

GROWERTALKS

COVID-19

5/4/2020

Resources for Greenhouse Growers, Florists & Retailers

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Resources for holding crops, maintaining quality and preventing pests

- [Holding greenhouse crops](#): Erik Runkle and Heidi Lindberg of MSU cover the basics on things you can do to hold plants in the greenhouse in this [Michigan State University Extension](#)
- [Tips on How to Hold 'Em](#): Brian Whipker of North Carolina State University and W. Garrett Owen of MSU discuss strategic tips for maintaining the quality of your annual bedding plants in [e-GRO Alert 9.20](#).
- [Tips to Hold Greenhouse Crops](#): Runkle and Roberto Lopez with the MSU Department of Horticulture presented a webinar to discuss strategies to slow down growth and maintain crop quality when plants cannot be shipped on time. Strategies such as lowering the temperature, placing cold-tolerant plants outdoors or in high tunnels, reducing fertility, applying PGRs and cutting back crops were discussed. [View the webinar and download the handouts](#).
- [Holding greenhouse crops – When temperature and PGRs don't suffice](#): In this MSU Extension article, Runkle, Royal Heins and Lopez discuss additional options when plants need to be held for prolonged periods.
- [Tips for Holding Greenhouse Crops during the COVID-19 Restrictions](#): Lopez, Runkle, Heins and Lindberg cover additional tips to hold spring greenhouse crops in [e-GRO Edible Alert 9.24](#).
- [Recommendations for Botrytis fungicides for 2020](#): Mary Hausbeck with the MSU Department of Plant, Soil, and Microbial Sciences covers research results for greenhouse ornamentals on fungicides for the pathogen *Botrytis cinerea*, commonly called gray mold. As crops are held in greenhouses for longer than planned with full plant canopies, the risk for *Botrytis*
- [Don't let downy mildew on impatiens surprise you](#): Hausbeck, Blair Harlin and Lopez discuss how to scout for impatiens down mildew and preventative measures you can take.
- [Surface Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#): Rosa Raudales, a greenhouse extension specialist at the University of Connecticut, provides a summary of the active ingredients approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for use against SARS-CoV-2, the causal agent of COVID-19. It also includes general recommendations on how to use sanitizers.
- [Temperature sensitivities of different crops](#) article series. Lowering greenhouse temperatures is one of

the most effective ways to reduce plant growth. Check out these articles to know how low you can go with different crops:

- Cold-sensitive Bedding Plants
- Cold-intermediate Bedding Plants
- Cold-tolerant Bedding Plants
- High Tunnels: Reduce Heating Costs While Improving Bedding Plant Quality
- Bench-Top Root Zone Heating: Can You Reduce Air Temperatures and Finish Bedding Plants On Time?
- Using root-zone heating for energy-efficient petunia production
- High tunnel and outdoor production of cold-tolerant bedding plants

Resources for garden retailers

- **Retail Garden Center and Florist Strategies to Sell in the Current Environment:** Behe and Lopez shared marketing and retailing strategies for garden center retailers to conduct touchless sales in e-GRO alert 9.19. This article and webinar emphasized how retailers need to adapt their sales processes during the pandemic of COVID-19, the infectious disease caused by novel coronavirus. They also cover positive messaging to keep you, your staff and your customers going through this crisis. Download the article, **view the** webinar and download the handout.
- **Social Distancing Signage** for your independent garden center: Garden Center Magazine published these downloadable free, ready-to-print signs from **Orora Visual Horticulture**. You can out and share these posters at your independent garden center, nursery or greenhouse operation to curb the spread of the coronavirus.
- **No Contact Plant Pick Up:** Greenhouse growers can sign up to sell plants at their site. Aaron Allison, co-founder of SBI Software, developed **No Contact Plant Pick Up**, a web-based platform to support a safe, no contact sales process for retailers of live goods. Consumers will be able to access a website platform to order plants online and have their order loaded into their trunk. It is a rapid way to launch a website for those retailers with a limited online store presence.

More than ever, national and state industry associations are providing the most up-to-date information on rules and regulations around coronavirus closures, resources for businesses, and information from government officials. If you aren't already, strongly consider becoming a member to support them and to receive timely information. AmericanHort, the national horticulture industry group, has a **Coronavirus Resource Center** that includes:

- Federal relief efforts
- Small business assistance
- Workforce
- Business best practices
- Communications and management tips
- Garden retail resources
- Webinars

Retailers will also want to check out federal assistance programs such as the United States Small Business Association (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) program. This program is a part of a large government

stimulus package for financial relief during the coronavirus pandemic. More stimulus packages may be passed depending on the duration and severity of the closures from the pandemic. Business owners should monitor this and other programs. During this time of extreme stress, MSU Extension's Farm Stress Program is now connecting farmers to licensed therapists via teletherapy. Stay tuned to MSU Extension as guidance is released for farmers working to keep employees safe.

*This article was published by **Michigan State University Extension**. For more information, visit <https://extension.msu.edu>.*