

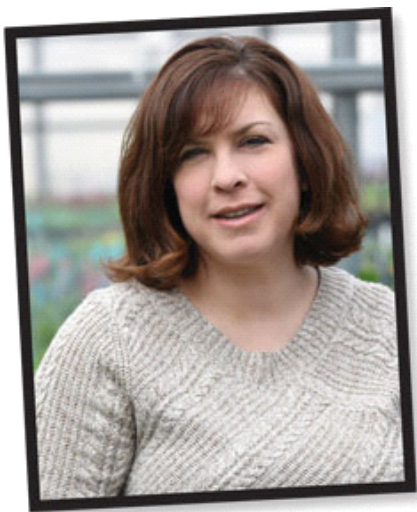
GROWERTALKS

Inside Look

6/1/2022

Shared Experiences

Jennifer Zurko



JENNIFER ZURKO

Next year marks my 20th year with Ball and my 14th in the Ball Publishing division. As someone who didn't grow up or study in the industry, I had a much steeper learning curve than those of you lucky enough to have embraced horticulture in your wonder years.

From what I've gathered, as I've gotten to know you hort professionals over the years, it's the real world where you really learn. Sure, you start your foundation in a college classroom, but it's going through the ropes while you're on the job where you really get the experience you need to move forward in your career.

And perhaps you learn a little bit about yourself personally that you maybe didn't realize before. Like that you don't have a problem presenting in front of people. Or that you like managing people. Or that you'd rather eat dirt (growing media?) than do either.

One thing I've learned is how valuable sharing information between peers is to this industry. Growers don't think twice about telling other growers about their experiences—even if they directly compete! And this is something deeply ingrained and that we're extremely proud of. I mean, this publication that I'm lucky enough to write words for is going into its 86th year of sharing information with the industry.

This month's cover story is an excellent example of this. Jeff Back, who's been on the front lines of growing operations for over 30 years (and is my boss' guitar-jam buddy), agreed to write a piece for us that takes a deep dive into flood floor irrigation. Sure, Chris or I could have sat down and interviewed a handful of companies and got their take on the benefits of flood floors. But isn't it more valuable to hear it from someone who's actually planned, implemented and used a flood floor? And not just a traditional one, but three other types, too?

Also this month, we've got other experts who are sharing their knowledge, like how to upgrade your existing greenhouse to bring it more up-to-date and using low-mass, low-water heating to be more efficient.

We've also got a very important piece I slid into this issue even though it'll be after calibrachoa production season by the time you read it. But you need to be aware of the new Chili Pepper Mild Mottle Virus that's been found on calibrachoa and could extend to other host plants.

Lastly, as we do every June, we have essays written by our Young Grower Award Finalists. This year, we asked our

young nominees to discuss the strategies they use to create long-lasting relationship with their suppliers and customers. **GT**