

NIPW, dark and sinister plus callas and cactus cracking



The logo for the Tropical Plant International Expo 2027 is displayed in a horizontal banner. On the left, the acronym 'TPIE' is enclosed in a double-bordered orange square. To its right, the text 'TROPICAL PLANT INTERNATIONAL EXPO 2027 FT. LAUDERDALE' is written in a dark red, sans-serif font. On the far right, a vertical orange gradient bar contains the dates 'JAN 20-22' in large, white, bold, sans-serif letters.



A blue horizontal bar contains the text 'News and Inspiration from the world of foliage and tropical plants' on the left. On the right side of the bar are two logos: 'GROWERTALKS MAGAZINE' and 'greenPROFIT MAGAZINE'.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

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# TROPICAL TOPICS

## COMING UP THIS WEEK:

NIPW: It's a Thing  
The Dark & Sinister Side  
And Another  
Plenty for All  
Speaking of Culture ...

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## NIPW: It's a Thing

In last week's *Buzz* newsletter I asked if National Indoor Plant Week—which happens during the third week of September every year—was still a thing. I received two responses that said why yes, in fact, it *is* still a thing.

The first was from industry consultant, author and plant expert [Leslie Halleck](#). I suspected she'd have something planned for NIPW and I was right. She hit the ground running on the first day of NIPW with a plant giveaway on her Instagram channel. You can check that out [HERE](#).





The second was an email I received from Green Plants for Green Buildings. Well, it wasn't a response to my *Buzz* query. It was actually an e-newsletter sent on Monday all about why indoor plants are important, and why it's important to participate in National Indoor Plant Week. This was sent to their entire distribution list—not just me. But hey, I felt like maybe my *Buzz* newsletter was an inspiration! (Or maybe it was coincidence.)

#### Celebrating National Indoor Plant Week

*Celebrate*  
**National Indoor Plant Week**  
every 3rd week in September  
[www.nationalindoorplantweek.com](http://www.nationalindoorplantweek.com)

Plants have been known to...

- Raise productivity, boost creativity
- Lower stress hormones
- Accelerate healing
- Accelerate student progress through curriculum

Join Green Plants for Green Buildings in raising awareness of the value and benefits of live indoor plants.

Share the love, share a plant, participate in plant give-aways, and share the social media posts.

I also received an email from the clear air professionals at [Filter King](#) on Monday morning—the first day of this National Indoor Plant Week—who put together a list of their 17 best air purifying plants for indoor use. This is coincidence again, I presume. Anyway, the list includes Peace Lilies, Garden Mums, Devil's Ivy (aka Pothos) and Red-Edged Dracaena. The full list of 17 can be viewed [HERE](#).



What's your contribution for this week's National Indoor Plant Week? Drop me a note about it at [ewells@ballpublishing.com](mailto:ewells@ballpublishing.com).

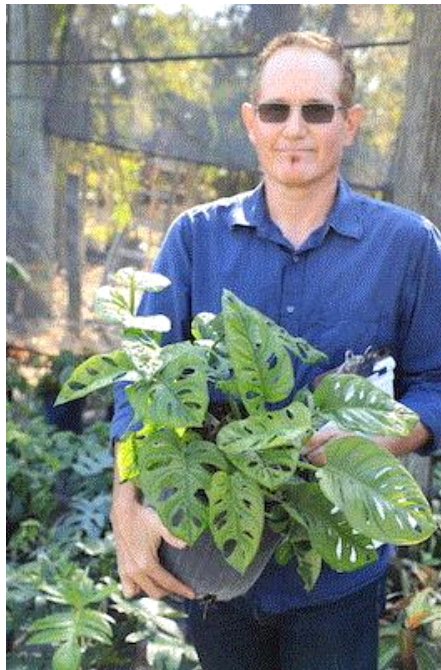


## The Dark & Sinister Side

Sometimes people's love of something becomes an obsession and can even cross the line into the illegal—or at least into an illegal trade willing to satisfy that obsession. (Gosh, I sound so dark and sinister!) That obsession is likely what's driving up the occurrences of plant theft, specifically of the rare and unique indoor and tropical plants.

My “man in the field” in Florida, David Bache of [Garden Industries](#), informed me of several such instances that happened at his own facility. Here's his take on the matter:

*“I recently became aware of a theft of some very rare aroids. I don't believe this was a random act. The plants are in a clearly marked ‘off limits’ shade house, where someone would have to remove a chain to enter. What was taken was exceptionally rare. If you didn't know the plants, you likely wouldn't look at them twice. There are far flashier plants in there than what was taken. I believe it was a very pointed, very intentional act, to grab what could not be purchased or found elsewhere without great difficulty and at great expense. We also had some stock items taken, which were in production but had not yet been put into a sales area. While not exceptionally unusual, they were also clearly labelled as stock, and the greenhouse had chains over the doorways.*”



**Bossman Beytes and I visited David and Garden Industries a few years back prior to a TPIE show.**

*“Somehow during the plant boom of the last few years, there has developed an attitude that can best be described as frenzied. People want different, better, more unusual plants than their friends and neighbors have. Simply shopping online doesn't supply the need, since everyone else has found the same sources. It's almost like an addiction that can't be satisfied. I know of several nurseries who have had the same problem that we have, with some having had plants stolen more than once. As it has become more and more lucrative to sell exotic plants, it is likely the criminal element has taken note, and have become a part of the problem. Case in point: Nurseries with surveillance cameras are only catching glimpses of the perpetrators who are experienced enough to hide their faces, making identification entirely unlikely.*”

*“There are some items we have that I will not post on our social media, because they are so rare. It feels like chumming the waters and attracting sharks. So, we discretely produce small numbers and sell them to long-term clients. We don't need to let a large number of people know they are here. Nothing good can come of that and having ‘unicorns’ often attracts the wrong kind of attention.*”

*“I hope that whoever is receiving these stolen plants feels at least a hint of shame every time they look at them. How can you enjoy something you know was pilfered? How can you show it off*

to your friends? It's just bad karma."

## And Another

David knows others who've had some plant theft issues. He got in touch with a fellow Floridian, Greg Slatner, who owns **The Flower Guys** in Ft. Lauderdale, "(very) high-end landscapers" according to David. Greg also has quite the personal collection of plants at home and has recent experience with plant theft. Here are Greg's comments on his theft experiences:

*"Having a small property created a problem for me during the rare plant boom. Because of my limited space I have to utilize each environment in my yard to its fullest. Unfortunately, my front walkway is one of the best areas of my yard for growing aroids and I literally have \$20,000 worth of plants where anyone can just walk up freely. I noticed a few weeks ago two of my philodendrons, Paraiso Verde and Sodiroy, had the tips cut off of them.*

*"While it is not the end of the world it does make me feel a little violated and it really shows how things have changed in the last few years. Ten years ago no one would have looked twice at such plants."*

Thank you, David and Greg, for sharing your experiences. Anyone have any experiences in this? Any solutions? Keeping the ultra-rare items under wraps as David does is a good idea. Any others? Drop me a note about it at [ewells@ballpublishing.com](mailto:ewells@ballpublishing.com).



## Plenty for All

Proven Winners, with the help of Classic Caladiums, has plenty of callas for all the folks who want them. Their **Be My line of calla lilies** includes six new varieties for 2021-22. Those are:

### Be My Sunshine



### Be My Heart



**Be My First Love**



**Be My Main Squeeze**



**Be My Prince**



**Be My Princess**



You can check them out on the Proven Winners site [HERE](#). And I see that the ABI catalog has some super-useful culture tips for the callas. That's if you can get by all that beautiful caladium eye candy prior to the callas in the catalog!

An advertisement for ASHS membership. It features a green header with the text 'GROW YOUR CAREER WITH ASHS' and 'Become an ASHS Member'. Below this is a QR code and a small image of a person in a lab coat working with plants. The text below the QR code reads: 'Are you passionate about plants, research, and the future of horticulture? Become a member of the American Society for Horticultural Science and join a thriving community of researchers, scientists, industry, academia, government, extension agents, and students who are shaping the landscape of tomorrow. Join ASHS!'.

## Speaking of Culture ...

Sometimes we cover cacti and succulents in this here *Tropical Topics*. So I thought it appropriate to share the information that my colleague Bill Calkins included in one of his recent Tech On Demand newsletters. It's about cactus cracking.

Here's what the [Tech Tip](#) included:

A grower noticed this cracking in his cactus crop and contacted the Tech On Demand team to find out what was happening. Generally, when you see cacti with vertical cracking, it's due to plants being overly wet.



Here's the recommendation:

Dry these down to a moisture level two or one as quickly as possible and don't water them above a three until the cracking stops.

Remember, on the one-to-five moisture scale, a moisture level two leaves soil tan in color and when the soil is squeezed, you should feel residual moisture (but not free water) on your fingers. At level one, soil is light tan in color, and you should feel little to no residual moisture in a handful of media. Moisture level three is brown in color but not black like in the photo and you should not be able to squeeze more than a few drops of water out of a handful of media.

Any suggestions, comments, questions or news to share? Just drop me a line at [ewells@ballpublishing.com](mailto:ewells@ballpublishing.com).

**Ellen Wells**  
Senior Editor  
Green Profit

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