

A New Cut Flower Promotion Order? Plus Lots on ErfGoed, ALPH



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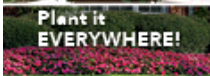
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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- Another try at flower promotion
- Two hot webinar topics
- A whole lot about ErfGoed
- Food packaging for plants?
- AIPH to host Sustainability Conf.
- Plus a sustainability survey
- IGOTY's—still time to enter!
- Plus, the jury
- A webinar on Mexico's industry



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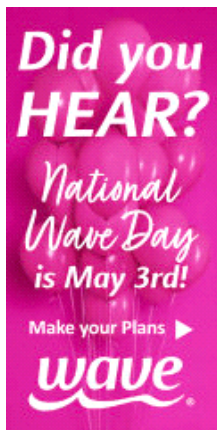
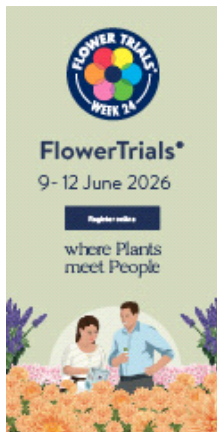
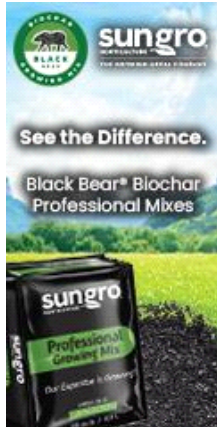
A new cut flower promotion order?

If you're in the cut flower business, you'll be interested to know that a "drafting committee" of 12—six domestic growers and six importers—has spent months attending Zoom meetings to draft a proposal for a new floral marketing and promotion order they're calling "Floral Board." You can learn more in webinars on August 24 and 25 in which the key elements of the draft proposal will be presented (more on that below).

The effort is actually several years old, and was started via discussions between Association of Floral Importers of Florida (AFIF) and the California Cut Flower Commission (CCFC). But CCFC went away and the idea slid to the back burner, until a group of domestic and international floral industry associations that get together quarterly for a "floral summit" resurrected the idea and assembled the aforementioned drafting committee, which came up with elements of the draft order. The webinars are to present the elements of the draft order to see if it's something the industry will support. If there are issues with it, they will then talk through any challenges to keep the idea moving forward.

I spoke with Christine Boldt, Executive Vice President of AFIF and the administrator for the drafting committee, to learn more.

"The pandemic provided a real boost and benefit for the flower industry... we saw how having consumers buy more flowers for everyday purposes or self-consumption created an increase in demand. And we want to keep that momentum going ... We want consumers to buy flowers



more often, not just during holidays. That's what we're hoping this general and generic marketing order will provide—more consumers buying more flowers, and therefore the entire industry benefiting." She added, "It's not targeted toward any particular country, flower, outlet, anything—we just want general and generic marketing and promotion."

A couple of the webinars took place before I got word of them, but you domestic growers have one more chance to tune in to learn more and ask questions. And there are two more webinars for importers:

Domestic growers:
August 25, 4 p.m. Eastern

Importers:
August 24, 11 a.m. Eastern
August 25, 2 p.m. Eastern

To learn more, visit www.FloralBoard.org to sign up for one of the remaining meetings.

Will this promotion order come to fruition? And more importantly, will it have staying power like so many other agricultural promotion orders like "Got Milk?" and "Beef. It's What's For Dinner"? The last time the industry tried a national promotion order was Promoflor and its "Think Flowers" campaign starring Buzz the bee, which ran for about two years before being voted down by flower handlers in 1997. Before that, the Floraboard promotion order was approved by Congress in 1981 and rejected by participants in 1984.



Upcoming GrowerTalks webinars

I've got two excellent topics on the docket for September:

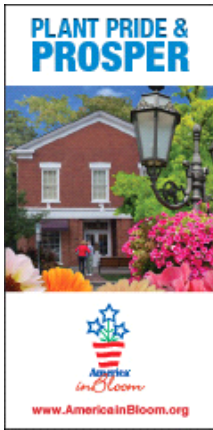
Building Better Rotation Programs for Troublesome Diseases

Wednesday, September 8, 1 p.m. Eastern

Guest experts: Dr. Emma Lookabaugh and Kimberly Noffke, both with BASF



Dr. Emma Lookabaugh and Kimberly Noffke will be discussing the basics of proper fungicide selection and how to build robust rotation programs to control root and crown diseases, foliar diseases and Botrytis. Topics we'll cover include: fungicide mode of action; contact vs. translaminar; timing applications; plant safety; residue management; and tank mixes and

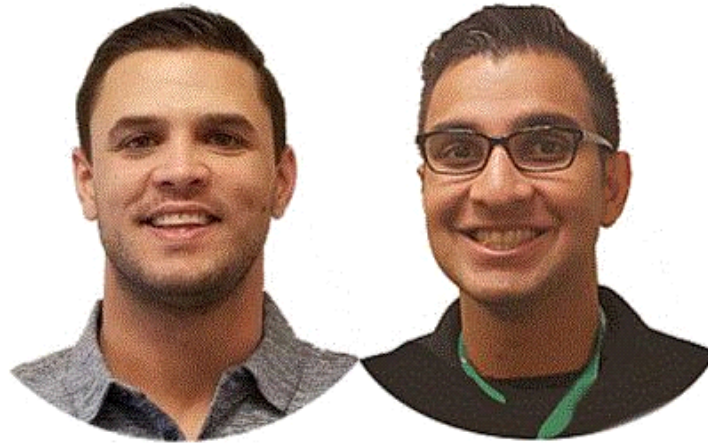


rotation. Diseases covered include Thielaviopsis, Phytophthora, Pythium, Cercospora, Anthracnose, powdery mildew and Botrytis.

The Best Strategies for Fine-Tuning the Growing Process

Thursday, September 23, 1 p.m. Eastern

Guest experts: Jacob Souza, Field Application Technician, and Vinay Sharma, Project Design Lead, both with Argus Controls



In this webinar, our duo of experts will explore how to identify the most problematic variables in your growing environment, and the best practices to ensure you're being as efficient as possible. We'll also explore how fine-tuning the production processes of your facility through automation can make your operation more sustainable and help reduce costs.

To register for either or both, go to www.growertalks.com/webinars.

As always, I'll be your host and emcee, so you know the presentations will be fast-paced, informative and fun!

Did I mention they're free? That's thanks to our generous sponsors BASF and Argus, who put the "free" in free webinar.



No, this is not the ErfGoedFloor issue

As brilliant as I am (and my mom thought I was a genius), I often get just a bit smarter when I hit "send" on a newsletter and get a reply back a short time later from a reader who knows more than I do about a topic.

Such is the case with ErfGoed ebb-and-flood floors, which I mentioned last time in connection with Four Star Greenhouses in Michigan. In that item, I wrote, "ErfGoed flood floors ... being

made of gravel, can't accommodate wheeled transport systems—even carts need to be run on metal tracks.”

It seems that's only partially true, says Jack Ford, the USA Sales Manager for ErfGoed, who emailed me with more details. Said Jack:

“It was great to read that Four Star mentioned the ErfGoed floor system! However, I have to point out a misconception expressed in their comments and something I am battling to educate growers on. They claim they cannot drive on the floor. This is not true! You can drive on or use carts on the floor that have air tires, and we have many growers worldwide doing this. In many cases, they are using fork systems with lifts developed for the industry.”



He continued: “It is true that you cannot take full ‘hard’ caster Dutch carts on our floors, and that is why we developed the trolley tracks that you saw at Four Star.”



Five more facts

Jack offered four of the five facts that make me smarter than I was a week ago:

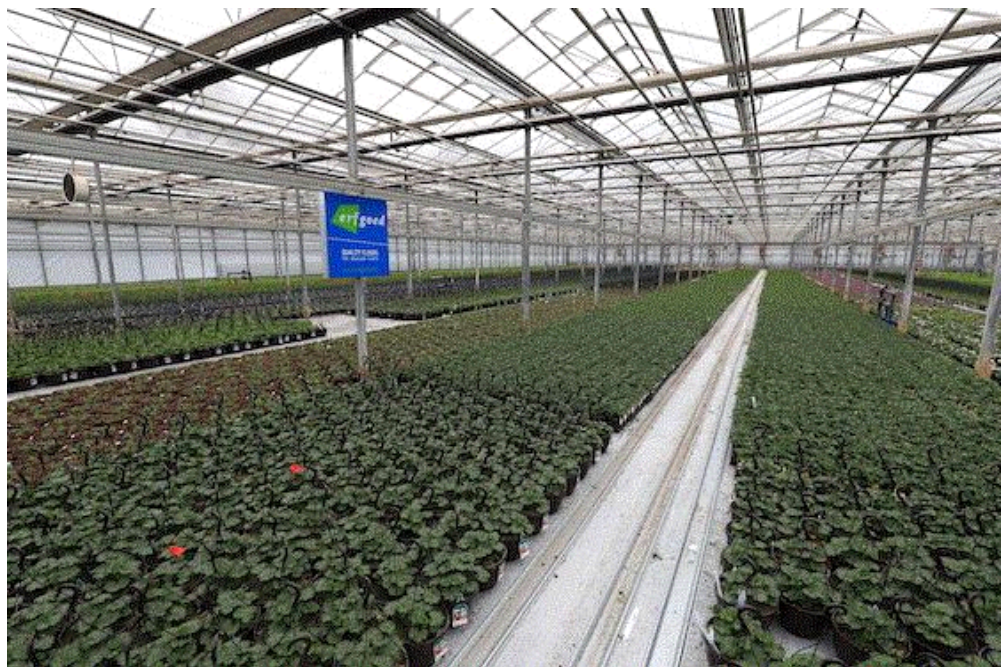
1. While they may be newish in North America (I was introduced to the technology in Canada about 10 years ago), he says that ErfGoed floors have been used in Holland for nearly 30 years.
2. They're more than just a subirrigation system. “It really is part of the environmental growing system as it can help cool, humidify, and also pull water through the media. Most growers have it connected to their environmental controls.”
3. Jack reminded me that one of the reasons Four Star went with the “Flying Fork” internal transport technology rather than a regular fork lift was to be able to access blocks of plants in the middle of a bay without having to move the plants in front of them (he knows this because he was sales manager at AgriNomix when Four Star purchased the system).

4. While Four Star Operations Manager Jeff Back expressed concerns to me that a rubber-tired vehicle would wear through the ErfGoed fabric layer relatively quickly, Jack says the top fabric is stretched very tightly and securely so it doesn't move even under the force of a powered vehicle. He explains, "The top fabric is a fabric we have developed to take the abuse of driving and walking on. We have our own labs and greenhouses where we test this on a regular basis. The thing that breaks down the fabric the most is growers not cleaning the floor properly between crops and soil/plant debris getting ground down into the fabric. With all that being said, we find the top fabric can last 10 to 20-plus years, depending on how the grower treats it."

5. As for my spelling it "ErfGoedFloor" up above? It's how the Dutch-based company refers to the product on their website.

What are you talking about, Beytes?

Now you're asking, "What the heck is an ErfGoedFloor?" Simply put, it's an ebb-and-flood floor made not of concrete, but of layers of tightly compacted gravel and other aggregate, topped with the aforementioned ground cloth. The irrigation water percolates straight up through this substrate and drains straight downward the same way, irrigating all the plants uniformly.



An ErfGoedFloor at South Central Growers in Tennessee.

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ErfGoed for cut flowers?

I promise this is the last time I'll mention ErfGoed this year!

I've only known of it being used for container-grown plants, but Dümme Orange just announced a partnership with ErfGoed to install one of their floors at their cut flower show greenhouse in De Kwakel, the Netherlands (the former Olij Rozen facility). It will be unique in that it will have a 20 cm (8 in.) layer of growing media on top of the ground cloth, in which Dümme Orange will grow cut chrysanthemums—just as if they were in traditional ground beds, except with a closed-loop irrigation system. The goal is highly uniform irrigation that also will enable the excess water and nutrients to be recovered.

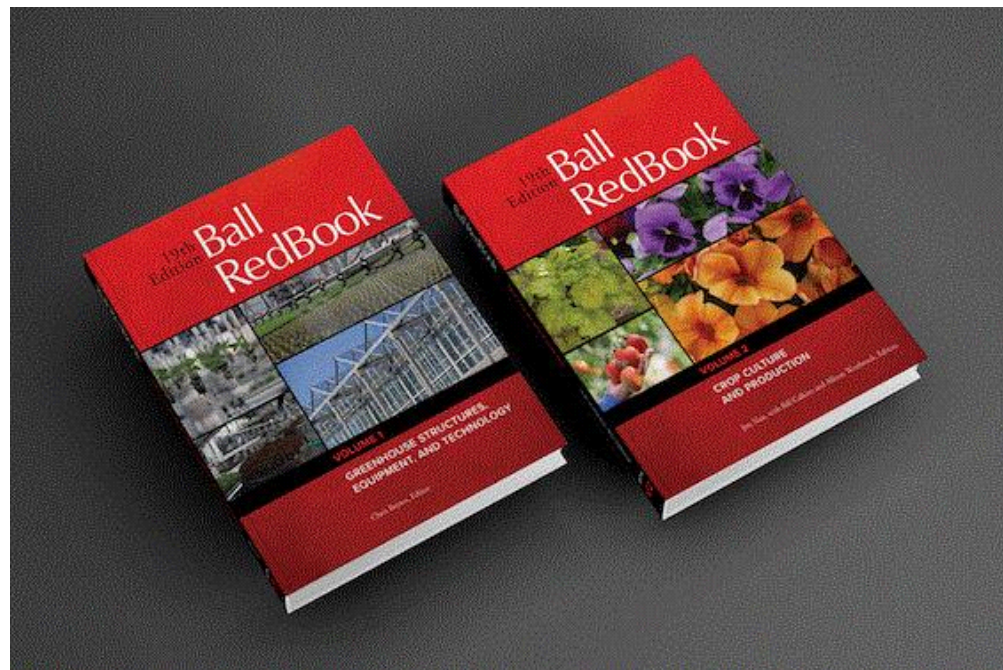
Being a “show greenhouse,” where Dümme Orange hosts trials and open days, the installation is intended to show off the ErfGoed technology to the cut flower sector, which is why it's a partnership between the two firms.

Reinoud Hagen, Managing Director Cut Flowers at Dümme Orange, explains, “Installing the ErfGoed cultivation floor at De Kwakel fits in with our commitment to growing cut chrysanthemums more sustainably. At the moment we are still cultivating them in the ground. By working with ErfGoed and other parties, we want to show the sector that there are some very useful innovations out there for soil-grown cut flowers. We expect to be harvesting our first ErfGoedFloor chrysanthemums in early 2022.”

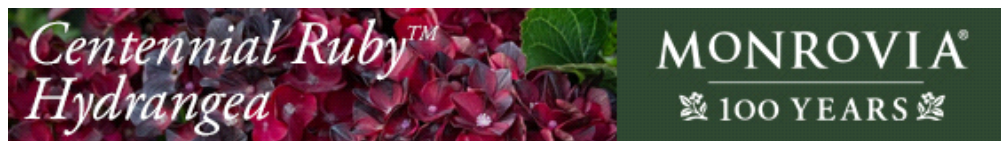


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Food packaging for plants?

Why not! say the folks from [Westgate Products](#) of Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Their colorful "Infinity Buckets" might be designed to hold fried chicken and popcorn, but they've added drain holes to make them excellent nursery and greenhouse containers, they say (or cover pots, if you leave off the holes).



We ran into company owners Patrick and Lisa Carroll at Plantpeddler's Variety Day, where they had a tabletop exhibit set up. We were impressed by the colorful nature of the printed pots (which come in many stock holiday offerings) and by the fact that you can get custom-printed pots for as low as a 2,500-pot minimum. This is the couple showing off their pumpkin-themed pot.

Along with being made in Wisconsin, the company brags that they're doing all they can to be sustainable, including "utilizing the eco-friendliest substrates commercially viable and are producing on custom-assembly equipment with optimized carbon footprint impact." All current products are produced with a blend of polypropylene and 40% mineral based renewable calcium carbonate.



As an interesting aside, I found a story online from a Wisconsin TV station from March 2020 that Westgate offered food containers at cost to local restaurants that were forced to adopt a carryout-only policy. Nice!

Looking for something custom for your business? Click the link above for contact info—Patrick told me he'd be happy to send out samples.

Coming: the AIHP Sustainability Conference 2021

In case you think sustainability came and went back in 2011, think again: It's alive and well and more important than ever!

That's why the International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH) is organizing a virtual conference on the subject titled, "The path to sustainability for ornamental horticulture." It's slated for September 30, and *GrowerTalks* is proud to be a Media Partner for the event, along with sponsors GreenTech, the Floriculture Sustainability Initiative (FSI) and *FloraCulture International* magazine. Royal FloraHolland and event agency PERA are the headline sponsors.

Speakers from around the world will evaluate what the industry is doing to become more sustainable, how we can measure progress and what the future holds. One of those speakers is our own Susannah Ball of Ball Horticultural Company! Professor Charlie Hall of Texas A&M will also be presenting, along with a list of at least 14 other experts from six countries.

Commenting on the launch of the conference, AIPH Secretary General Tim Briercliffe, said "The global ornamental horticulture industry makes such a positive contribution to the planet in so many ways but to create a truly sustainable supply chain we need to share initiatives and work together. This conference provides the perfect platform for taking this forward."

Conference attendance will cost 20 GBP (\$27.25 US). For more details and to register, visit <https://aiph.org/event/sustainability-conference-2021/>.

Fill out this sustainability survey, please

AIPH is the association that unites most of the world's horticultural associations, and at the organization's spring meeting in April 2021, AIPH members approved the adoption of the AIPH Sustainability policy. This policy describes the ambitions of AIPH to serve the ornamental horticultural industry and support the industry as a sustainable and resilient global industry across all aspects of the supply chain. Sustainability topics AIPH wants to help all horticulture associations address include getting more plants in urban environments (for the climate benefits), biodiversity, sustainable sourcing, equality and inclusion, and raising the awareness of the benefits of plants. That's a key reason AIPH is hosting the conference above.

But AIPH wants to know what you think! To help them prepare for this event, they are seeking your support via a short (10 minute) survey that aims to identify areas where AIPH can have the most impact.

Click [HERE](#) to access the survey. They ask that you complete it by Friday, September 3.

AIPH will use the survey to prepare a report on global attitudes and initiatives on sustainability in our sector, and these will be presented at the Sustainability Conference on September 30 and reported in *FloraCulture International* Magazine. It should also provide a valuable global benchmark on this topic.

IGOTY Awards: you can still enter!

If you want to see if your business can hang with the best of the best on the planet, why not enter the International Grower of the Year (IGOTY) Awards?

The IGOTY Awards celebrate excellence and best practices in five categories; Finished Plants and Trees, Young Plants, Cut Flowers and Bulbs, Sustainability and Inspiring Business. Within each category, they award bronze, silver and gold awards. From among these categories, one gold award winner will be crowned the AIPH International Grower of the Year 2022 and receive the Gold Rose—the industry's most coveted prize! (Which, as emcee for the sixth time in a row, I

get to announce!) The awards ceremony will be held in January during IPM Essen in Germany, the industry's largest international trade fair.

But you have to act fast, as entries are only accepted up to Friday, September 10.

For more information, visit aiph.org/igoty.

Jury named for the IGOTY Awards

Who will be judging your entry for the IGOTY's? These six just-named ornamental horticulture experts:

- Tim Edwards, Vice President of AIPH and Chairman of Boningale Nurseries (UK).
- Jan-Dieter Bruns, Managing Director of Bruns Pflanzen and President of the European Nursery Stock Association (ENA) (Germany)
- André van Kruijsens, CEO of Plantion (Netherlands)
- Poul Graff, CEO of Graff Breeding A/S (Denmark)
- Augusto Solano, President of industry body Asocolflores (Colombia)
- Hiroshi Sakata, President of the Japan Home Garden Association (Japan).

Some heavy-hitters and knowledgeable business owners, to be sure—including a Gold Award winner from 2017!

Tapping into Mexico's ornamental horticulture industry

America's neighbor to the south, Mexico, is the second-largest economy in Latin America. The country has a population of nearly 130 million, many of which love flowers. The Mexican society has deep roots in floral tradition, which explains why the nation boasts a sizeable home production of young plants, cut flowers, houseplants, annuals, perennials and nursery stock products. Are there ways to tap into that giant market?

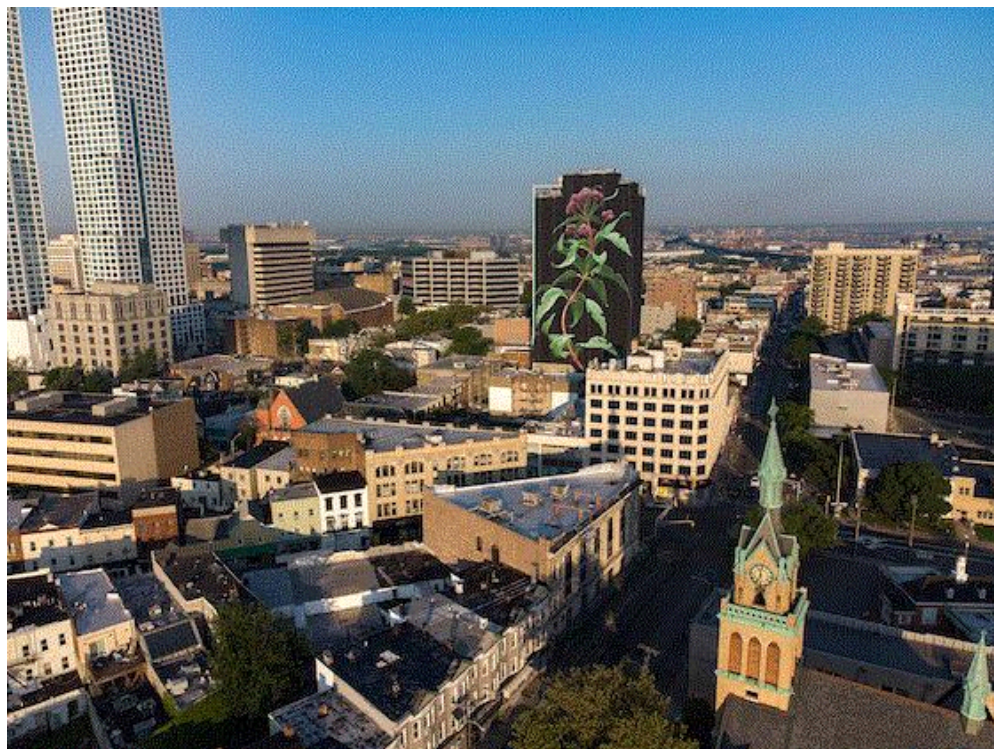
GrowerTalks' sister publication *FloraCulture International* (FCI), with the support of AIPH, wants to help you find out, which is why they're hosting a free webinar for growers, retailers, suppliers and traders to discuss how the industry can tap into Mexico's growing ornamental horticulture industry. The 90-minute webinar is slated for September 14 at 9 a.m. Eastern (3 p.m. in the UK, where it's British Summer Time).

Enrique Arias Velazco, president of Ornamental Plants & Flowers, Mexico's premier horticultural trade show (which made its debut in September 2019) says, "In Mexico, daily life cannot be conceived without plants and flowers—they are part of our language."

In the session, says FCI, "Mexico will put itself forward as a horticultural powerhouse with world-class, high-quality, sustainable flowers and plants; a benign climate and good soils; counter-seasonal supply opportunities; a young, skilled and dynamic workforce; and a strong entrepreneurial spirit. Plus, the direct vicinity of large consumer markets in the USA and Canada make Mexico ideal for the horticultural industry."

Curious what's going on south of the border? Click [HERE](#) for more and to register.

Finally ...



I love [this story](#) from the art and culture website “Colossal” about a 20-story mural in Jersey City, New Jersey. It’s by San Francisco artist [Mona Caron](#), who apparently is known for painting giant weeds.

See you next time!

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

[Chris Beytes](#)
Editor
GrowerTalks and Green Profit

This e-mail received by 25,158 loyal readers!

Thanks to my loyal sponsors, who help me reach the 25,158 readers of *Acres Online* in 66 countries. Want to be one of them (a sponsor, that is)? Give [Paul Black](#) a shout and he'll hook you up.

A promotional banner for BASF GrowerTalks. On the left is the BASF logo with the tagline "We create chemistry". In the center, the word "GROWERTALKS" is written in large, bold, white letters. On the right, there are three overlapping magazine covers for "GROWERTALKS 2024 HANDBOOK: Marijuana & Hemp". A red button with white text says "View ONLINE!".