

Efficient Lighting & Irrigation, Plus What to do About Invasives



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

New Sustainabloom Guides
A Soil Health Center
Sprouts' Rapid Growth
Invasive Plants at the Nursery
Report from the MT Outpost



Sustainabloom's New Lighting and Water Guides

Sustainabloom—your source for free floriculture sustainability education—just added three new guides to their growing lineup of resources. They're part of Sustainabloom's mission to make sustainability approachable for all segments of the floral industry through clear, data-driven insights and actionable strategies.

Here's a rundown on the new guides:

Lighting Guide: Learn how to optimize lighting for plant growth, employee well-being and energy efficiency. You'll find steps to assess your current system, improve control options, and balance both environmental and economic factors.

Water Conservation for Growers: Reduce your input costs while maintaining crop quality. This guide brings you efficient irrigation practices, water recycling and system maintenance advice.

Water Conservation for Retailers: The retailers guide offers tips on minimizing water use in design and display, extending flower life, and engaging consumers in sustainability. Plus, steps on how to assess your water usage and implement conservation measures.



A New Soil Health Center

The University of California-San Diego just established a new Soil Health Center at Scripps Institution of Oceanography. This cross-discipline center will bring together researchers from various disciplines to focus on soil health research that can mitigate climate change, strengthen food security and improve resilience.



Sarah Allard, executive director of the new entity, said, “The Soil Health Center is a new initiative at UC-San Diego where we’re bringing together microbiologists, chemists, physicists, people with expertise in hydrology, public health, economics and public policy who are working on soil health across disciplines.”

The creation of the Soil Health Center is based on existing work by UC-San Diego professors looking at microbial solutions to improve soil health and advance regenerative practices. A team is currently developing probiotics, or biostimulants, that can be used to improve plant growth while also increasing carbon storage below ground. They’re partnering with local farms to trial one of these probiotics in the real world on lettuce, pumpkins and other crops—first in a greenhouse and then in the field.

You can learn more about the center [HERE](#).



The Rapid Growth of Sprouts Farmers Market

If you haven’t checked out [Sprouts Farmers Market](#) yet, you might want to. They were named Retailer of the Year by *Progressive Grocer* last December and now *The Produce News* has named this fast-growing business as Retailer of the Year for 2026.



Why all the buzz? Sprouts Farmers Market is now considered one of the fastest-growing specialty retailers of fresh, natural and organic food. They've focused on having a curated selection that their customers can't find anywhere else, but at prices that are "affordable." Sprout's open layout makes fresh produce the main attraction, something that's attracting both health-conscious shoppers and conventional consumers.

In fact, while Sprouts prices might not remind you of Whole Foods, some **pundits predict** that with this growth, Sprouts may actually be capable of competing with the Amazon-owned chain.

With more than 450 stores in 24 states, Sprouts added 35 stores in 2024 and 2025 looked to have a similar rapid pace of expansion. They reported \$2.2 billion in net sales in their 2025 third quarter earnings, a 13% increase over the same period in 2024. (And if you take out the new stores, they had comparable store sales growth of 5.9%.)



How Hoffman Nursery is Phasing Out Miscanthus

What happens if a significant plant in your production line is considered invasive? And what if that invasive is suddenly seeing banned sales and other regulations? If you're David Hoffman at Hoffman Nurseries, you respond proactively.



For North Carolina's Hoffman Nursery, the plant at issue was the popular grass miscanthus, which has been a significant part of their inventory. Not only has it been identified as an invasive, but it has created concern as it can increase the fuel load in wildfire risk. (Two states have sale bans on specific species, while others have emerging restrictions.)

David said, "We're choosing to gradually deemphasize and eventually phase out miscanthus."

His team has pivoted to finding design-driven alternative plants, and they put together an education webinar to give folks alternative grass options and to explain the regulatory environment for miscanthus. Whether you're looking for design ideas and product replacements, or if you're looking to learn how a company approaches this complex topic of invasive plants, there's a lot of fodder in this 54-minute presentation.

You can watch the full recording [HERE](#).

Report from the MT Outpost

December is throwing all the whiplash weather it can: We began with beautiful snow, following by rain and warm temperatures, then a giant wind storm that brought 80-plus mph winds and power outages. Yesterday, it looked like winter again and today it poured rain for an hour before I trudged through slush under blue skies. Some of you may be used to this kind of December, but here in Montana, I was ready to watch the snow pile up and hunker down for a long winter. (I'm sure, at some point, that will still happen.)

I want to wish all of you dear readers a happy holiday season. Gather the lights, the people and the good cheer. And don't forget to take yourself outdoors and ramble a bit.

Until next time,



Jennifer Duffield White

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