

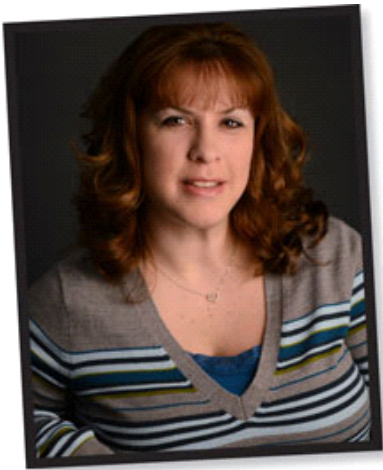
GROWERTALKS

Columns

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Outside of the Comfort Zone

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JENNIFER ZURKO

My risk taking is cautious and guarded. I know—"risk" and "cautious" don't belong in the same sentence, but I promise you it makes sense.

For instance, I'll try just about any food. I have two justifications for this: 1) I love food, and 2) You can always spit it out. And say you once tried (fill in the blank) and it was terrible/delicious! As far as my culinary experiences go, I don't mind venturing outside of my comfort zone.

Now when it comes to the possibility of bodily harm, I balk. Skydiving? Mmmm, no. Bungee jumping? Nope. Running with the bulls in Pamplona? Uh-uh.

So I guess you can say that my love of eating overrides any sort of physical risk taking. An adrenaline junkie, I am not. An over-eater? Perhaps ...

This also applies to learning new things—but again, it depends on what it is. If you want to teach me something to do with math, economics or how to play craps, you'll lose me about 10 seconds in. If it's about new plants, I'm all over it.

Usually, I'm pretty confident in my plant knowledge, but not so at the MANTS show this past January. Annuals and perennials I have down pat; trees and shrubs, not so much. So I was very happy that I got to tag along with Dr. Matthew Chappell during the show to get a crash course in what's what in woody ornamentals.

If you don't know who Matthew is, here's what you need to know, in this order:

- He's a professor at the University of Georgia.
- He played professional baseball and was actually drafted by the Chicago Cubs (which happens to be my favorite baseball team).
- He likes bourbon.

- He writes our Nursery & Landscape Insider e-newsletter, so he knows A LOT about that side of our industry. (And you should subscribe to it if you don't already.)

It was nice to walk down the trade show aisles, listening as he pointed out this tree and that shrub and told their backstories. What struck me was how long it takes for them to be introduced into the market. Typical annuals take about five years to develop and bring to market; many trees and shrubs may take more than a decade. And because of this, we don't often learn about the newest varieties (especially in trees). We here at Ball Publishing are trying to improve upon that. Hiring Matthew to write the newsletter that focuses on nursery and landscape and having the August issue dedicated to this segment are steps in the right direction.

This time, we've tapped into Matthew's knowledge of the plants and the breeders behind them for a look into what's new in woody ornamentals (page 46). Also helpful to you landscapers out there is how temperature impacts how you use herbicides in the landscape (page 52). And we have the second part of our Spring Trials coverage, which includes new shrubs (page 56).

I hope that we've provided some good information that allows you to step outside of your comfort zone a little bit—maybe by trying a new crop or using a new way to kill weeds. I would think those things would be much less dangerous than getting gored by a bull on the streets in Spain. **GT**