

Strategies for COVID-19, plus TP & Weed

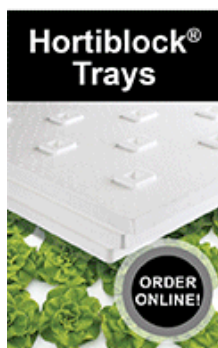
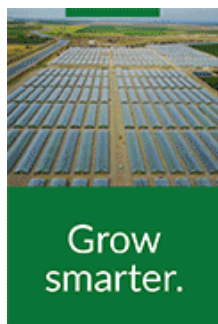


Greenhouse vegetable news from GrowerTalks magazine



FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2020

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Controlled Environment Agriculture

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Dealing with COVID-19
Seasonal Workers
Cancellations & Delays
2020 GHSE Training
Help Influence Trucking Regs
TP & Weed



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Strategies for Dealing with COVID-19

Since I sent my last newsletter not even two weeks ago we've seen a tectonic shift in the world around us, from how we interact socially (virtually nonexistent now) to how we conduct business, due to COVID-19. It's an uncertain time, but one thing is for sure: people are relying on stocked grocery stores to help them through this crisis.

In some ways, the panic buying could have been expected—it's the first thing that happens when a snowstorm hits, for example. Everyone runs out for milk and bread. This is way more severe than a snowstorm, so the panic buying is much more intense. Demand continues for fresh produce at the grocery store, but there's reduced demand from restaurants, institutions and universities.

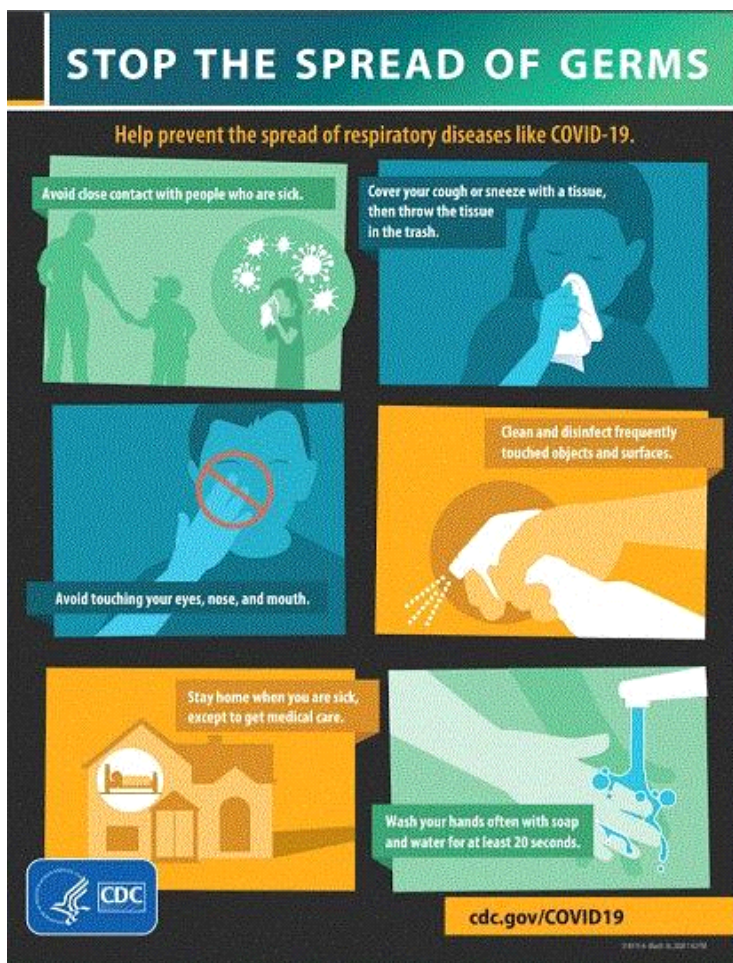
To that end, United Fresh President & CEO Tom Stenzel sent out an update Tuesday with links to two separate resources, one for producers and another for consumers. The [industry-facing site](#)



includes links to the CDC, WHO, USDA statements and more. The [consumer-facing site](#) reassures the food supply is safe (and that there are no clinically confirmed cases of COVID-19 linked to the consumption of fresh produce) and encourages people to not hoard food.

The organization also created a [LinkedIn Group](#) for industry members to share, connect and talk about specific needs. That group can also help connect distributors with excess produce to retailers looking to restock shelves.

Tom also noted in the message that the Small Business Administration (SBA) has loans up to \$2 million available for small businesses, agricultural cooperatives and non-profits that are in declared disaster areas via its [SBA Disaster Loan Program](#).



Finally, if you're looking for basic information on how to keep you and your employees safe during this stressful time, the Florida Nursery, Greenhouse & Landscape Association (FNGLA) provided a list of links for growers and retailers. Here's one for printable [CDC recommendations](#) on facts and safety information related to COVID-19 in English and Spanish.

New developments are coming out daily with regard to small business assistance, so I'll try to stay on top of what's happening to get it out to you when I can. If you see something you think would be beneficial to blast out to the industry, email it to me at jpolanz@ballpublishing.com.



Seasonal Workers



Labor, which is already a major challenge, will likely continue to be in multiple ways. On Monday, it was announced the U.S. Consulate in Mexico would cease processing visas, meaning some seasonal workers won't be able to come in to the country to work. AmericanHort sent out a message from Ken Fisher on Tuesday that they're working with "government partners and business coalitions to ensure these programs are not unnecessarily disrupted. We are pressing the case that H-2 visa processing should be prioritized and should continue."

The Washington Post reported [Wednesday](#) that the American Farm Bureau Federation is also working with the federal government to find "safe, practical ways" to bring seasonal workers into the U.S. The story stated: "Many seasonal workers will still be granted entry. The State Department is allowing laborers with previous work experience in the United States and who do not require in-person interviews to return, according to the federation. In 2019, 258,000 migrant workers received H-2A visas, the vast majority of whom were from Mexico."

In an update letter to members Thursday, United Fresh President & CEO Tom Stenzel relayed a new partnership between USDA and the Department of Labor to identify foreign and domestic workers that may be able to transfer to other U.S. agriculture sectors to fulfill workforce needs. [Read USDA's release on that HERE.](#)



Cancellations & Delays

Of course, there have been many cancellations in the recent days and it seems like we can expect more as we go. The biggest one for me was the NCERA 101 International Meeting that was scheduled to take place this week. Fortunately, that's already been rescheduled for September 13-17, still to take place at the Marriott University Park Hotel in Tucson, Arizona, on the main campus of the University of Arizona. You can find the revised details [HERE](#).

GreenTech Americas, originally scheduled for next week, is being rescheduled for August 25-27, also still in the same location as before at the Queretaro Centro de Congresos, QRO Mexico. [CLICK HERE](#) for those details.

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All Events

March 2020

9 - 18 World Orchid Conference (WOC 23) - Postponed, Date TBD
13 - 22 Canada Blooms - Suspended
14 - 22 Indiana Flower & Patio Show - Cancelled
15 - 18 NCERA 101 Annual Meeting - Postponed to September 2020
18 UConn Tomato Workshop For Production In Soilless Media In Greenhouses
18 - 20 Tulip Trade Event
18 - 22 Chicago Flower & Garden Show - Cancelled
20 - 29 Realtors Home & Garden Show - Cancelled
20 - 22 Jackson Garden Extravaganza
20 - 24 Minneapolis Gift, Home & Accessory Show - Postponed
22 - 24 REV Chicago Boutique Show
24 - 26 GreenTech Americas - Postponed to August 2020
25 - 29 Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show - Cancelled
25 - 27 World Floral Expo - Rescheduled to 2021
26 AmericanHort Webinar: Three-part Series for Garden Retailers - Shopping from the Consumer's Perspective
27 - 29 Capital District Garden & Flower Show - Cancelled
27 - 29 Boise Flower & Garden Show - Postponed until March 2021
28 - Apr 2 California Spring Trials - Cancelled
29 - 31 LA Mart Spring Market | Gift + Home

April 2020

2 - 3 WQA Convention & Exposition - Cancelled
2 - 5 San Fran-Nor Cal San Francisco Flower & Garden Show - Cancelled
4 - 5 Los Angeles Christmas Cash & Carry Gift Show - Postponed to June

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World Orchid Conference 23rd
2020 世界蘭展 台北
Taichung

World Orchid Conference (WOC 23) - Postponed, Date TBD

3/9/2020 - 3/18/2020

Waipu Expo Site of Taichung World Flora Exposition, Taichung City, Taiwan

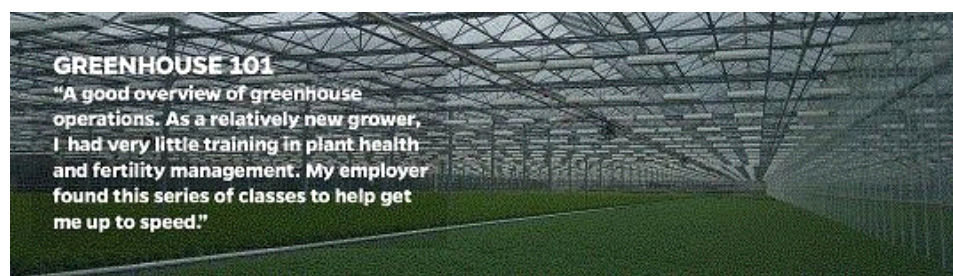
The 2020 World Orchid Conference has been postponed due to concerns of the Coronavirus.

www.woc23.com
service@woc23.com
Phone: 886-4-26833728

It's a fluid situation when it comes to when we'll be able to gather in large groups again, so keep checking our HortCalendar.com website to see whether or not your industry event has been cancelled and/or rescheduled.



2020 Greenhouse Training (Online, of Course)



Education can continue via web-based learning, though, and this year the University of Florida's online Greenhouse Training course includes a new hydroponics production class. These are four-week, award-winning online courses in both English and Spanish, offered by University of Florida IFAS Extension. The first course begins on June 1 and includes streaming videos, readings and assignments.

New modules are activated each week during the course and they're available any time of the day. University instructors are available for help and interactive discussions. The university offers discounts for registering multiple staff.

This year's course lineup includes:

- **Greenhouse 101:** June 1 - June 26 (registration closes June 8)
- **Nutrient Management 1 (introduction):** July 6 – July 31 (registration closes July 13)
- **Advanced Nutrient Management:** August 31 – September 25 (registration closes September 7)
- **Disease Management:** September 28 - October 23 (registration closes October 5)
- **Weed Management:** October 26 – November 20 (registration closes November 2)
- **Hydroponic Vegetable Production:** November 9 – December 11 (registration closes November 16)

To register, visit <http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/training/>.

Help Influence Trucking Regulations

It's hard to say how current shutdowns will impact the trucking industry, but right now there are other regulations at play that we can have an impact on. AmericanHort is asking for more support from industry members to help change the definition of "agricultural commodity" to specifically include horticulture and floriculture. Currently, Senators David Perdue (R-GA) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR) are circulating a letter to the Senate's Transportation Appropriations subcommittee to include the same language from the House bill Agriculture Trucking Relief Act into the legislation to fund the government for FY2021.



"Crops that have long been recognized as agricultural commodities—such as nursery and greenhouse production—remain in limbo despite facing the same challenges as other agricultural commodities: seasonality, perishability and narrow market windows," writes AmericanHort's advocacy team. "We're hoping for an equally strong showing in the Senate to showcase how big of an issue this is for producers and shippers alike. We can't wait through another harvest season full of uncertainty."

[CLICK HERE](#) to fill out a quick and easy form letter and lend your support.

TP & Weed

On the lightest note I can possibly muster right now, I end with this: people are not just hoarding toilet paper, but also marijuana, apparently. According to 420Intel, Americans are more than a little concerned that their favorite dispensary may have to close due to the spread of COVID-19.

Shops all over the country have reported an uptick in the amount of customers and how much they're buying at once.

"Apparently people need weed and toilet paper, that I am sure of," the story quotes Wanda James, 56, who owns the Simply Pure dispensary in Denver. "They are absolutely stocking up."



You can read the full story [HERE](#).

As always, feel free to email me at jpolanz@ballpublishing.com with comments, questions, news and views.

Until next time, stay safe and be healthy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer". The script is cursive and fluid.

Jennifer Polanz
Editor-at-Large
Inside Grower

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