

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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On The Move

Jennifer Zurko

BALL SEED

Ball Seed launched upgraded features to its WebTrack online ordering system and business management tool. The system updates include enhancements to overall navigation, search functionality and other easy-to-use customer interfaces, like easy rebooking, locating suppliers based on distance, product search updates and cart upgrades. In addition, the upgraded system puts photos, the latest product culture, printable bench cards and other resources just a click away in the WebTrack cart. Log into your Ball Seed customer account at ballseed.com/webtrack or contact the customer service department at (800) 879-BALL if you're not a customer.

BIOWORKS, INC.

Erfan Vafaie, Ph.D. has been named Technical Services Manager at BioWorks. In his new position, Dr. Vafaie will be responsible for leading the Technical Services team, which provides information and education to their customers. Dr. Vafaie brings over nine years of Integrated Pest Management to BioWorks with a focus in Entomology. He most recently held a position of Extension Program Specialist at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Overton, Texas. In previous industry roles, Dr. Vafaie's responsibilities ranged from designing, executing and providing write-ups on research experiments relevant to the greenhouse and nursery industry, both in controlled environments and on-site trials, translating technical or academic results into educational programming and resources for growers, state-wide volunteers, County Extension Agents, and other specialists.

EASON HORTICULTURAL SERVICES

Eason Horticultural Resources (EHR) announced the addition of Aidan Castori as IT Support Specialist. Prior to coming to EHR, Aidan spent 12 years in the horticultural industry, where he was responsible for systems updates and managing vendor data. During this time, he pioneered data translation tools to enhance and speed up company functions, and increase productivity. Most recently, he's been a private business owner, launching his own online retail company in the fall of 2020.

HOFFMAN NURSERY

Hoffman Nursery, Inc. has hired Craig Reynolds as Operations Manager. He joined the nursery in June 2021 and works closely with David Hoffman, Senior Director of Sales and Operations, to oversee daily operations and manage production, growing and logistics. Hoffman Nursery is facing the same challenges many others in the industry are—supply chain disruptions, labor shortages and new safety protocols. The senior management team realized there was a role that needed to be filled and they brought in an expert.

Craig has held marketing, revenue and operation positions with several Fortune 500 companies, spearheading improvements in internal processes and customer satisfaction within each. At Hoffman Nursery, he's already implemented numerous initiatives to increase productivity and improve the customer experience. With Craig on board, the nursery recently signed a contract to utilize the H-2A program, which will give it a more stable, reliable workforce in the future.

Prior to joining Hoffman Nursery, Reynolds traveled the world while employed by Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines as Marketing and Revenue Manager.

Manny Martinez has joined the nursery in July 2021 as its new logistics manager with over 20 years of experience in distribution and logistics. He specializes in team building and is responsible for educating other team members on using strategic implementation and improving efficiency, including lean process and company collaboration. His team ensures customers get accurate, timely and cost-effective shipments of the highest quality plants.

Before joining Hoffman Nursery, Martinez managed logistical operations for Goodwill Industries, Walmart and Burlington Coat Factory. He was brought onto the team when the nursery's longtime shipping manager transitioned to full-time work on his family farm. As logistics manager, Martinez manages the entire shipping process and oversees facilities personnel. He handles permitting and communicates with all the shipping vendors to keep a steady and timely flow of plants into and out of the nursery.

OASIS GROWER SOLUTIONS

Oasis Grower Solutions announced the newest member of its technical sales team—Brenton Williams has stepped into the role of Midwest/Southeast territory technical sales representative. Brenton will build relationships with new and existing customers, collaborating with them on their processes and providing them with solutions to ensure their continued growth and success. Based out of Kent, Ohio, Brenton transitioned to this new role from his previous position as Senior Greenhouse Technician. Brenton has been with Oasis Grower Solutions for seven years. **GT**