

GROWERTALKS

Inside Look

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When the Music Gets Real

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Humans are a curious, nosy bunch. Hence, why there's such a thing as "gaper's delays" when there's an accident and why reality TV is so popular. We want to KNOW what's going on all the time—especially when you hear something tragic or upsetting, the first thing you want to know is "why."

This was definitely the case when the news hit that Color Spot, the largest and one of the most well-known growers in the country, announced that they were declaring bankruptcy and closing their doors for good. After the first reaction of shock, the second thing many people did was wonder why (and how).

You never get the "real" story, at least on the record. Color Spot certainly hasn't been the only big grower to go under and the reasons we heard why the others that went down before them were coated with speculation and rumor. Unless the previous owner wants to spill the tea—and even

then, it may not be ALL the tea—no one ever really knows what really happened.

Which is why this month's cover story is extraordinarily special. We get the actual story of WHY Color Spot went out of business, direct from an expert who knows what happened backstage that caused the star of the show to collapse onstage. It's a captivating read and a bit disturbing in the candid way he painted a picture of the why. The author, Barry Sturdivant, stopped me in my tracks with this line: "In the end, the Color Spot story cannot be told without also telling the story about an industry that eats its own." If that doesn't make you want to read it, my friends, I don't know what else will.

The goal wasn't to shock our dear readers or to kick the players who were with the Color Spot band when they're down. It's to inform you and, in turn, help you learn from your peers' devastating mistakes. Without a healthy industry, this 80-plus-year-old magazine that I've fallen in love with would be nothing, thus we all wish and pray and cheer for every grower, retailer, landscaper and nurseryman's success. In order to keep the music playing, we need to make sure the band stays together, and that if the lead guitarist departs, we can fill the spot and continue jamming on. **GT**

For most of us, there is only the unattended

*Moment, the moment in and out of time,
The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight,
The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning
Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts.*

—From “Four Quartets” by T.S. Eliot