

Costa’s new focus, GardenComm winners and a retirement



News and Inspiration from the world of foliage and tropical plants



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TROPICAL TOPICS

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Costa Farms' New Consumer Focus
They're Winners, Baby
Bowden Retires
A Deal on Macrame



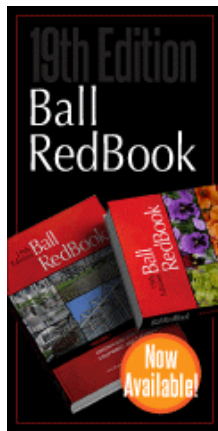
Ball Culture Guide

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
SEED GERMINATION

By JIM NAU

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Costa Farms' New Consumer Focus

Costa Farms is launching a shift in their commercial strategy to focus on the end consumer. This new focus has called for a rebranding effort and a marketing campaign that is oriented toward the end users of their plants, and included in this effort are strategies to engage with them and educate them so they all become successful gardeners and plant parents.

Rather than being seen as the wholesale grower of products that millions enjoy, they aim to become the consumer brand that folks turn to for their plant needs. Said Costa Farms CEO Joche Smith of the change of focus, "With changing demographics and the continued enthusiasm with gardening—particularly indoor gardening—we're seeing more consumers than ever want to communicate with the team that grew their plants. We're embracing this opportunity to build relationships with the plant community and putting more effort into connecting with the new consumer."

How'll they accomplish that? New branding, a new logo and new visuals for starters. Here's the logo:

costa

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And fresh messaging with bold imagery and an approachable tone. Check these out. They are stills taken from GIFs, so the originals actually move; e.g. the flamingo bobs across the screen. (The GIFs are too large for our system, dagnabbit!)





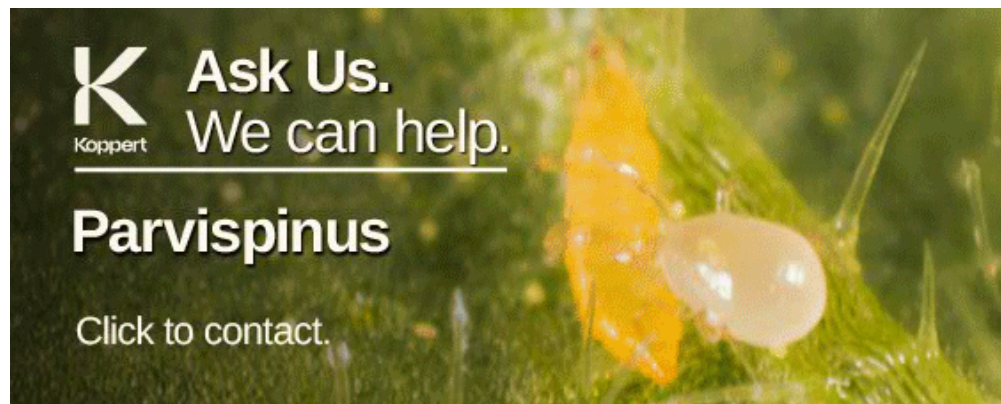
They also have some fun short videos with folks enjoying their plant parenting tasks. All very well done—and did I mention fun? These all appear in Costa's latest consumer campaign, All Thumbs Are Green. "Everyone can enjoy beautiful, healthy plants—indoors or out," says Justin Hancock, Costa Farms Brand Marketing Manager in a press release. "We know this is true, and we're working to create messaging across a wide variety of platforms and channels to reach the consumer so they believe it, too, even if they've never owned a plant before."

Also in that messaging effort is a DTC (direct to consumer) site, shop.costafarms.com, where consumers can shop and have fresh plants delivered from Costa's farms. In fact, Costa Farms set up a 7-acre e-commerce facility that can ship up to 30,000 plants per day.

Wait, there's more! They are launching an experiential platform called Plant Rx that includes a podcast, starting small-clipped TikToks with planting tips and adding a consumer contest to further engage customers.

"By building positive, inspiring messaging across core channels that appeals to the consumer appetite for plants, targeting their specific pain points, and offering solutions, we believe plant parents will feel confident joining a brand that's had their hands in the soil for such a long time," says Mari Carrasquillo, Costa Farms Senior Director of Marketing.

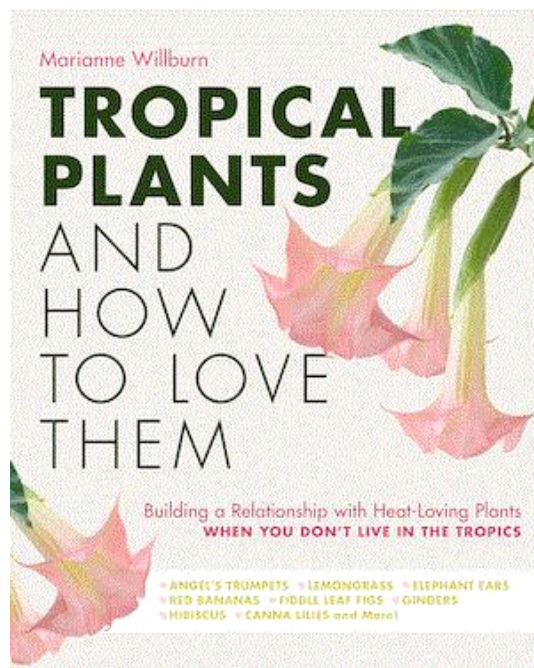
Stay tuned for an upcoming edition as I hope to find more information about those consumer initiatives and what they plan to do to engage consumers directly.



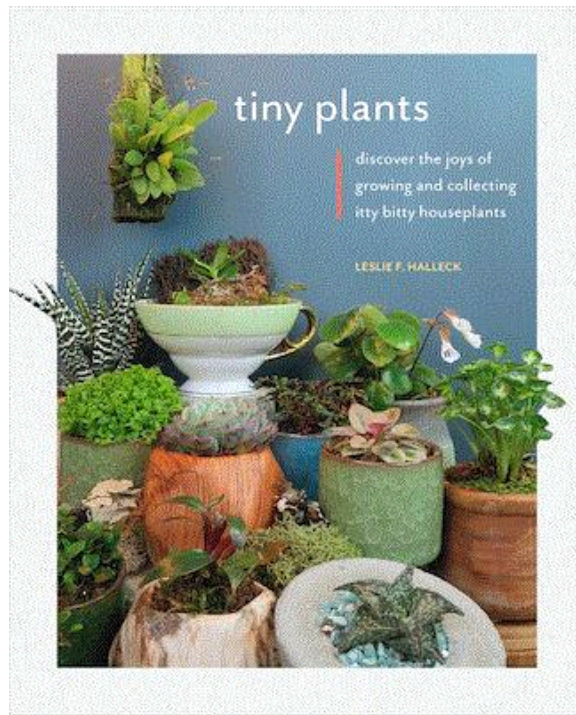
They're Winners, Baby

To corroborate just how popular tropicals and houseplants are nowadays, just look at some of the book titles and influencers that brought home Silver Awards from [GardenComm's](#) 2022 Media Awards. In fact, I've mentioned these two books in this space before:

"Tropical Plants and How to Love Them" by [Marianne Willburn](#). Marianne looks at the world of tropical plants through the lens of human relationships, and does so in such a fun way! Whether it's a "friend with benefits" or a "summer romance," readers will learn how to fall in love with tropical plants. Marianne's book took home two silver awards, actually—one for writing and the other for the overall book (which is quite lovely). Published by Cool Springs Press.



"Tiny Plants" from [Leslie Halleck](#). In this book Leslie explores the world of miniature houseplants, both of the flowering and foliage varieties. Whether in a terrarium or on a windowsill, she highlights a whole host of petite plants that can grow with minimal space. Also published by Cool Springs Press.



And because garden communication is more than just books and magazines these days, GardenComm recognizes the contributions of plant experts in the digital media realm. Raffaele Di Lallo's [Ohio Tropics Instagram](#) site took home a Silver Award in the social media category.

Speaking of Raffaele, I was told at Cultivate'22 by the folks at Proven Winners that they've initiated a working partnership with their company pertaining to their new leafjoy line of houseplants. Great move on their part!

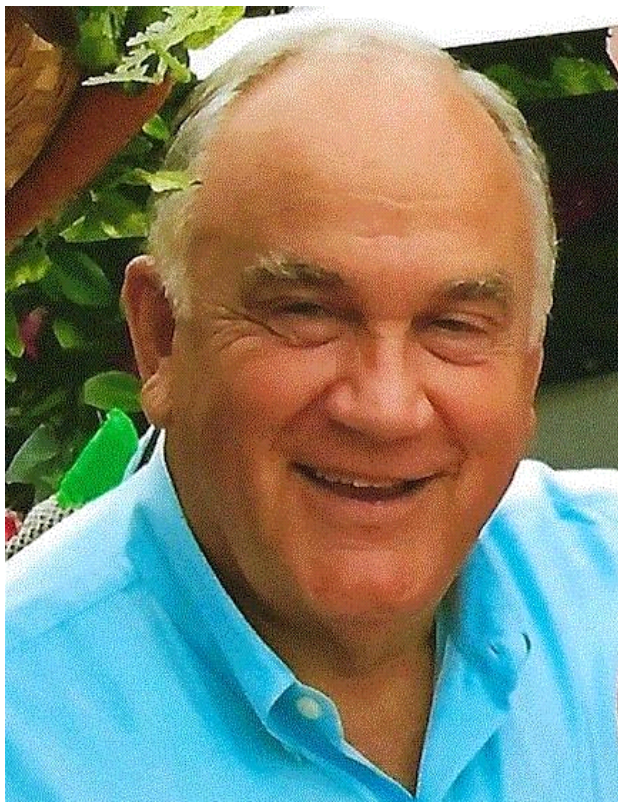
For the full list of Silver Award winners, head on over to GardenComm's [AWARDS PAGE](#). Oh, and by the way, now that the Silver Awards have been determined, the recipients will now compete for Gold Medals within their category. Good luck and represent houseplants and tropicals for the gold win!



Bowden Retires

I remember meeting Robert Bowden at my first TPIE as editor of *Tropical Topics* when we served on a booth award judging panel together. There's a famous photo of Gen. George Patton in a Jeep during World War II. It could very well have been Robert in a golf cart, brimming with dedication and direction.

I got word recently that Robert has retired as the Executive Director of Leu Gardens in Orlando, Florida, a position he held for nearly 30 years. Before coming to Orlando, he had been the Executive Director of the Atlanta Botanical Garden and was Director of Horticulture of the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis. He also spent time as Assistant Director of Old Westbury Gardens out on Long Island, my old stomping grounds.



I was emailing with FNGLA's Linda Adams about Robert and aside from his role as lead booth judge at TPIE, the more important role he played in Florida's tropical plant industry was this: By attending TPIE, Linda says, Robert saw tons of cool plants, connected with those growers and introduced these plants into the beds at Leu Gardens where tens of thousands of visitors saw them—and then buy them for their own home landscapes. "Robert has been a passionate and effective advocate for Florida foliage plants throughout his career, and we have been grateful of the many supportive roles he has played within FNGLA." Robert's been more than a judge—he's a maven! Enjoy, Robert!



A Deal on Macrame

I told you about the macrame company Soul of the Party, a Cultivate'22 exhibitor, an issue or two ago. The owner, Kevin (gah! I still haven't gotten his last name!), was so delighted that I included his product that he gave me an offer exclusively for *Buzz* and *Tropical Topics* readers.



Use this [SPECIAL LINK](#) to received \$100 off and one year of free shipping. That's a great deal—take Kevin up on this generous offer. And try to find out his last name if you can.

Comments, questions or news to share? Just drop me a line at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

Ellen Wells
Senior Editor
Green Profit

This edition of Tropical Topics was sent to 29,499 loyal readers!

If you're interested in advertising on Tropical Topics, contact [Kim Brown](#) ASAP!

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