.5-inch diameter PVC pipe inserted inside another pot or utilizing commercial bait stations to distribute these lethal products around the nursery. Baits should be kept dry as moisture reduces their effectiveness.

Follow each product's recommendations as far as how much bait to place in the overwintering facilities. For many products, it's recommended to place baits 12 ft. apart in all directions when targeting voles. It's beneficial to check the baits on occasion throughout the winter months to determine if additional baits are needed to supply sufficient control through the rest of the season.



Walmart Features Metrolina



Last week when I was watching “The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon” I was pleasantly surprised to see a Walmart commercial featuring Metrolina Greenhouses. The commercial tells the story of how buying plants from Walmart allows them to purchase more plants from businesses like Metrolina, which allows them to hire people to grow more plants. Walmart’s take-home message, “We’re supporting over 750,000 U.S. jobs by working with U.S. businesses like Metrolina Greenhouses.”

It was nice to see this commercial supporting our industry—we could really use more like it.

Click [HERE](#) or the image above to watch the 30-second commercial.



The Great Grow Along

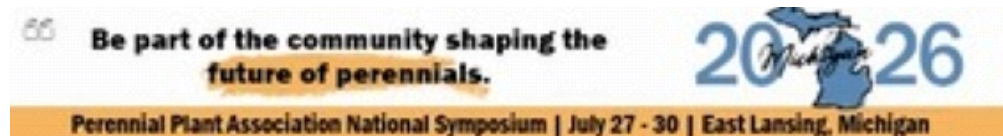
Along the lines of promoting our industry, a number of green industry companies are sponsoring the “The Great Grow Along,” a virtual gardening festival, March 19-21, 2021. The event targets gardeners and aims to provide information to help retain the 16 million plus new gardeners the industry gained in 2020.



There are over 40 sessions featuring passionate authors, speakers, influencers and plant professionals. There will be workshops, expert Q&A sessions and live interviews where attendees can learn about edible gardening, pollinators, plants, DIY landscaping, urban gardening, houseplants and much, much more. If you own a garden center, consider passing this along to your customers.

Click [HERE](#) to learn more about this virtual gardening festival.

I encourage you to find ways to promote plants and gardening in the weeks and months ahead. Let's keep the momentum going.



COVID-19 Vaccine Facts

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. is currently administering over 2.1 million shots a day. As I write this, more than 92 million doses have been administered, reaching 18.1% of the total U.S. population.



There are still many questions surrounding COVID-19—how dangerous it is and about the vaccines

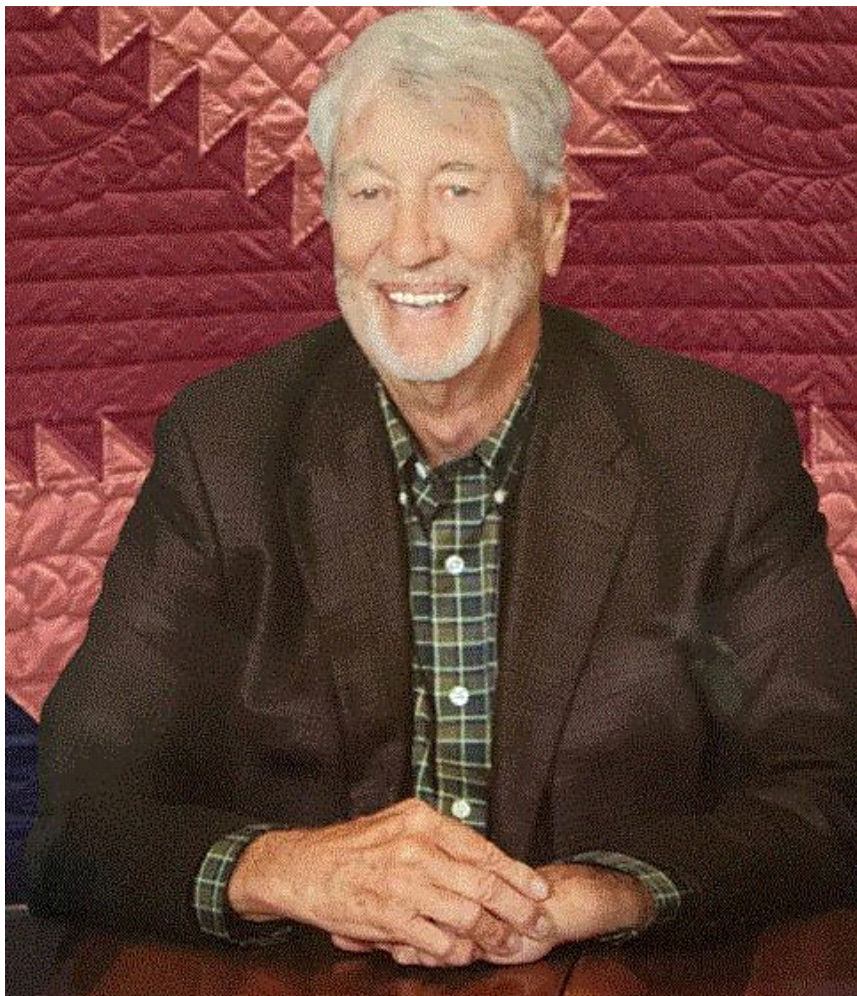
being administered to protect us from this deadly virus. The National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) and the Latino Landscape Network developed a fact sheet to help educate the members of the landscape industry. However, these sheets would be great to share with members and employees throughout the green industry. Consider posting them by your timeclock or central notification board.

The vaccine information is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Special thanks to NALP for making these available.

RIP Ramsey Yoder

Last week on March 2, our industry lost an icon: G. Ramsey Yoder. He was the chairman and leader of Aris Horticulture (formerly Yoder Brothers until the company sold its Yoder mum business and changed names in 2008).

Ramsey served as president of the family business starting in 1977, then CEO and Chairman of the Board in 1989. He retired as CEO in 1992, but remained Chairman. Throughout Ramsey's career he fostered a close-knit relationship with employees, customers and top industry leaders. He passed away from complications related to pneumonia at the age of 87.



Ramsey lived on a farm in Tinmouth, Vermont. He loved to travel and was an avid fly-fisherman. Pre-deceased by his first wife, Patty, he's survived by two sons, Brad and Shane, and wife Denise (Tess). He'll be greatly missed by all the people he touched over the years. I send my condolences

to his family, friends and coworkers.

Thank you, Ramsey, for your contributions to this great industry. Rest in peace.

Thanks for reading this edition of *Perennial Pulse*. My email is ppilon@ballpublishing.com if you have any comments or suggestions.

Take care,

Paul Pilon

Editor-at-Large - *Perennial Pulse*

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