Pairing solar and CO2 in the greenhouse, plus REAP changes



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:
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Combining Solar Panels with CO2

The European Union recently awarded a significant grant to the REGACE Consortium to develop an agrivoltaic technology that uses CO2 enrichment to increase electricity yields.



The initial prototype was built by one of the consortium's partners, TriSolar. The idea: to combine optimum crop conditions with significant energy production, including using agrivoltaics in areas with lower light conditions. Solar panels are mounted on a responsive tracking system in the greenhouse, with a controller that changes the angle of the panels according to the plants' needs. By using CO2 enrichment, they can increase plant growth while allowing for lower-light

conditions under the solar panels as they angle for a more optimal positioning to produce more energy.

The consortium also claims that the new RAGACE technology will reduce the carbon footprint of conventional solar energy and will allow small greenhouse owners to play a significant role in the energy market.

Going forward, they'll be conducting further research and testing the system in six locations with different greenhouse types and crops. Should be interesting to see where this leads. You can learn more on their website.



REAP Grants: What You Need to Know About the Changes

For years, greenhouse growers and other rural businesses have taken advantage of the Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP) to help fund renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements. That includes everything from solar panels to biofuel, LED lighting and energy curtains.

However, with the passing of the Inflation Reduction Act last year, there are new loan and grant products, as well as incentives, to expand clean energy and create rural jobs. The act included $2.025 billion for REAP, including $303 milion for underutilized technologies and technical assistance.

The USDA is hosting two webinars that will cover updates on funding available under REAP.

March 31: REAP Stakeholder Call at 2:30 p.m. ET. Register.
April 4: REAP Training Webinar at 2:30 p.m. ET. Register

To learn more about the Inflation Reduction Act and these changes, go HERE.



Canada-Mexico Organic Equivalency Arrangement

Canada and Mexico have signed a memorandum of understanding recognizing their two national

organic systems as equivalent. Mexican organic products that will be able to be sold in Canada include ag products of plant origin (including fungi), processed foods of plant origin and beekeeping products. Canadian products that can be sold as organic in Mexico include the above, plus livestock-related products.

However, any Mexican livestock or processed foods of animal origin won't be allowed to be sold as organic in Canada unless they get certified under the Canadian Organic Standard. Also of note: Mexican organic products certified to the Mexican organic standard and imported to Canada cannot be re-exported to the U.S. or used as ingredients in products destined for the U.S. market under the U.S.-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement. These products may be used as ingredients in processed products certified under the Canada Organic Regime and exported to other countries.

For full details and labeling requirements, go HERE.



Dianthus Webinar Alert!

Remember that "Do or Dianthus Part 1" webinar we had in early February? Part 2 of the webinar series is coming up. It's called "Do or Dianthus Part 2: Being Successful from Rooting to Finishing" and will cover all of the production details to produce a top-notch crop.



Gary Vollmer will guide you through the growing, along with James Doukas and Nathan Jahnke, including the topics of:

Scheduling—How to time your production across the different types of dianthus, growing regions, growing structures and temperature

Propagation—Learn the full protocols from receiving the cuttings through to finishing the liners, including mist management, PGRs and more

Finishing—Pinching, nutrition, temperature, lighting, and insect and disease management across different growing systems

You'll learn everything you need to grow some darling dianthus. Register for the April 6, 1 p.m. Eastern/Noon Central webinar HERE. Thanks to Selecta One for sponsoring it.

Report from the MT Outpost

Winter is still the driving force here in southwestern Montana. While we revel in the longer days and the strength of the sun, storm cycles continue to dump snow on many of us. Last weekend, it was a couple of feet in most places. Good for the snowpack and rivers, perhaps a little depressing for those itching to get started on gardening. It's going to be a while yet before my gardens see the light of day.

So instead, I cling to more subtle signs of spring stirring. The magpies began building a nest in the big Doug fir tree. Lupine, my bird dog who thinks she's a first-class, obsessive mouser, has begun to leave us gifts of dead mice in the driveway. I've spotted two skunks doing their spring waddles.



This morning, when our little canyon was shrouded in fog, a fox showed up in the yard. The fields seem to be a regular hunting ground for him, and he stalks the same spots Lupine does, cocking his head to listen for rodents. (By the way, that photo was taken from my kitchen window, looking out onto the patio. That rim of black in the snow? A patio chair buried in a drift, waiting for a more appropriate day to watch the sunrise.)

Happy spring!

Until next time,



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