

# Meet Maddie; JZ Gets Inspired; Gardening on Netflix



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FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2026

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## GrowerTalks' Acres Online

*News and Commentary from GrowerTalks Magazine*

### COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- Podcast: Meet Maddie Maynor
- GreenTech NA on for Sept
- Fert/Nutrition short course
- Happy 35, Emerald Coast!
- JZ at the big Home Show
- White IS a color!
- Gardening on Netflix
- Finally ...



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**Posted: My latest Young Grower podcast**

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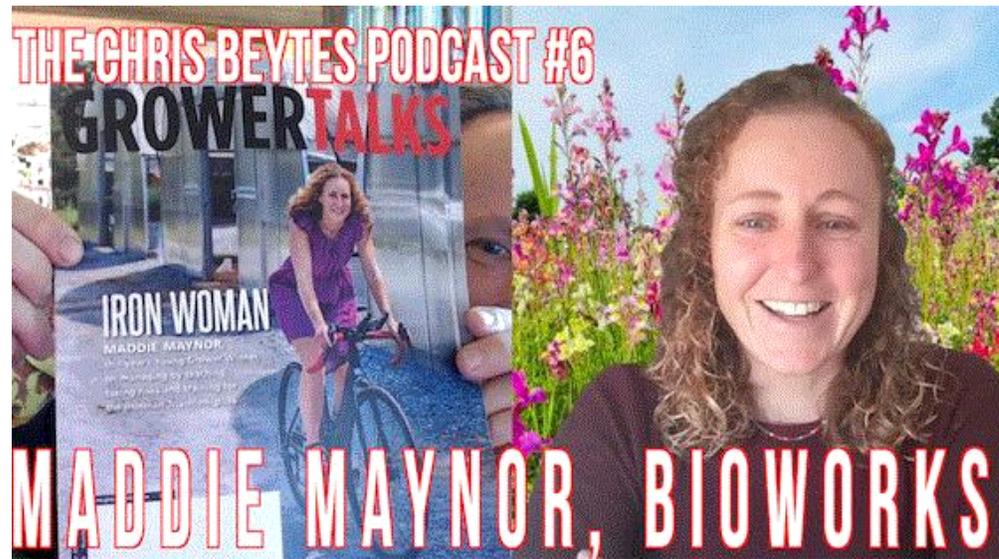


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I've just dropped (isn't that what the kids say?) the latest in my Young Grower Award podcast series, this time featuring our 2021 winner, Maddie Maynor. Maddie is a technical support specialist at BioWorks, where she said her job "is like a field trip, every other week."



Maddie grew up surrounded by horticulture, especially public horticulture—her mom was a horticulturist at the North Carolina Zoo and her dad was a forester. But for Maddie, hort was only a back-up plan—she thought she wanted a career in history! And yet somehow she's become an expert at biological controls. I think you'll enjoy and learn from this conversation.

Click [HERE](#) to watch and/or listen.

**NEW FOR 2026**

**PETUNIA OF THE YEAR**

**PW PROVEN WINNERS**

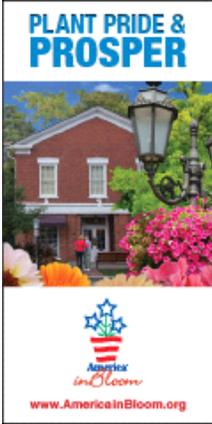
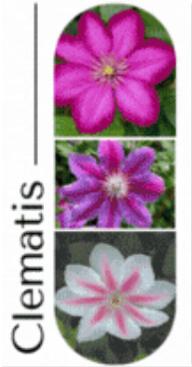


## GreenTech North America on for September

Since some of my time and attention goes toward CEA, or controlled-environment agriculture (the fancy term for growing food in a greenhouse or vertical farm), I thought I'd mention a show you might want to check out if you're in the region: the first-ever GreenTech North America, sister show to the big one held in Amsterdam every June. It's slated for September 23-24 at the Philadelphia Convention Center.

Now, it will NOT resemble the original GreenTech, which in 2025 could boast 545 exhibitors from 41 countries and 11,800 attendees. Our show will have around 90 exhibitors and 1,000 attendees (the organizers forecast). Humble, but a start.

They say the trade show will focus on "sustainable and high-tech horticulture solutions." Attendees are expected to represent growers and breeders of vegetables, soft fruits, ornamentals, leafy greens and medicinal plants. And all the allied folks, of course, including me—I'm scheduled to check it out, since I'm the only one of the Ball Publishing staff who's been to the Amsterdam show.



I'm looking forward to hearing keynote speaker Cole Mucci, CEO & Founder of KingsOne Farms, a Canadian hydroponic lettuce producer. He's the third-generation of Mucci farms, where his dad and uncle grow high-wire vegetables. I guess they decided they needed some lettuce for their salads and Cole took on the challenge.

I like this quote Cole gave the show organizers for their publicity: "While new technologies and automation are shaping the future of our industry, it's important we don't overcomplicate things and continue focusing on the fundamentals of good growing."

If anyone knows CEA is farming and not a Silicon Valley tech investment, it's Cole.

Anyway, learn more [HERE](#) ... and maybe plan to drop in for a look-see!





## Fertilizer and plant nutrition short course

Speaking of veggies, if you're interested in providing better nutrition for leafy greens, strawberries or tomatoes, sign up for one of the excellent short courses offered by my friend Chris Higgins of HortAmericas. This one, "Fertilizer Management and Plant Nutrition," will be taught by expert Karla Garcia on Friday March 27. It's via Zoom, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Eastern. The price is just \$50.

**FERTILIZER  
MANAGEMENT  
AND PLANT  
NUTRITION**

**SHORT COURSE**

Learn how to make nutrient recipes and calculations for leafy greens, tomato and strawberry production

**March 27th**

By: M.S Karla Garcia  
**LIVE SESSION**

In this two-hour class, you'll learn:

- Plant nutrition and nutrient uptake
- Crop-specific nutrition, tailored for leafy greens, vine crops and strawberries
- How to formulate and mix your own fertilizers
- How to monitor, adjust and manage your fertilizer program for consistent, healthy crop production

While aimed at vegetable production, I think the principles will apply to any crop, so you're bound to pick up some valuable insights if you attend. Plus, I'm sure you can ask Karla questions.

Learn more and sign up [HERE](#).



## Happy anniversary, Emerald Coast!

A very happy 35th anniversary to Florida grass, perennial and succulent liner specialist **Emerald Coast Growers**. The Pensacola, Florida, business was founded in January 1991 by Dave and Wyona Babikow, who moved to Florida from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, with their two sons, Mark and Paul.

Dave has a long family history in growing, dating back to 1875 in Baltimore, where his grandfather had a nursery. In Pennsylvania, Dave worked for Green Leaf Enterprises, owned by his brother, Buzz, but he was also growing ornamental grasses in his backyard. The family decided to branch out and start their own nursery, and they chose the panhandle of Florida, a decision that's not quite as crazy as it sounds. It's mild enough for a long growing season (Zone 8b), but gets cool enough in the winter for a good dormancy period. And it's near major highways.



Over that 35-year period, Emerald Coast has grown from just a few hoopouses to three locations (they added Milton, Florida, and Lancaster, Pennsylvania), with 570,000 sq. ft. of greenhouses and 85 acres of farmland. And they've expanded from just grasses to include perennials and succulents.

Dave and his wife retired in 2013; today, the fourth generation is keeping the Babikow family tradition alive!



## JZ at the Inspired Home Show

*If I regret anything about moving away from Chicagoland, it's missing out on the annual **Inspired Home Show**. It's the gathering place for all the big kitchenware companies like Pyrex and Lodge Cast Iron and CorningWare and Wusthof and Riedel, and it's fun to look for the ways the housewares industry makes use of OUR stuff—sometimes indirectly, through images of our flowers and foliage, and sometimes directly, with flower pots and even countertop composters. But Jen Zurko still lives in Chicagoland, so she got the fun gig instead. Here are the highlights from her report:*

Every March, Chicago's McCormick Place hosts The Inspired Home Show, which the event organizers (the International Housewares Association) boast is "the world's leading home and housewares show." It's worth sitting in traffic and heading into the best city in the world to see how the housewares and décor industry incorporates our products into theirs.

Yes, there's a lot of cookware, stemware, cutlery and kitchen gadgets featured at this show (and more things to drink out of than you can shake a straw at). But there were also some interesting finds this year—a couple I think our IGC friends would find especially interesting.

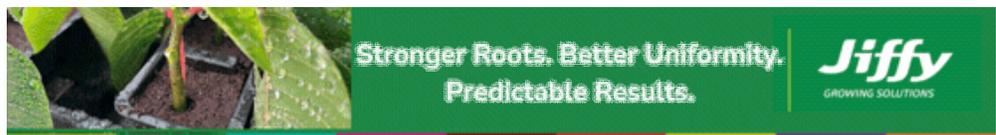
Blue Sky had cactus plant mugs and a slew of pet-related products, including bowls and dishes—for you and your pet!



I stopped at Tag's booth because I saw a little figurine of a cat stretching and thought, "Hey, I just saw those at Wallace's Garden Center last week!" Steve Johnson, who helps Tag with their marketing, told me that they know Wallace's well and sell to many garden centers around the country. They not only had figurines, but trinket dishes inspired by flowers, plants and pets.



I LOVED these bowls and cups from Widgeater, which have real dried flowers molded inside the plastic.



### Inspired Home Show (cont.)

Brazil-based company Floridis makes planters and containers from high-density polyethylene, so they not only last a long time, but they're UV resistant so they don't fade. The Verdy series features four sizes of containers shaped like a wine glass that have a stone texture. They're also really lightweight. They're currently selling them at some big box stores and retailers like

Wayfair.



Prepara's Salad Pod is a genius way to pack an on-the-go salad. You just put your salad in the Pod and when you're ready to eat it, you open the top, pour in your dressing, close it and shake it for even dressing distribution. No leaking! The best part is it also serves as your bowl, too—just put it on its side and open the hatch. They also have the Harvest Pod for grain and protein bowls or warm dishes. They sell them individually or in bundles and have self-standing endcap POP.



The one booth where I saw real plants was where the company called Hello Tomorrow (cute name!) was showing their new brand of motion-sensor pots and vases. Called Plantpetz, the interior shell of the container will make the plant inside of it move in response to motion or ambient sound with the help of a sensor that you place in the soil. You can pet or talk to your plant and it'll start to spin and wiggle. The pot also serves as a Bluetooth speaker, so you and your plant can dance together to your favorite tunes. And you can record a message to make a truly unique personal gift.



## The rationale behind Cloud Dancer

As in previous years, Executive Director of the [Pantone Color Institute](#) Leatrice “Lee” Eiseman gave a talk about color trends. This year, her presentation theme was “Sense-Abilities—The Most Directional Color & Design Trends.” I think of her as the Anna Wintour\* of color trends and really enjoy her talks.

Lee started her session with: “It’s not just the trend, but what’s behind it.” She tied in color trends with the five senses (sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing) and it can be argued that many of the recent Pantone Colors of the Year cover multiple senses.



Lee said she saw Peach Fuzz, the 2024 Color of the Year, used in what she calls “integration in memorable and unexpected ways”—in a variety of textures in clothing and apparel, for instance as a cozy fleece peach blanket. Last year’s Mocha Mousse was “a color you could literally taste,” said Lee.

As for the Color of the Year for 2026, Cloud Dancer, Lee explained it’s “something to quiet all the white noise. It’s a hushed whisper in a noisy world.”

As with 2025’s Mocha Mousse, there were a lot of ... ahem ... opinions about the choice of Cloud Dancer. Some people told Lee that “white is not a color.” But she bristles at that.

“White evokes a presence. It’s a clean slate—especially with what’s going on around us.”

Lee said white is the best color for contrast and 95% of consumers say that color is the number one reason they buy a product, so “presentation and color is key.”

She showed many examples of white used in multiple ways, from clothing to housewares. White is classic and timeless, and can be used anytime, anywhere, with anything.

She waved off not wearing white after Labor Day as “an old concept.” And that we should pay attention to what fashion designers are creating—which right now is a lot of flowy white clothing.

“Fashion always points the finger on where we are going,” said Lee.

And in home décor, white is “a stable, dependable choice” in quilting and porcelain, linens and marble, which “expresses purity.”

Lee also talked about something a bit closer to home: foliage and greenery. Not everyone has easy access to nature, so they’re always looking for it in home décor, even if it’s a floral pattern on a dish or leaves on wallpaper.

“The key to bringing it all together is color,” she said.

*\*Editor of Vogue magazine from 1988 to 2025.*

## **Gardening coming to Netflix**

“If I were to offer a remedy to the human condition, it would be a garden ... or acid.”

So says actor/comedian Zach Galifianakis in the trailer to his new Netflix series, “This Is a Gardening Show,” scheduled to start April 22 on the streaming service.

The trailer (which you can [FIND ON YouTube](#)) describes the series like this:

*Rather than positioning himself as an expert, Galifianakis approaches the subject with curiosity and self-effacing humor, admitting that his goal is to learn alongside the audience. The series blends lighthearted comedy with a sincere appreciation for humans and nature. Ultimately, "This Is a Gardening Show" is about the joy of connecting with the earth and people.*

This isn’t Zach’s first foray into the plant world—he’s also the host of the satirical celebrity interview show “Between Two Ferns.”



It makes me wonder if Netflix saw the wild success of “[Clarkson’s Farm](#)” on Amazon (one of my favorite new shows) and wanted a piece of the action. Regardless, being on Netflix could be the break our industry has been waiting for!

## Finally ...

Where am I this time? Off to the California Spring Trials, as I think I've mentioned one or 10 times. Next Monday through Friday, I'll be with fellow editors Jen Zurko and Bill Calkins covering every stop, while videographer extraordinaire Osvaldo Cuevas captures the action in HD splendor. If you receive this newsletter, you should also automatically get our daily "Acres of buZZ!" newsletter featuring all the highlights and video links. It's the next best thing to being there yourself!

Feel free to email me at [beytes@growertalks.com](mailto:beytes@growertalks.com) if you have ideas, comments or questions.

See you next time!



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