

Where do plants come from? Plus new moss, fertilizer and GPGB leadership



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For Sale



# TROPICAL TOPICS

## COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Going Behind the Scenes  
Plant Fertilizer in an Instant  
New Leadership at GPGB  
Get Your Moss On



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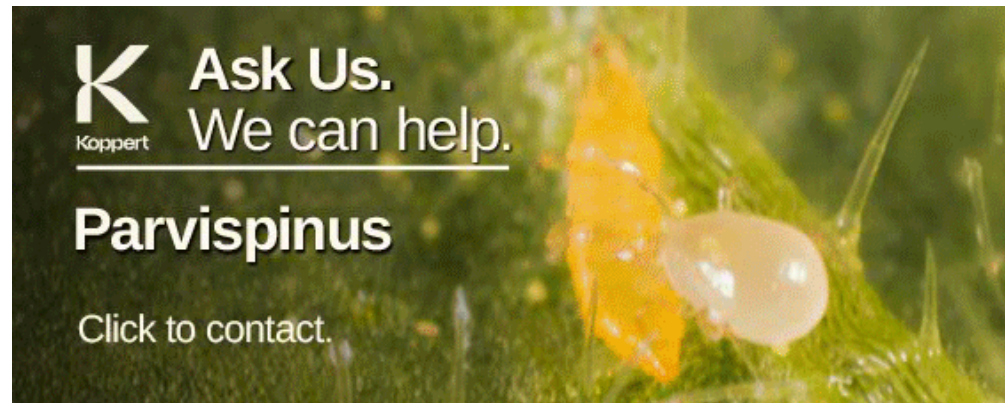
## Going Behind the Scenes

I may be wrong here, but I bet that a lot of folks new to plant parenting—and even new to plant shop ownership—aren't aware of all the processes involved in bringing a houseplant to the garden center shelf. And I don't mean just taking it off the delivery truck (although that last mile is very important!). I'm talking about where those plants originate, how and where they are reproduced, and eventually how they are grown to the final stage before they are packed up and shipped to the final destination.

Jos de Boer, marketing manager for ForemostCo, sent along a short video that ForemostCo made in conjunction with their [partner KP Holland](#) to show how they create and bring spaths and curcumas to the North American market. "I always find it interesting to learn a little more about what goes on behind the scenes in our industry and figured your audience may as well," Jos wrote. I agree! (That's why I loved watching "Unwrapped" on Food Network.) Watch the [VIDEO](#).



Lab coats! Petri dishes! How many new houseplant owners realize that their new plant pet got its start thanks to all this tech? And if you're already in the know about what all's involved with the plant growing at your operation, maybe think about what other folks *don't* know about it. Make a video and let them know! Although you may see it every day, it's fascinating stuff to those who don't. (And if you do make a video, [let me know about it.](#))



## Plant Fertilizer in an Instant

Maybe you've seen the commercials or social media videos for certain cleaning products that say something like this: "You have water, so why do we need to expend energy/release carbon/money to ship you a liquid dish detergent/laundry detergent/shampoo/conditioner? Use this soluble sheet/powder/bar soap and just add your own H<sub>2</sub>O! (Also, let's use less plastic while we're at it.)

That's the idea behind Instant Plant Food's self-dissolving fertilizer tablets. Just drop a tablet in water and, to steal an old catch-phrase, plop plop, fizz fizz, it's that easy to feed your plants.



I spoke to Jeff Robbins, one of the founders of San Diego-based Instant Biologics, the company that makes the effervescent Instant Plant Food tablets. He and business partner Ari Tenenbaum have been in the sustainable landscape business for about 15 years. About five years ago the



pair got to thinking of ways they could extend their message of sustainability, something that could have an impact beyond planting one garden at a time.

The answer for them has been these conveniently packaged, pre-portioned and odorless fertilizer tablets that help plant parents be successful with houseplants of all sorts. Each tablet will feed a large plant or several small ones for up to three months. What's in it? A release on the product says it's "derived from abundant, naturally occurring minerals and an eco-friendly live fermentation of waste feedstock and molasses [and] contains all the essential nutrients that houseplants need along with trace micronutrients required for a well-rounded, healthy plant diet." And it's fun! Kids love to see the bubbling of the tablet once it hits the water, Jeff tells me.

They've made good headway into retail already. The product is available in more than 700 plant shops and boutiques throughout the U.S. and Canada and they are in talks with some national retail chains, too. Learn more about these fizzy tablets and the company at [www.instantplantfood.com](http://www.instantplantfood.com). Here's a VIDEO that shows the effervescence and explains a bit about the product.



This is the second newish plant food line I've heard about in the last month. It seems our industry is ripe for entrepreneurship! I'll tell you about the other one in the next edition of *Tropical Topics*.



## New Leadership at GPGB

I'm been meaning for some time to let you know about some leadership changes at the Green Plants for Green Buildings (GPGB) organization. Mary Golden and her team at Golden Group Solutions have been shepherding GPGB since 2008. She has decided this year to step away as part of the executive team to pursue other projects. I have had some great interactions with Mary over the years and I always appreciated her passion and enthusiasm for the GPGB mission. I am sure she will bring the same energy to whatever she pursues next. And she's not gone forever, as she will remain active on a few committees. But please do reach out to her and wish her well—you can reach her at [mary@goldengroupsolutions.com](mailto:mary@goldengroupsolutions.com).



Thank you for your service, Mary!

Assuming management of GPGB will be the team at The Solution, a Colorado-based association management company with a combined 135 years of experience in association management. Monica Groh will serve as Executive Administration and Josie Wanner is joining as Administrative Support.



Monica Groh (left) and Josie Wanner

For all of you with dealings with GPGB, the organization's new contact information (via Monica and Josie) is [admin@gpgb.org](mailto:admin@gpgb.org) and 720-579-8250.



## Get Your Moss On

While Irish moss is not a tropical, it does slot in well with the mission of the aforementioned GPGB. Use it in between pavers for a more ecologically friendly car park, for instance. Or use it in green walls or living murals.



The folks at [Mossify](#), the company that brought you the bendable moss pole and the nifty automatic Mistr mister, now have available plenty of premium fast-growing Irish moss (*Sagina subulata*) seeds in bulk.



### **250 Irish Moss Seeds**

Photo enlarged to show details

It's fun, it's soft and it could very well be a cushiony houseplant gift. Find out all about it on the company's website and then order up some—either for landscaping/mural creation or for a fun houseplant program. Check it out [HERE](#).

Comments, questions or news to share? Just drop me a line at [ewells@ballpublishing.com](mailto:ewells@ballpublishing.com).



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