

Labor Woes, Can't-Miss Events & Herb Producer Expands

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Controlled Environment Agriculture

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

- Labor Woes
- Biologics on the Rise
- Get Your Travel Plans Ready
- Expanding Herb Operation
- Webinar Alert!
- Inside Grower is Out

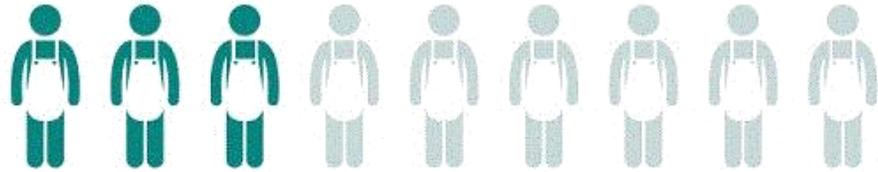
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Labor Woes

I wish I had better news to report, but based on a recent survey collaboration between AmericanHort, University of California–Davis and Michigan State University, labor issues continue to be a struggle for greenhouse and nursery growers of all types.

The 2022 Greenhouse & Nursery Labor Employment survey showed only about a third of growers were able to find the workers they needed for production in 2021. More than 60% said COVID caused them to experience additional labor shortages in 2021, too.

When asked if they still experienced shortages in 2022, 42% said they hired more workers than the previous year, about 38% said they hired about the same and 19% said they hired fewer workers. To combat the shortages of labor, 35% of respondents said they used H-2A visa workers, with 18% saying it was their first year using the program.



Only one-third of survey respondents were able to hire all the workers they needed in 2021.

The average workforce shortage: **20%**

You can read the full report, which is free with registration, [HERE](#).

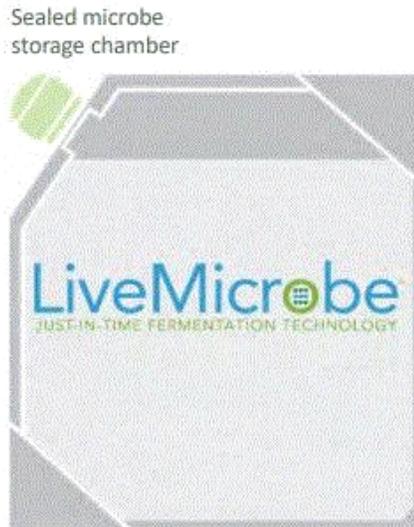
The legislative folks at AmericanHort are reading the tea leaves related to Congress, too, and trying to tease out whether there's some potential opportunity to get agricultural workforce reform passed through the Senate in the lame-duck session. If that becomes a possibility, I'll report on it in this space!



Biopesticide Research Get USDA Boost

A couple of months ago, I wrote about 3Bar Biologics in this newsletter after seeing a presentation from them at the Ohio Controlled Environment Agriculture Center Annual Conference. The company is a Columbus, Ohio-based startup working with researchers at The Ohio State University on developing a delivery system for biopesticides—the particular solution they were focusing on in the presentation was to combat hairy root or crazy root disease (*Agrobacterium rhizogenes*) in hydroponic tomatoes.

The company's endeavors just got a boost financially in the amount of \$650,000 from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Small Business Innovation Research program.



A mockup of the LiveMicrobe technology 3Bar Biologics is researching.

The goal of the program is to help advance agriculture research, education and extension in the U.S. and “make transformative discoveries that solve societal challenges,” according to the USDA’s announcement. NIFA invested \$2.2 billion in 2022 to push those advancements.

“The projects we’re supporting demonstrate scientific originality, technical feasibility and strong commercial potential,” said Acting NIFA Director Dr. Dionne Toombs in the announcement. “With this research, our small business partners are helping solve some of our most vexing agricultural problems.”

[CLICK HERE](#) to read a brief explanation of the research and visit www.3barbiologics.com for more on the company.



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Get Your Travel Plans Ready

Or, if you prefer, find a new Zoom background for some virtual events. Whether you prefer in-person or virtual, there’s lots to choose from to get educated and connect with others in the CEA space. Here’s a short list of some educational events on the horizon:

- The 4th Annual Conference Urban Agriculture: Controlled Environment at Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center in Dallas on **Tuesday, December 6**. Read the full event schedule [HERE](#), and register either for in-person or virtual attendance [HERE](#).
- The 1st Maryland Mushroom Growers Symposium at the Maryland Department of Agriculture in Annapolis on **Tuesday, December 6**. [CLICK HERE](#) to see the event schedule and to register.
- The Hydroponic Vine Crop Intensive Workshop runs January 6-8 in person and virtually through the University of Arizona’s Controlled Environment Agriculture Center (CEAC). [CLICK HERE](#) for the schedule and [HERE](#) to register.
- The 2023 Virtual Climate Control Short Course from GLASE is a six-week virtual course that runs **Thursdays from January 19 to February 23** from 2:00-4:00 p.m. Eastern. [CLICK HERE](#) for details and to register.
- Greenhouse Management Workshop: More With Less Energy will be held **January 26-27** at the Shisler Center on the Ohio State University Wooster campus, as well as virtually.

More details are coming, so save the date and watch this space for a link to register once it's available.

Did I miss anything coming up in December or early January? If so, email me at jpolanz@ballpublishing.com and I'll try to get your event in an upcoming enewsletter. I told you there was a lot going on!



Expanding Herb Operation

Someone asked me not too long ago for an update on Shenandoah Growers, an herb grower from Virginia that had been expanding into South Carolina. I'd lost track of their progress. Well, turns out they're now [Soli Organic](#) (have been for a little while now) and they have seven growing facilities and 12 facilities overall operating across the U.S. with more planned.

The company just announced its newest location in San Antonio, Texas. It's a vertical farm setup with six vertical layers of production in 100,000 sq. ft., as well as 40,000 sq. ft. of processing, according to a [story on Yahoo News](#).



An example of one of Soli Organic's offerings, the Extra Large Organic Living Basil.

Soli is also expecting to open another indoor farm—a 130,000 sq. ft. controlled environment operation in Marysville, Washington—in early 2023, as well as an Anderson, South Carolina location. According to an announcement, the goal is a total of 15 growing locations to supply the U.S. with organic herbs produced in soil. Their specialty is a selection of leafy greens, a

selection of living herbs and packaged Indolce Basil, all organically grown. The company says 90% of its production will be indoors.



Webinar Alert!

Do you want to know more about how biologicals work in your potting soil and how they can impact plants in a positive way throughout the growth cycle? Well, then we've got a great webinar for you kicking off at **1:00 p.m. Eastern/Noon Central on Thursday, December 1.**

Our guest expert, horticulture specialist Troy Buechel, will guide you through the world of active ingredients and show you how the investment translates into substantial benefits.



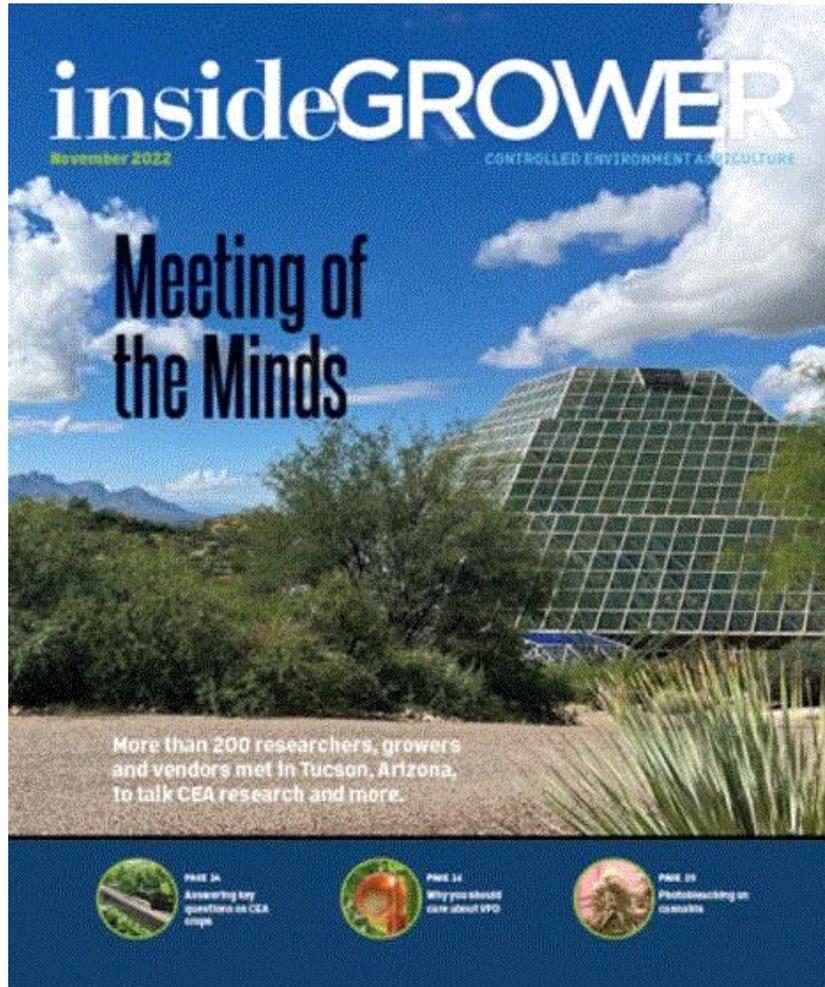
Specialized in floriculture and plant nutrition, Troy Buechel has a bachelor's and a master's degree in horticulture. Part of Premier Tech Grower Services since 1995, he assists customers with questions concerning crop, fertilizer and water quality issues relating to Premier Tech horticultural products.

Sign up for this free webinar today at www.growertalks.com/Webinars. Special thanks to our sponsor, Pro-Mix, for putting the free in free webinar.

The Latest Inside Grower is Out

Our latest print edition of *Inside Grower* is out and we've got coverage of the following:

- A recent international meeting of CEA researchers, growers and vendors
- FAQs on hot CEA crops
- Why you should care about VPD
- Photobleaching on cannabis
- Pesky cannabis pests



[CLICK HERE](#) or on the cover to check it out!

As always, feel free to email me at jpolanz@ballpublishing.com with comments, questions, news and views.

Until next time,

Jennifer

Jennifer Polanz

Editor-at-Large
Inside Grower

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