

Insect control with AI, and urban ag funding



*A sustainable e-newsletter from GrowerTalks and Green Profit*



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## COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Urban Ag Funding Restored  
AI Insect Control  
Halted Ban on Chlorpyrifos  
Transparent Storytelling  
Report from the MT Outpost

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## Senate Restores Funding for Urban Ag

Led by Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry Committee, the Senate has restored \$8.5 million in funding for the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production, which assists urban, small-scale and innovative producers with technical and financial assistance that supports community farms and gardens; rooftop, indoor and vertical farms; and other innovative production. The idea is to increase greenspaces in communities, improve access to fresh, local foods and open new pathways to jobs in agriculture.



Initially, neither the Senate nor House agriculture appropriations bills included dedicated funding for the Office. But Sen. Stabenow filed an amendment to an agriculture appropriations package, which passed the Senate by a vote of 82 to 15. The amendment must now be conferenced with the House before being signed into law.

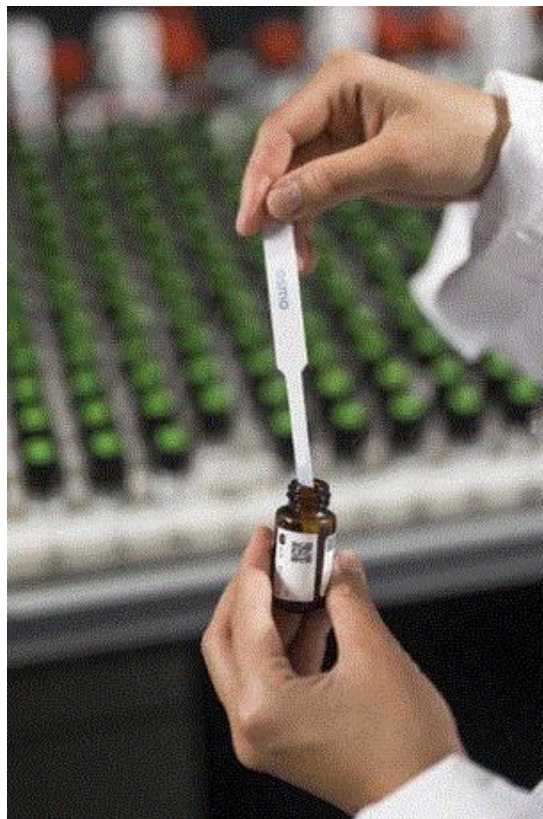
The funding was applauded by the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and the International Fresh Produce Association.

“Urban and innovative agriculture offers tremendous opportunities for sustainable production and puts fresh produce closer to the consumers who needed it most to improve their health and reduce hunger, especially in underserved communities,” said IFPA Vice President of U.S. Government Relations Rebeckah Adcock. —*Chris Beytes*



### Insect Control with AI?

Could AI insect control be in our future? A company called Osmo is exploring how scent molecules can aid in insect and disease control. They just secured \$8.5 million in funding, including a \$3.5 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and \$5 million in equity investments.



Osmo is developing an AI-enabled scent platform for discovering and producing compounds that repel, attract or destroy disease-carrying insects to improve animal and human health. For now, that technology is focusing on a pilot project repelling mosquitos, which affect human and animal health. But it will be interesting to see how it might also apply to crop health in the future.

You can learn more [HERE](#).



## Court Stops Ban of Chlorpyrifos

A federal appeals court recently vacated the EPA regulations that banned the use of chlorpyrifos, which should mean that the insecticide will continue to be allowed for agricultural use. Nursery growers probably know it as Dursban. Most residential uses of the chemical have been banned since 2001, but more recently, agricultural uses were scrutinized, with one concern being the neurological impacts on children.

As Chris Beytes reported in *Acres Online*:

*The initial [agricultural] ban came in 2021 from the EPA in response to an order from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The new court (the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis) ruled that the EPA could have instituted a partial ban.*

*"The court found EPA disregarded its own scientists' findings by ending numerous uses of chlorpyrifos they determined were safe," a coalition of grower groups that had sued the agency said in a news release. The decision "restores agricultural uses of the tool."*

*While the ruling impacts specific crops, including Michigan tart cherries, soybeans and sugarbeets, as well as alfalfa, apple, asparagus, citrus, cotton, peach, strawberry and spring and winter wheat, it seems like it would lessen the chance of a ban for other uses, including nursery.*



## Telling Your Story: Videos

I've been enjoying these short [YouTube updates](#) from Willoway Nursery in Ohio, which often answer questions folks have about their operation. Recently, they did a longer [8-minute tour of their water system](#), including their ponds and irrigation.





Plus, there's a short [2-minute explanation](#) of what they do with greenhouse plastic once it comes off the greenhouse, and even how they use the leftover tubes that the plastic arrives on. Videos like this are not only a great way to share knowledge, but they are also a great example of transparent storytelling for your customers.

Remember, the things that may be seem like unexciting, normal operational details may be fascinating for someone else.

## Report from the MT Outpost

I'm a romantic for November hues, and the quirks of shoulder seasons—those in-between times when everyone else seems to be mourning the end of something, or waiting for something better.



And here I am, strolling around, reveling in the nuances of brown and gold, and lingering on the seeds yet to launch.

Perspective is everything, and I love to think of all the things teeming underground: the roots of the perennials, fungi, bacteria, insects, and all kinds of mysterious happenings.



The ice on the creek has begun to form, and I'm grateful for a little more time on bare ground, to take in this stage before the snow sets in for good.

Until next time,



Jennifer Duffield White

[jwhite@ballpublishing.com](mailto:jwhite@ballpublishing.com)

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