

Bareroot Perennials, Succulent Propagation & an Emerald Coast Exclusive





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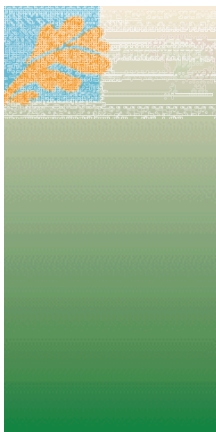


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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

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An Emerald Coast Exclusive
Succulent Propagation
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Perennial PULSE

News and commentary on the global perennial plant market



What's Happening Here?

Have I ever told you how humbling growing plants can be? It seems like just as soon as you get comfortable with a crop or have had a couple of really good and predictable years, out of nowhere a new (or old) issue rears its ugly head reminding you that you're not in as much control as you think.

Here's a fairly common issue I run across from time to time:





I think you can see the white etiolated (thin and elongated) shoots on this perovskia planted from bareroot. I'd say this is a moderate case or whatever this issue is. Believe me, growers don't want to experience a severe case of this.

Have you seen this or something that resembles this before? Unfortunately, I don't have any clues to offer. There are just a couple of possibilities, but only one correct answer. It's time for me to ask, "What's happening here?"



An Emerald Coast Exclusive

Andropogon gerardii Rain Dance



Rain Dance in an Intrinsic Perennials introduction, which is exclusively available from **Emerald Coast Growers**. It has red-tipped foliage and darker green leaves than other species. It takes on a stunning maroon appearance in the fall. Rain Dance produces red flowers on red stems in the late summer. Grows 4- to 5-ft. tall, and is deer resistant and drought tolerant. Hardy to Zone 3.



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Succulent Propagation

Bill Calkins covered how to successfully propagate succulents in the *October 31, 2025, edition of his Tech On Demand newsletter*. Here's what Bill wrote:

Succulent Propagation BMPs

Because these crops are most often native to hot, arid regions, the environmental conditions in your greenhouse need to be much dryer than with other ornamentals. Many growers find that misting isn't necessary and can even be problematic, leading to disease.



Substrate: A wide variety of potting substrates are suitable. Many commercial propagators in North America use a 70% peat/30% perlite blend. This blend lends itself to suitable aeration and drainage when proper irrigation practices are used. Upon sticking, the soil should just be damp—about a level 3 on the 1-to-5 scale—and never saturated.

Sticking: Many succulent URCs are just fleshy leaves and they may not need to be inserted into the soil for rooting. However, the crop time is lengthy and the plants are generally uneven when propagated from leaves instead of stems. Recognizable stems should be inserted into a dibbled hole and ensure good stem-to-soil contact is made.

Misting and moisture: Succulents need low to moderate moisture during propagation. Wet foliage should be avoided as much as reasonably possible. URCs and plants should go into the night with dry foliage to reduce disease incidence, which can permanently scar leaves. Misting is generally not recommended at night and most succulents are successfully propagated without mist.

Many growers find that wetting the soil (level 3) during sticking and then tenting the crop with Reemay (or similar) is beneficial, while others choose not to tent. This will depend upon your environment.

Light: A light shadecloth (or Reemay) can be beneficial during the first few days of propagation in southern climates if you're starting plants in summer with high temperatures and high light. Propagation in late fall or spring generally warrants full sun.

Feeding: Low fertilization rates (100 to 150 ppm N) are appropriate from a complete fertilizer selected based on your water quality. Substrate electrical conductivity (EC) levels should be kept below 1.2 mS/cm until roots are established.

Feedings approximately every four days except for sempervivum varieties, which want feed every two or three days. After two weeks, increase the substrate EC to 1.5 mS/cm.

Disease: Keeping foliage dry is the number one key to reducing disease. Fungicide applications targeting Fusarium, Alternaria and Botrytis are suggested during the first week of propagation. Be sure to follow all label instruction and conduct trials.

Here's a general prop strategy—keeping in mind, of course, that each variety will require a specific protocol and you always need to be aware of nuances. Work with your suppliers and technical experts if you need assistance putting together the best plan:

- Stick URCs into a rooting substrate with moisture level 3.
- Do not apply water for the plants for several days.
- After several days, a light irrigation and feeding (solution EC of 1.2) can be applied.
- Moderate to high fertilizer concentrations will burn the tissue.
- A quick rinse of the foliage may be beneficial to remove fertilizer residue.
- Shading should only be used to reduce temperature stress when temperatures surpass 80F.

Thanks Bill, for always coming up with great content and allowing me to share it with my subscribers. [GO HERE](#) to read Bill's entire newsletter.



January Events

Last month I listed several trade events being held in November and December. January is a big month for trade shows. Here's a listing of several of the January shows I thought would be worth planning for. Tap on the name of each event to learn more.

January 5-7, 2026

[Utah Green Conference & Trade Show](#)
Sandy, Utah

January 6-8, 2026	Montana Green Expo Billings, Montana
January 6-8, 2026	Landscape Ontario Congress Toronto, Ontario Canada
January 7-9, 2026	Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show (MANTS) Baltimore, Maryland
January 9-10, 2026	Mid-Ohio Grower's Meeting Millersburg, Ohio
January 12-16, 2026	Green & Growin Greensboro, North Carolina
January 14-16, 2026	Gulf States horticultural Expo Mobile, Alabama
January 20-22, 2026	Northern Green Outdoors St. Paul, Minnesota
January 20-22, 2026	Great Lakes Trade Expo Annual Conference & Trade Show Grand Rapids, Michigan
January 21-22, 2026	CNLA Winter Symposium Plantsville, Connecticut
January 27-28, 2026	InVigorateU Bloomington, Illinois
January 27-28, 2026	Total Pro Expo & Conference Edison, New Jersey
January 27, 2026	Plant-O-Rama Brooklyn, New York
January 27-30, 2026	IPM Essen Essen, Germany
January 29-30, 2026	SC Green Conference & Trade Show Columbia, South Carolina

The Answer is ...



I shared this image of perovskia at the top of the newsletter and asked if you knew what's causing the new growth to appear white and etiolated. Before I reveal its cause, I'd like to ask you to look at the pots in the background. Notice the variable plant size and the pot with only one stem growing in it? This variability is a clue about what the problem is. Have you narrowed down your answer yet?

To find the answer you have to look at the parts of the plant that are below the soil surface. Carefully digging up the plant clearly shows what many of you have answered—this perovskia was planted too deeply. It was planted in such a manner that a few of the older stems were visible above the surface and the crown was planted at least 2 in. below the surface.

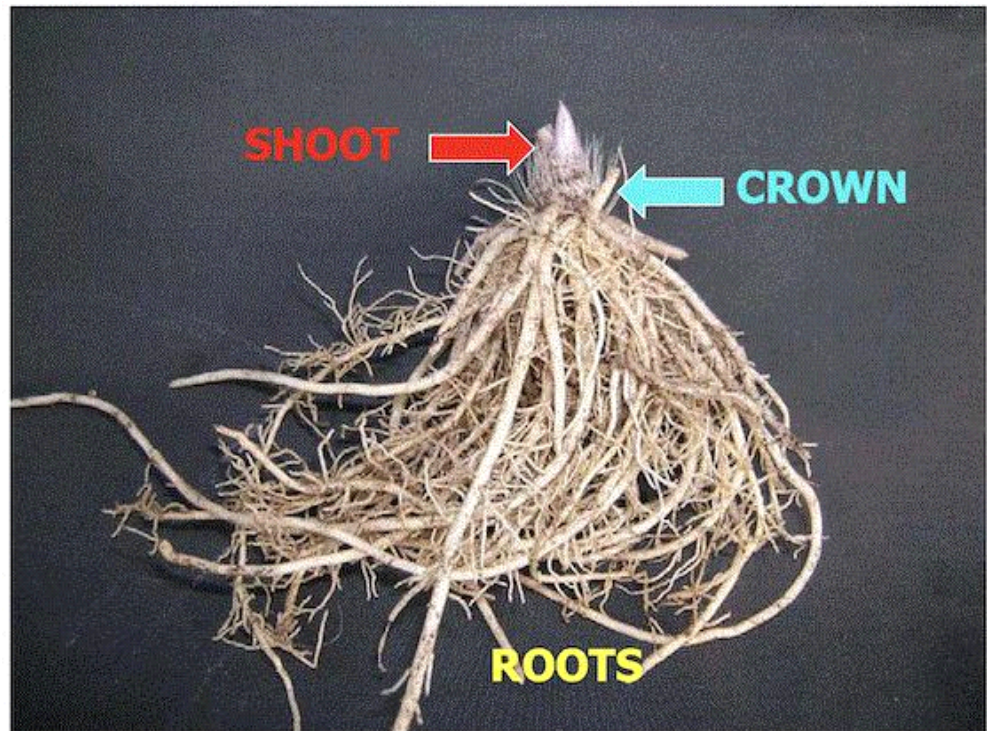
The crown of this plant is near where my thumb is in the image. The crown of bare-root should be at or just below the surface of the growing mix. The proper planting depth is the area around my thumb and index finger. Planting bare-root too deeply results in delayed emergence, reduced vigor, crop variability and possibly even crop losses.

Bareroot Continued

I covered proper planting depths of bare-root a couple years ago, and since I featured it in this week's challenge, I thought I'd share this content with you again.

Bareroot Planting Depths

Planting depths are also important with bare-root starting materials. The crown of the plant is the point where the stem forms a union with the roots. Be sure to identify where the crown is on the bare-root, as it will look different from one perennial to the next.



Do NOT bury the crowns too deeply.

Most bareroot perennials should be planted so the crown of the plant is no more than ½ in. to 1 in. below the surface of the growing mix. Similar to planting plugs/liners too deeply, bareroot planted too deeply will also lead to slower establishment, reduced vigor, cause crops to appear variable and could lead to plant mortality.

Cornell University performed research indicating several bareroot perennials should be planted “high” with the crown being ¼ to ½ in. above the media surface.

Bare Root Perennials to Plant High

With the crown ¼ to ½-inch above the media surface

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| ■ Aconitum | ■ Geranium | ■ Lysimachia |
| ■ Astilbe | ■ Geum | ■ Salvia |
| ■ Athyrium | ■ Helenium | ■ Tradescantia |
| ■ Campanula | ■ Hemerocallis | ■ Trollius |
| ■ Echinops | ■ Hosta | ■ Verbascum |
| ■ Epimedium | ■ Iris siberica | |
| ■ Euphorbia | ■ Liatris | |
| ■ Filipendula | ■ Ligularia | |

The perennials listed above grow more slowly and have less vigor when they're not planted slightly high.

[GO HERE](#) to read the entire newsletter where I also covered Perennial Planting Depths, Aris Perennial Trial Results, a hellebores announcement and a weed identification challenge.

My email is ppilon@ballpublishing.com if you have any comments, article suggestions or if you'd just like to say hello.

Best regards,

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

Paul Pilon

Editor-at-Large—*Perennial Pulse*

National Sales Manager—Pace 49, Inc.

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