

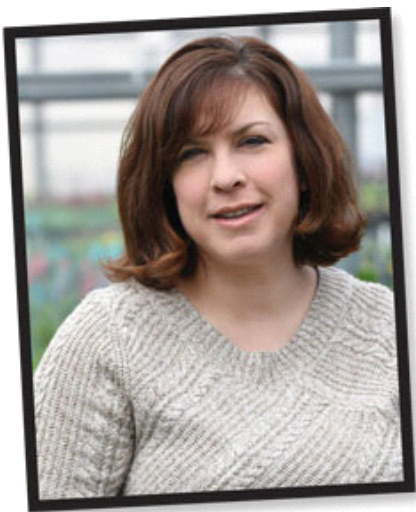
GROWERTALKS

Inside Look

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Getting the Lazy Excited

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This month's cover is so pretty. And it makes me want to have this in my yard. Unfortunately, Ever Twilight Agapanthus isn't hardy here in Chicagoland.

Actually, some of the typically "hardy" stuff in our neck of the woods wasn't hardy enough to make it through the brutal winter we had this past year. In real time, cars wouldn't start and water pipes burst. After the carnage of snow and -27F temps, when spring FINALLY came, perennials never emerged, and shrubs and trees looked like someone set them on fire.

It's understandable. I actually had to venture out on the coldest day of the history of EVER (January 30) to attend the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association trade show and just during the two-minute walk from my car to the convention center entrance, the small part of my legs that weren't completely layered went numb. (I saw two guys outside the entrance

having a smoke. I didn't know them, but I said as I sprinted past them to get inside, "Guys. Just quit for today.")

So it's no wonder that when Bossman Beytes went around his neighborhood for his spring River Ridge Report to see who was gardening this year, many of his neighbors' shrubs and trees had the recognizable signs of a brutal winter.

But it's weird ... after a bad winter, when a perennial doesn't come back, you dig out the dead roots. If the weather rips off some siding or a shingle, you replace it. If your boxwoods are brown instead of green ... you leave them there...?

That's what Chris noticed when he and his wife Laurie were driving around their River Ridge subdivision. In his July 10 *Acres Online* newsletter, Chris said, "Might folks have had to spend money they might have spent on flowers replacing shrubs? I don't think so. Most haven't touched their dead boxwoods or maples yet. I saw little to no evidence of fresh landscaping. I hate to say it, but my neighbors are just plain lazy when it comes to regular maintenance of trees and shrubs, let alone drastic measures to revitalize or replace them."

But perhaps if Chris' neighbors saw the cool and beautiful new woody varieties coming out, it would get them more excited and enticed to replace those sad, brown, freezer-burned boxwoods. Our good friend and editor of our *Nursery & Landscape Insider* newsletter Dr. Matthew Chappell spoke with his pals in the woody breeding world to

find out what's coming down the genetics pipeline.

Speaking of woody ornamentals, we've got tips on how to get woody liners off to a good start. And if you're in the business of growing perennials, our resident perennials expert Paul Pilon discusses which crops can be grown as bareroot. We also have a listing of the latest apps and digital services for landscape businesses and Part 2 of our coverage of the California Spring Trials, which includes perennials, woodies and potted plants.

What's that old saying, "Anything worth having is worth working for"...? Something like that. We all catch the lazy bug once in a while—and that's okay. Removing and replacing trees and shrubs is hard work. But, hopefully, Chris' neighbors start getting sick of looking at their dead shrubbery and get off their lazy behinds and head to the garden center to find some beautiful new woodies to put in their landscapes. It would certainly make Chris excited to report about it in next year's spring River Ridge Report. **GT**