

Cold, Heat, a Passing and Grower Weeks



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Baby, it's cold outside!
South FL "dodged a bullet"
The latent energy of fusion
Cover your plants ... ?
RIP Gordie Bailey
Why no PlantCon Orlando?
Young Grower time!
Which week is which?



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I can't report from warm, tropical Orlando every week without being honest that the last two weeks have felt more like November in my old Illinois neighborhood River Ridge—cold and frosty!




I'm sure you've seen the news images of Florida's ice-covered blueberry and strawberry fields. And Dewar Nurseries in Apopka also got some national (and probably international) press courtesy of an AP photo of their crops covered with ice. They also posted some photos to Facebook and Instagram (including the one above), writing, in part:

"Moments like these are a reminder of how much care, planning and resilience go into every plant we grow. While freezes are never easy, they also highlight the strength of our team and our commitment to quality. Our crews worked quickly to monitor crops, implement protective measures and assess fields to minimize impact wherever possible. Growing is never without its challenges, but neither is our dedication. As temperatures rise and fields recover, we remain focused on delivering strong, healthy plants and supporting our customers every step of the way. Thank you to our team and customers for your continued trust and support. Warmer days and new growth are ahead."



If that doesn't sound like the voice of an optimistic grower, nothing does!

The temperature in Orlando hit a low of 24F on February 1, breaking the old record for that day,




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28F, set back in 1938. In fact, lots of Central Florida cities set new record lows for the day. But it wasn't the coldest ever in Orlando; that record is 18F in 1894's "Great Freeze" that folks still talk about because two back-to-back hard freezes destroyed much of the state's citrus industry.



Bradley Bethurem of Brad's Bedding posted this picture of ice-protected ferns at their Fort Pierce location.

I haven't yet heard any damage reports from growers (including Brad, who I emailed), but the USDA and the University of Florida are surveying the industry to assess damages, which can aid state and federal decision-making regarding response and relief.




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South Florida “dodged a bullet”

Down in South Florida, conditions weren't quite as drastic, but it was close. Andrew Britten, technical sales manager—foliage and tropicals for Ball, lives in Homestead and emailed me the weather report:

“We had a heavy frost here on Sunday night. Both Saturday and Sunday nights went down to 32F. We had a bit of wind on Saturday night, so no frost developed. Sunday night, the wind died down and frost was pretty widespread. We did not go as low as was forecast, so we did not have a freeze ... All the growers down here ran water, so I don't think anyone has had any major issues from the people I have talked to. I think we dodged a bullet here in South Florida.”

Costa Farms had a social media post much like Dewar's, along with a video of employees moving sansevieria late into the evening. Wrote Costa:

“We'd like to give our growers across our farms a shout out for putting in overnight shifts and doing the real work of protecting your future plants from the cold so you'll be able to find your favorite houseplants, tropicals like hibiscus and mandevilla, and other plants this spring. In this kind of weather, our growers are the definition of dedication and passion for their commitment and love of growing healthy, beautiful, high-quality plants. The next time you're out plant shopping, send them some positive vibes their way!”



How ice keeps plants from freezing

We've all seen this, and if you do it you probably know how it works. I sorta know ... but not exactly. So I dug into the science of the “latent heat of fusion” in which freezing water actually gives off heat energy.

How much heat exactly?

334 joules per gram.

Now bear with me here ... there are 334 joules per gram and about 240 grams in a cup of water, which equates to 78,824 joules per cup of water, which equates to 0.021 kWh (kilowatt-hours—the amount of energy given off over time).

How much heat energy is that? Well, it's the same as running a 100-watt light bulb for 13 minutes. Freeze a gallon of water and you get 3 ½ hours of that energy.

At the same time, as long as the water continues freezing, it will stay at 32F, in essence insulating the plants from dropping below that temperature, so you get both heat energy and insulation from the ice.

And now you know that those icicles are more than just good photo ops for the press!



Why “cover your plants” probably didn't work



With a light frost, covering a beloved plant with a sheet might keep frost from damaging the foliage. But with what we experience, the advice was worthless unless the fabric was tented above the plant and there was a heat source (like a lightbulb) below. And even then the odds weren't good at below freezing.

One of my neighbors had recently planted a long hedge of tender clusia, well over 100 of them. These are a Zone-10 plant and we're in 9B, so we knew it was a risk and we were sorry to see them get hit so hard so soon after planting.



The landscaper made a gallant, but ill-advised, attempt to protect some of them with shade cloth. Why he thought a fabric that's full holes was going to do any good I have no idea ...

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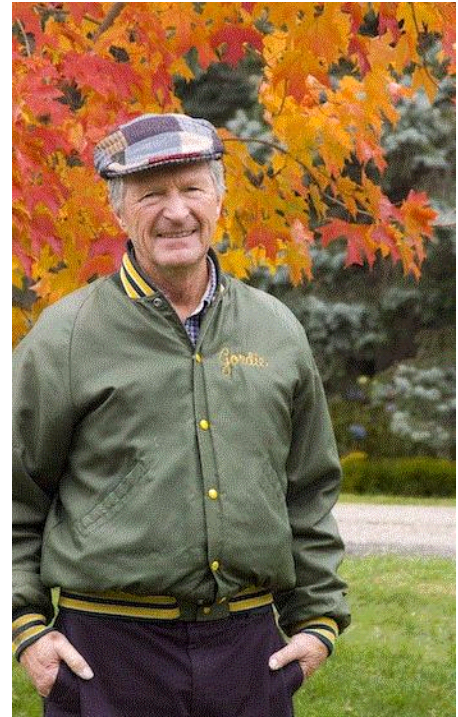
In memoriam: Gordie Bailey

I'm sorry to report the passing of one of the third-generation leaders of well-known Bailey Nurseries in Minnesota. Gordon "Gordie" Bailey, Jr. passed away January 29 at his home in Newport, Minnesota, at the age of 90 after a—get this—70-year career with the family business. That's a long and influential life in horticulture! Gordie is said to have played a pivotal role in shaping the company's growth, culture and long-term vision. Known for his humility, deep knowledge of plants and unwavering belief in people, his influence also extended well beyond the company to the broader horticulture industry.

“Gordie believed that success in this industry starts with people and plants,” said the Bailey family in Gordie’s obituary. “He cared deeply about creating opportunity for others, advancing innovation and growth within horticulture, and stewarding the land and communities he loved.”

During his long career, Gordie served as President of the Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association and was inducted into the Hall of Fame for both MNLA and the American Nursery & Landscape Association. He also served as a trustee for the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Foundation, Saint John’s University and Carpenter Nature Center, among other organizations.

Gordie was also known for his philanthropic efforts and advocacy for horticultural research and education. He spearheaded “Tour de Hort,” cycling 2,100 miles across the U.S. to raise \$1.25 million for the Horticultural Research Institute. He even climbed Mount Kilimanjaro at age 79 to help fund the construction of a girls’ school in Nairobi, Kenya.



A zealous plantsman, he was passionate about environmental stewardship, introduction of new genetics and growing great plants. His contributions include selecting notable varieties such as Frontyard Linden, Wildfire Winterberry and Shamrock Littleleaf Linden.

Gordie’s family added that he was a humble, thoughtful and hardworking man who lived a full life. In his memoir, “Filled with Gratitude,” Gordie shared his perspective that leaves us with words to live by now and into the future.

“I am filled with gratitude as I have looked back on my life in writing this. I have so much to be grateful for and so many to be grateful to. Gratitude is much like love in that it is never expressed enough.”

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IN TOUCH

Why no PlantCon in Florida?

Last year, in late February, I reported on the first [PlantCon Orlando](#), which drew more than 3,000 houseplant enthusiasts to the most unusual plant show I’d ever attended (I noted that the first booth I saw was a tattoo artist). It seemed to be a roaring success and Kenny Kong, the founder, seemed pleased when I interviewed him. In other words, I was fully expecting news of the second PlanCon Orlando sometime this winter.

But nothing. Their website lists Los Angeles (February 21-22) and Houston (April 25-26). But no Orlando. Why not? I emailed Kenny to ask, but heard nothing back.



The inaugural PlantCon Orlando seemed to be a feeding frenzy of foliage.

While at TPIE, I encountered two folks in PlantCon t-shirts and I took the opportunity to ask them about Orlando. I also mentioned that I'd emailed Kenny, but he hadn't replied.

Then when I got home, I found this in my inbox:

"Hi, Chris! I'm sorry we missed each other this weekend! When I finally saw you, I believe you were the man with the gorgeous, massive palm. It looked like your hands were plenty full and I did not want to impose. *(I was hauling a Christmas palm that had been gifted to me.)*

"Thankfully, my team said they got to talk with you on the show floor and let me know to search my inbox for missed emails from you. Sure enough, there they were in my spam folder.

"To very belatedly answer your question, we did not have plans to return to Florida because the attendance in Orlando was less than half of our next lowest-attended show and a third of our largest. However, after coming to TPIE and being asked multiple times by sellers, wholesalers AND attendees to add Florida back to our roadmap, I am launching an effort to add a PlantCon Florida on the first weekend of December before the year ends."

That "effort," Kenny explained, could be driven by a Kickstarter campaign, which would help him gauge the interest among potential attendees and exhibitors, as well as raise funds for locking in a venue. (He also mentioned that there were six PlantCon events already scheduled for this year, so I assume they just haven't put them online yet.)

Added Kenny, "I have been floored and honored by the sheer number of requests for a return to Florida, and it's just so humbling to see that our presence in this community was so appreciated. It makes it very hard not to return as soon as possible."

I'll admit I was a bit surprised by his low numbers ... however, this is Orlando, where houseplants and places to buy them are more common than in other big markets, so perhaps that explains it.

Anyway, stay tuned to see if PlantCon makes its return to the Sunshine State or adds any other events to its calendar.



Nominate a Young Grower or Young Retailer

For more than 20 years, Ball Publishing has bestowed the title of Young Grower and Young Retailer on deserving individuals who've chosen horticulture as their career. Honorees are young (under 35), but they're already doing big things in the industry—with the promise of much more!



Our finalists and winners for 2025. Are you next in line?

Do you know a young person making a difference in horticulture? Someone who sets an example, inspires their peers, impresses their bosses and loves what they do. Perhaps that even describes YOU!

Nominations are currently open now through March 1 for the 2026 *GrowerTalks* Young Grower Award and *Green Profit* Young Retailer Award. Here are the nomination forms:

[YGA Nomination Form](#)

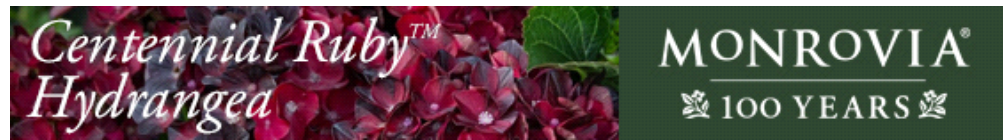
[YRA Nomination Form](#)

How does it work? Well, from the nominations, our panel of editors will select three finalists for each award, each of whom will be asked to write a guest editorial for the June issue of our magazines based on a topic selected by our editors. And all six finalists will be invited to attend Cultivate'26 in July for a gala dinner with editors, judges and sponsors before the awards ceremony Monday evening at AmericanHort's Unplugged event for young professionals, where we'll crown the two winners.

Those two talented souls will be featured on the covers of the September *GrowerTalks* and *Green Profit*, and will get to help judge next year's award candidates.

So what are you waiting for? Sign up that talented young person (or yourself) now!

A huge thanks to our award sponsors Ball Horticultural Company, BASF, The Garden Center Group and AmericanHort.



Which Week is which?

2026 Calendar with ISO week numbers							www.calendar.best																									
January							February							March							April											
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A note about Weeks. Not weeks. Weeks. As in Grower Weeks. As in “It’s Week 10, where the heck are my begonia plugs?” We’ve heard a report of at least one horticulture industry calendar showing the last week of 2026 as Week 1 of 2027, when actually it should be Week 53 of 2026. How is this figured and which is correct?

Easy!

Weeks have been determined by a methodology accepted by ISO, or the International Organization for Standardization, since 1971.

First, note that an ISO week runs Monday–Sunday, not Sunday–Saturday. That is critical!

Week 1 is the first week of the year that contains a Thursday.

That’s the whole trick. (This is also why some years have 52 weeks and others have 53.)

So for 2026, January 1 falls on a Thursday, which means the week that includes it—December 29, 2025 through January 4, 2026—is Week 1 of 2026.

Looking ahead to 2027, January 1 is a Friday, which means it still belongs to the last ISO week of 2026. The first Thursday of 2027 is January 7, so January 4–10 becomes Week 1 of 2027. That makes December 28, 2026–January 3, 2027 Week 53 of 2026.

Clear as mud?

A few other rules you can use to figure it:

- Week 1 is the first week with four or more of its days in January
- Week 1 always has January 4 in it
- In many business calendars, Week 1 is considered the week with the year's first workday in it (though this is a convention, not an ISO rule)

And remember: The ISO week runs Monday to Sunday, so adjust your computer calendar accordingly if you have the "Show Weeks" setting on.



Feel free to email me at beytes@growertalks.com if you have ideas, comments or questions.

See you next time!

Chris Beytes
Editor-in-Chief
GrowerTalks & Green Profit

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