

GROWERTALKS

Inside Look

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Balancing Tech and Life

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How do you know your level of tech savviness?

According to the Oxford Dictionary, a tech-savvy person is “someone who is well informed about modern technology and also uses his/her skills in order to take advantage of the current technology.”

As I read about what it means to be tech savvy, standing in line for hours for the newest iPhone doesn’t seem to cut it. According to what I’ve gathered, the ideal characteristics of someone who’s tech savvy include:

- You’re flexible/adaptable
 - You communicate digitally
 - You embrace change easily
 - You’re collaborative/a team player
- You have long-range goals on how tech could help you move forward
 - You use technology in your everyday life (i.e., use a variety of apps)
 - You have a balanced attitude toward technology

This last one means that tech may play a large part in your life, but you don’t let it RUN your life. Tech is a great tool, but not always a great teacher. And we all need breaks from tech now and then. I’ve said before that if I lost my phone, I would be a lost soul. Mostly because my life is IN the phone. I guess I’m not as balanced a tech-savvy person as I’d like to be ...

But tech—especially new tech—is fun, and incorporating it into daily tasks to make your life easier is always worth a try. A good example of balancing tech in everyday life is what you see on our cover this month. You’ve probably read articles written by Stanton Gill, an IPM extension specialist and entomologist at the University of Maryland, in these pages. Stanton’s always good for an article pitch on his latest research and I thought this one was pretty interesting.

During the last few Cultivate shows, there have been sessions on using drones in the greenhouse, and I think we’re still trying to figure out the best way to do that. But the two most promising ways of using drones in a growing operation that I’ve seen is for spreading biologicals (like the Parabug drone I first saw at the Plug & Cutting Conference in 2019), and what Stanton and his team are doing with pesticides on outdoor mums.

They've been trialing the application and efficacy of spraying preventative pesticides over ornamentals and nursery crops for four years now. This month, Stanton gives us the data from the mum trials. (Next month will be Part 2 on nursery crops.) It's a great way to blend tech with traditional greenhouse methods.

And since this is our annual Pest Management Issue, we've got lots of great information to handle insects and diseases in the greenhouse. We've balanced fun tech-y toys like drones for pest control with information that includes some of the old reliable stuff, like Botrytis, knowing the difference between phytotoxicity and disease, bacterial issues, and fungus gnats.

As you move into the peak of spring production, I hope that you'll be able to find a balance between the craziness at the greenhouse and a little downtime. Perhaps that should include a break from technology, too. **GT**