

Q&A from foliage webinar, plus tropical combos and Mother’s Day



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TROPICAL TOPICS

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Answering the Unanswered
Two About Inventory
Tropical Combos
Houseplants for Mom's Day



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Answering the Unanswered

I mentioned last time around that AmericanHort's "Trends & Availability for Tropical and Foliage Plants" webinar that took place April 6 had a tremendous amount of attendee participation in the form of submitted questions. The webinar's panelists—Kingston White of Morning Dew Tropical Plants, Denise Godfrey of Olive Hill Greenhouses, Maxwell Mercer of Mercer Botanicals and Bryan Johnston of Tri-State Foliage—did their darnedest to answer all the questions I threw at them as moderator. But we couldn't get to them all.

At least, not during the webinar. Several of our panelists were able to quickly type up some answers to the remaining questions, and over the next several editions of *Tropical Topics* I will be sharing them with you.

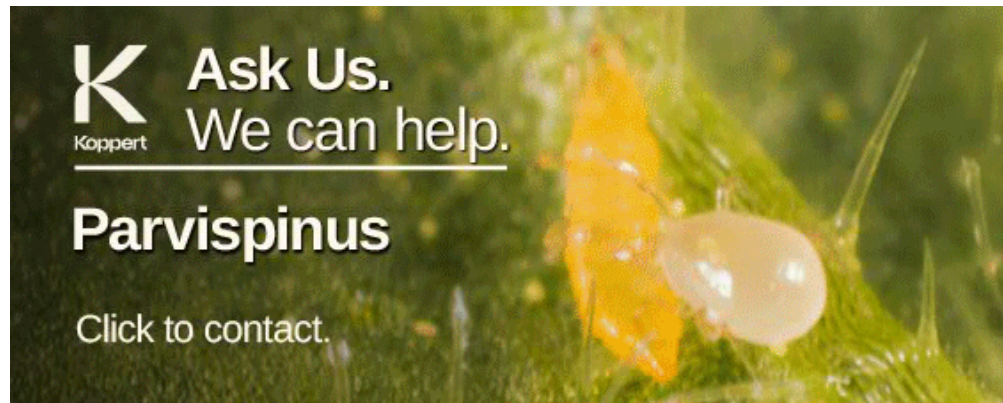


The first question has to do with one of the most popular varieties out there currently.

Q.What's going on with aglaonemas? When will we start to see varieties again?

Kingston's reply: "One thing to keep in mind is that aglaonemas are slow growers. We've talked with growers about this availability. Growers have experienced not getting all the liners (or any at all) that they ordered over a span of several months. Deliveries are back, and growers are releasing aglaonema to limited customers as the plants get rooted."

And Maxwell's answer: "Kingston is correct, we have seen issues at the farm with crop losses and growing issues that slow production, which has caused shortages. They've also been taking some cuttings that were for sale and put them back into stock to have a better supply moving forward. Once growers start getting cuttings consistently it will return six months down the road."



Two About Inventory

Two questions dealt with the topic of when inventory numbers might be increasing.

Q.Do you feel like we are at a low currently for plant availability, or do you think availability will get worse before it gets better?

Kingston: "This time of year, we would typically see 1,200-1,500 items on our availability list. We are seeing about 800+ this year and growing."

Maxwell: "On our end I do not believe the availability is going to get much worse. It will be a slow trickle of assorted products on a weekly basis. It may not be exactly what you are looking for, but there will be product. If we get a small break this summer as travel restrictions start to get lifted, we may see a temporary dip in demand. This will allow the plants to grow and catch up, giving a better full availability for fall."

And the second ...

Q.What would be your guesstimate (yes, I know it is a guess!) on when the inventory might replenish to at least 70%?

Maxwell: "Until the demand decreases enough and allow plants to catch up, it will be a slow trickle of availability. Growers are used to a decrease in demand in summer and winter. This allows crops to catch up so we have large numbers and availability for spring and fall. We have been in a never-ending spring since the first lockdown ended May of 2020."

And a bonus question because you are likely asking this question yourself:

Q.Are there any plants that seem to be consistently available?

Kingston: "Palms, ferns, some dracaenas, succulents, bromeliads."

If you missed the original AmericanHort webinar, you can watch it [HERE](#).

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Tropical Combos

Thanks for the help with pulling together the tropical combos article for the May issue of *Green Profit!* I think it turned out pretty well. But you be the judge—you're the houseplant experts, after all. Here's a [LINK TO THE DIGITAL EDITION](#) plus a photo of a tropical combo that houseplant guru Lisa Steinkopf just happened to snap while on a garden tour walk in Fenton, Michigan, a few years back. It's creator has no idea the publicity this pot is now getting!



The combos are gorgeous, but do read the article for the reasons why tropicals—individually or paired together—have been seeing such interest in the market over the last half-dozen years. Did the words “they’re easy” just pop into your brain? Yes! That's just one reason, though. Read the rest of the reasons either in the link above or [HERE](#).

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Try Houseplants for Mother's Day

Mother's Day has always been either a bedding plant or combo container type holiday to me, depending on how much your mother enjoys the work involved. Houseplants? But the weather is just getting super nice, so why not move outside? There are plenty of reasons why, actually. Maybe Mom doesn't have outside space or has limited space. Maybe Mom doesn't have time for outdoor plant care. Or maybe she doesn't have a green thumb. Indoor houseplants are the "but here, try this, Mom!" alternative.

Online plant retailer [Lively Root](#) pulled together five houseplants that mothers will appreciate for their beauty and easy care. What are they and why will Mom love them?

Kalanchoe. High light, low water with a lovely splash of vibrant color when they are blooming. A great gift from the smiley child.



Ponytail Palm. Each time she sees it, a mother will be reminded that only her favorite child could give her a plant exuding such whimsy. Bonus: It's low maintenance.



Rubber Tree. This one is gifted by the overachieving child as it is a quick grower (up to 8 ft.!) and does well in the majority of light conditions inside the house (that would be moderate indirect).



Lady Palm. For the mom with a patio, this very tropical-looking plant can spend time outside in good weather. It dresses up any space it's in—and frankly, it can cover up a good amount of clutter with all those fronds.



Dancing Queen Amaryllis. An unusual time of year for amaryllis, but sure, ok. This candy-striped character is for the mother who loves to laugh, particularly at herself (at least that's how I interpret this one) and maybe with her disco shoes on. Put this on your list of items to produce for Mother's Day 2022.



Your thoughts on ways to market houseplants for Mother's Day while the outdoor annuals get all the attention? Drop me a line about it at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

Any suggestions, comments, questions or news to share? Just drop me a line at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Ellen".

Ellen Wells
Editor-at-Large
Green Profit

This edition of Tropical Topics was sent to 25,793 loyal readers!

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