

Biosolutions, Thai Constellation, Palomino Roots and Costa a Top Workplace



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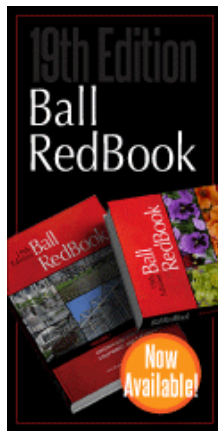
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TROPICAL TOPICS

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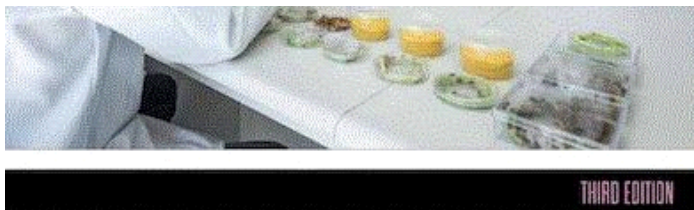
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2025 Biosolutions Guide

I've been mentioning pest issues in this space more frequently than I used to, relying on experts in the field to weigh in on mites and thrips and other creatures that can spoil your beautiful tropical and foliage plants. If you're eager for more than just the occasional pest information I include here, grab yourself a copy of the *GrowerTalks Biosolutions Guide*. The third edition of this valuable resource is available for download [HERE](#), and a paper edition of it should be arriving with your June issue of *GrowerTalks*.

GROWERTALKS Biosolutions Guide





These guides are more than just efficacy tables! Experts in the field of biosolutions have contributed articles on a range of topics, from transitioning your operation to a more biologically based program to how to conduct your own in-house quality control assessments of your biocontrol workforce. In fact, here's what you can find in the *Guide*:

- Michael Brownbridge of BioWorks on what to consider when making the transitions to a more biological approach to managing pests and diseases.
- Jeremy Webber of Koppert on a hybrid biological control-pesticide approach.
- Lowell Halvorson of Triadicon on the impact of logistics on the quality of the biological products.
- Suzanne Wainwright-Evans, aka the “Bug Lady,” on testing the quality of biocontrol agents.

It's all good information—and it's all free! Download [HERE](#) or find it in your June *GrowerTalks*. Wait, what? You don't receive *GrowerTalks*? Sign up for it [HERE](#).

Cultivation Station: Thai Constellation Monstera

I was thinking this issue of *Tropical Topics* would be a good time for another episode of Cultivation Station—the semi-occasional how-to for growing a particular tropical/foilage crop—but wasn't sure which timely crop to feature. So I reached out to Ball Seed's Technical Sales Manager for foliage and tropicals, Andrew Britten, to see what he might suggest.

“What about focusing on Monstera Thai Constellation?” he responded. “It's now readily available and at a reasonable price. I imagine a lot more growers will be producing it for the following season.”

Good point and a great idea, Andrew!



For giggles, I asked ChatGPT why Thai Constellation is such a popular plant. Within seconds it gave me five reasons:

- Striking variegation: "Unlike some variegated plants, its pattern is stable and consistent thanks to being tissue-cultured, which means new leaves are reliably beautiful."
- Rarity (or perceived rarity): "Even as it's become more available, the aura of exclusivity still surrounds it."
- Statement plant aesthetic: "The variegation makes each plant unique and highly photogenic—a favorite for Instagram and home decor."
- Plant community hype: "It has become a 'trophy plant' in the plant collector community—a way to signal taste, knowledge and investment."
- Low maintenance: "Despite its exotic appearance, it's relatively easy to care for compared to many other variegated or rare plants."

I'm betting on the "aura of exclusivity" and "trophy plant" to carry Thai Constellation's popularity for a little while longer. In which case, you'll want to know how to grow it.

Total Crop Time from Liner to Finish: 12 weeks for 4-in., 18 weeks for 6-in., 24 weeks for 8-in. and 10-in.

Soil/Media: A well-drained mix

pH: 5.5-7.0

EC: 2.0-2.5

Temperature: 68-85F

Humidity: 60-80%

Nutrition: Use a well-balance feed, being sure to keep the media EC around 2.0.

Light Level: 3,000-5,000 f.c.

Pests: Watch for aphids, scale, spider mites, whitefly, Alternaria



A TPIE Holdover

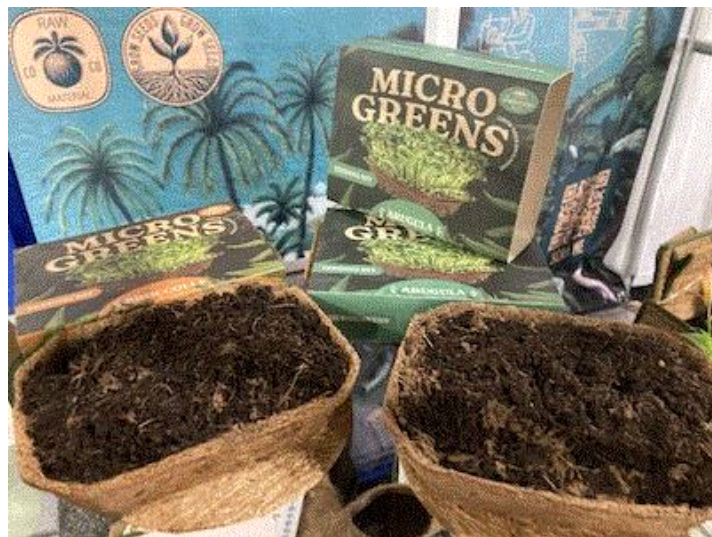
My notebook from January's Tropical Plant International Expo (TPIE) still has a few items in it that I haven't told you about. I've been wanting to tell you about a company from Colombia, Palomino Roots, because I like what they are doing.

The company makes a dozen or more different products—deco pots, baskets, wall bags, pressed pots, grow poles, etc.—using the waste of the country's coconut industry. I have written in my notes that they recover 100 tons of coconut coir, or the fiber of the coconut husk, per month. This is material that would otherwise be unused—I'm not even sure it's composted. Palomino is the only one in the country doing this.



If memory serves, the coconut plantations allow their workers to sell the coco fiber to Palomino, so that puts a little extra money in the workers' pockets. As for creating the pots, they are employing folks in small shops in the cities to sew each item using a sewing machine. Using a waste product and employing people—both are very good things!

They also produce these microgreens kits. I'm a fan of any grow kit that includes a container. Bonus points for it being biodegradable.



Find out more about Palomino Roots [HERE](#).



Costa Named Top Workplace

When you love where you work—and everyone there does, too—it shows. This “love where you work” culture that **Costa Farms** has built over their 64 years in business has paid off in being recognized as a 2025 Top Workplace by *The South Florida Sun Sentinel*. The *Sun Sentinel*'s Top Workplace list recognizes companies in South Florida that create exceptional work environments and foster positive and engaging cultures for employees.



How do they determine who has a “top workplace?” The *Sun Sentinel* engaged an independent research firm to collect confidential employee feedback measuring key aspects of workplace culture. In other words, Costa’s employees raved about the place.

“We are incredibly honored to be named a *Sun Sentinel* Top Workplace,” said Joche Smith, CEO of Costa Farms, in a press release on the topic. “This recognition is a testament to the passion, hard work and commitment of our entire Costa Farms family. Our employees are the heart of our business, and we’re proud to provide a workplace where they can thrive and grow.”

Costa Farms fosters an inclusive culture for its more than 5,000 employees, offering professional development opportunities, prioritizing employee well-being and encouraging community involvement. “We strive to create a culture where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered,” said Arianna Cabrera de Oña, SVP of Costa Farms. “This award reflects the positive and engaging workplace we endeavor to cultivate. Our Love Where You Work culture really encompasses what we as a company do every day.”

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions for content, email me about them at ewells@ballpublishing.com.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ellen".

Ellen Wells
Senior Editor
Green Profit

This edition of Tropical Topics was sent to 29,143 loyal readers!

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