

Dipping tropicals, UF's latest online course and news from Garden Industries



TROPICAL PLANT  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
EXPO **2027** FT. LAUDERDALE

**JAN**  
**20-22**

News and Inspiration from the world of foliage and tropical plants



TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2026

subscribe



Get to the Root of It  
*We know greenhouses!*



# TROPICAL TOPICS

### COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- Dipping Tropicals
- Suzanne at Cultivate
- UF's Latest Online Course
- Speaking of UF IFAS ...
- Garden Industries

**FIND MORE**  
Search with confidence.

Hundreds of growers. Thousands of plants.

**SEARCH NOW**

NEW! **NurseryGuide.com**

Built for wholesale plant search.

## Dipping Tropicals

I occasionally reach out to some industry experts to essentially ask, "What's up? Anything we should keep our eyes on?" My latest "What's up?" ask was to Suzanne "Buglady" Wainwright-Evans. And I love her for always coming through with a "Well, actually ..."

She says many growers have increasing concerns about the ever-present pressure from spider mites, thrips and aphids coming in on material originating from off shore or from the south. After all, it only takes a few individuals to cause a major pest scene, especially now with beneficial insect programs under more pressure themselves.



Suzanne sees a trend in the number of growers bringing in finished plants and/or cuttings from

---

tropical plant production facilities who are dipping, or treating incoming plants, before they continue into their own production areas, or even cross-docking. Tropical plant growers are doing everything they can to prevent pest pressures, and to that end dipping is becoming part of the standard intake procedure for several growers. It's a practice that they feel helps reduce the need for repeated sprays as the crops finish.

Suzanne mentioned two products growers are using in this dipping procedure. First is Agro ProX from Agromagen. She calls them the "newer kid on the block" but has found that this product not just works well, but growers she has been in touch with have seen great results with it. It's also EPA-exempt, so no special REI and no special PPE required.

Another product Suzanne mentioned is EpiShield from BioWorks, another EPA-exempt product.

Suzanne also noted that there are ongoing and planned trials looking at how dipping fits into production systems, especially around tropical foliage. Stay tuned!

## Suzanne at Cultivate

Not only is Suzanne's knowledge on the topic of insects a 10 out of 10, but her enthusiasm for sharing what she knows is off the charts, as well. And just like aphids in a cozy warm greenhouse, her enthusiasm spreads like wildfire. Catch some of both her knowledge and passion for the topic at [Cultivate'26](#), happening in Columbus, Ohio, July 11-14.

You have four chances to catch her doing what she does best (get to the Monday session early if you want a seat!):

Saturday, July 11: [Grower Insect & Disease Full-Day Workshop](#)

Sunday, July 12: [Moderating the Visionaries in Biocontrol Panel](#)

Monday, July 13: [Pest Management Update with the Bug Lady](#)—always a can't-miss session!

Tuesday, July 14: [Biopesticides 101](#)—a grower-driven 3-hour deep dive into biopesticides.

There are a bunch of other great courses that are geared toward interior plantscapers. I'll update you about them next time.



## UF's Latest Online Course

The University of Florida IFAS Extension has some excellent greenhouse training courses—all online! Their latest is Substrates for Container-Grown Plants and it starts June 1.

The course, taught by Dr. Loren Oki and Dr. Jeb Fields (a fellow Ball Publishing newsletter editor), is for those in production, technical or sales roles for greenhouse and nursery crops. The focus is on understanding the science of substrates on factors that improve water and air availability for plants. Learn about all aspects of managing container substrates, including the appropriate use of substrates, amendments, fertilizers and irrigation. The course, which runs from June 1-26, will teach real-world knowledge and skills that can be applied to nursery and greenhouse production in commercial and urban agriculture, research and commercial landscapes.



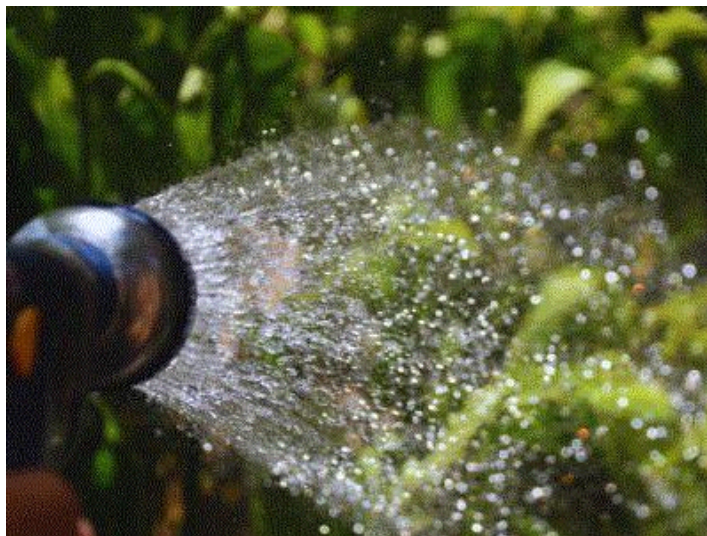
This is an all-online course that includes course materials, videos, quizzes and an interactive discussion board with the course instructors. You'll gain access to two new modules each week during the four-week course. Register [HERE](#). And by the way, the course is a requirement for the [Root Zone Expert program](#).



## Speaking of UF IFAS ...

That same University of Florida IFAS Extension Greenhouse Training Online program has a free online Professional Irrigator training series to help growers train staff to avoid overwatering and inconsistent irrigation. Did I mention *free*?

The series includes short modules in a "lunch and learn" format, each one including one instructional video for a mobile phone or in the break room, along with one hands-on activity to apply skills directly in the greenhouse or nursery. Materials are in both English and Spanish to support a diverse workforce.



What I like about the course is that they explain the “why” behind irrigation decisions as well as the practical “how-tos.” The modules use everyday analogies instead of technical jargon, making it way easier to comprehend some of the complex concepts that are critical for proper irrigation.

The six lunch and learn sessions are available for free [HERE](#)—just look under “Training” and “Professional Irrigator.”



## Two Things from Garden Industries

A couple weeks ago I promised you an “I Dig Your Story” podcast with another tropicals-related individual. That person is David Bache, Nursery Director of Garden Industries in Loxahatchee, Florida. Everything about David and our conversation says, “plant nerd,” and he proudly responds to that name.



We had a great conversation about how his passion for plants developed, when he finally realized it was all about the plants and not about the design, and how his free time away from plants is ... more plants. Oh, and fish. Listen to the conversation [HERE](#) on Apple Podcasts or on other major podcast platforms.

As for the second thing from Garden Industries, the nursery is informing its customers that they are transitioning to a by-appointment service model. Why? Well, when you have great plants, you

draw a crowd. Scheduling a visit helps to quell the crowding and make it a much more enjoyable and personalized experience for every client.

With nursery visits scheduled, orders can be pre-assembled whenever possible, allowing for personal attention when clients are on site. One time slot, one client, so visitors get their undivided attention.

If you are a Garden Industries client, you can start scheduling your appointments now. They are using Calendly, a tool that lets you see available times and schedule your visit quickly. You can find the Calendly scheduling link on the Garden Industries website, in their email signature, across their social platforms and whenever they post their availability. No app to download, just click a link. The current system of walk-in sales ends Memorial Weekend and will proceed with scheduling on May 26. Check out the ease of the Calendly link [HERE](#).

I like this idea. I feel like it's taking control with the goal of creating order. And I am sure it helps staff arrange their time more effectively, too.

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions for content, email me about them at [ewells@ballpublishing.com](mailto:ewells@ballpublishing.com).



**Ellen Wells**  
Senior Editor  
Green Profit

**This edition of Tropical Topics was sent to 28,754 loyal readers!**

If you're interested in advertising on Tropical Topics, contact [Kim Brown](#) ASAP!

