

# GROWERTALKS

## GT in Brief

7/1/2021

### On The Move

*Jennifer Zurko*

#### **AMERICANHORT**

Dr. Michael Martin has joined AmericanHort as the newest member of the advocacy and research staff team. Michael, who will serve as science, research and regulatory director, has a wide range of industry experience. Born in upstate South Carolina, he received his Bachelors in Horticulture and a Masters of Agricultural Education from Clemson University. Michael received his Doctorate in Horticulture from the University of Georgia, studying plant physiology. He's co-owned and managed a niche native plant nursery and most recently worked with a German company that produces lighting for use in controlled environment production.

#### **AMERICAN TAKII, INC.**

American Takii announced the addition of Shohei Murakami as Product Development Manager to the Flower Department. Shohei will oversee the Salinas, California, trialing activities and serve as the commercial greenhouse contact for the Western U.S. territory. Transferring to American Takii from Osaka, Japan, Shohei began his career with Takii & Co. Ltd., and held positions in both the Domestic and International Departments, focusing on sales and product development. He holds a degree from Osaka University in Language and Culture.

Jessica Cudnik will fill a newly created role of Product Manager for the Flower Division of American Takii. Jessica will focus her time and energy implementing the company's new Mercado Product Management tool and overseeing the Product Life Cycle of the entire Flower Department portfolio. Jessica worked for American Takii from 2009 to 2010 before moving on to the Carpe Diem International Educational program and starting the Normal Soap Company in 2013. She returned to American Takii in 2019 as Flower Product Development Manager. Jessica holds an M.S. in Horticulture from the University of Georgia along with a B.S. in Horticulture and Certificate in International Agriculture.

#### **BAILEY**

Bailey Nurseries has hired Layci Gragnani to the brand marketing team as the Brand & Business Development Manager. Layci has over a decade of industry experience in public relations, sales, marketing and brand management, most recently at Star Roses and Plants.

As Brand & Business Development Manager, Layci will oversee the strategic direction and drive the supply chain for

the introduction of proprietary genetics into Bailey's consumer brands. Working with the product development, marketing and sales teams, Layci will drive brand awareness and sales through Bailey Nurseries and its brand licensees.

## **BAYER**

Bayer recently announced that Brett Begemann, Chief Operating Officer, Crop Science, will retire from his role after 38 years with the company. Rodrigo Santos—currently Head of Crop Science Commercial Operations, Latin America—will succeed Brett and assume global responsibility for the division's commercial organization, reporting to Liam Condon, President Crop Science and Board of Management Member at Bayer AG. Rodrigo's replacement is Mauricio Rodrigues, currently Head of Finance, Crop Science, Latin America.

During his tenure with the company, Brett held several global and regional leadership positions, and had responsibility for global commercial and operations teams at Monsanto prior to the acquisition by Bayer. As President and Chief Operating Officer at Monsanto Company, he led global efforts to increase manufacturing and supply chain efficiency, as well as the company's growth agenda.

Rodrigo, a Brazilian national, has spent over 23 years with the company and has led the Latin American Crop Science business for Bayer since the integration of Monsanto and Bayer in 2018. Earlier in his career, Rodrigo worked in sales, marketing, strategy and business development roles, including a leadership role in Eastern Europe.

Mauricio, who's also a Brazilian national, has been with the company since 1999, and has held numerous roles in Finance in Brazil, Mexico and the United States.

## **BIOSAFE SYSTEMS**

Eric Smith was recently promoted to Turf & Ornamentals Sales Manager. In this new role, he'll be in charge of implementing the sales activities, identifying new market opportunities and defining the actions required to continue T&O's growth initiatives. Eric and his team will continue to develop opportunities and partnerships within ornamentals, grounds maintenance, cannabis/hemp, turf, greenhouse vegetables and CEA markets.

Eric joined BioSafe Systems in August of 2016 and has played a critical role in the development of the T&O division. For the past two years, he's also managed the East Coast T&O team and was recently voted into FNGLA's Executive Leadership track.

## **DARWIN PERENNIALS**

Darren Barshaw has joined the Darwin Perennials team as Product Representative. He will collaborate with fellow Product Representative, Chris Fifo, in working with customers to build perennial programs and educate on culture. Darren comes to Darwin with nearly 30 years of perennial experience, including roles at Walter's Gardens, Hoffman Nursery, Vandenburg Bulb Company and Eason.

## **EASON HORTICULTURAL RESOURCES, INC.**

Eason Horticultural Resources (EHR) has welcomed Jeremy Montgomery to its Nursery Sales division for territories in North Carolina, Eastern Tennessee, South Carolina and Northern Georgia. Jeremy has worked in various aspects

of the horticultural industry throughout the last 20-plus years in retail, landscape design, wholesale production and sales, including the past 13 years in sales at McHutchison.

Jack Campbell has joined the national sales team, covering parts of Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina, which he's serviced for many years prior to accepting his new position at EHR.

Jim Etzel joins the national sales team having worked in horticultural sales for over 35 years. In his new role, he'll be covering Delaware, Maryland, Eastern Pennsylvania and the Washington, D.C., area.

EHR also announced the addition of Paige Moats to its nursery sales team. Paige has been involved in broker sales for nearly two decades, building a territory throughout Oklahoma, Northwest Arkansas and Northern Texas. In her early years in the industry, she worked in retail garden centers throughout Texas and Oklahoma.

## **SAUNDERS BROTHERS, INC.**

NewGen Boxwood from Saunders Genetics, LLC and Saunders Brothers, Inc. announced the joint hiring of Dr. Holly Scoggins as NewGen Program Manager and Saunders Brothers Marketing Coordinator. Holly joins NewGen and Saunders Brothers with extensive experience in horticulture that includes university-level teaching and research, leadership roles with national associations and specialized expertise in multiple facets of plant production.

The majority of Holly's efforts will be devoted to the administration of the expanding NewGen Boxwood program with responsibilities for marketing, licensee management, industry education and outreach, and content creation and communication across various channels. As Marketing Coordinator for Saunders Brothers, Holly will provide a range of marketing guidance and execution for the wholesale nursery. Specific duties will include maintenance of the online plant catalog and photo library, and coordinating plant tag production.

Holly's career in horticulture spans more than 25 years. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Georgia, and her Ph.D. in Horticultural Science from North Carolina State University. She's an associate professor emeritus from Virginia Tech, retired after 20 years in the Department of Horticulture with teaching, research and cooperative extension responsibilities. She also served as Director for the Hahn Horticulture Garden from 2002-2014.

Before her new positions with the Saunders companies, Holly was Vice President of Educational Programs for AmericanHort, working on the development of green industry education programs, including sessions at Cultivate, fall specialty conferences and webinars.

Career honors and awards include Professional of the Year from Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association, an academic award from the National Perennial Plant Association, teaching awards from Virginia Tech chapter of Gamma Sigma Delta Honor Society of Agriculture, the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and the Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society. Holly currently serves as president-elect of the national Perennial Plant Association, taking office in October 2021.

## **SIGNIFY**

Signify expanded its horticulture team in North America to support business development efforts in the region. Neil Copping and Colleen O'Hara have joined the U.S. team as Key Account Managers and will be responsible for developing new business opportunities and driving sales growth of Philips LED horticulture grow lights across all customer segments. Neil will support sales efforts in the central and southeast, and Colleen will support sales efforts in the northeast.

Neil comes to Signify with 13 years of agricultural and horticultural technology sales experience. He most recently served as National Sales Director at BIOS Lighting, where he worked with greenhouse and indoor growers to adopt and integrate horticultural lighting solutions. Prior to that, he held roles at Motorleaf, a company specializing in artificial intelligence for greenhouse production, and at LED grow lighting manufacturers Heliospectra and Lumigrow.

Colleen was most recently Commercial Sales Manager for the Mid-Atlantic region at Hawthorne Gardening. Prior to joining Hawthorne, she was the East Coast Regional Business Development Manager for BIOS Lighting with an emphasis on providing lighting solutions for cannabis cultivators. Before joining BIOS, Colleen served as Director of Sales for HiFarm, a craft cannabis cultivator in Portland, Oregon.

## **SYNGENTA FLOWERS**

Syngenta Flowers announced that Kelli Gibson has joined the sales team in North America as its newest Broker Account Manager. She will be responsible for driving sustainable sales growth while strengthening Syngenta's commitment to deliver outstanding service to its customers. Kelli has more than 20 years of experience working in horticulture and has previously held sales positions at Express Seed Company and PanAmerican Seed Company.

**GT**