

The tariff rollercoaster, reasons to go to CAST and we got your smiles

The logo for the Tropical Plant International Expo '27. It features the letters 'TPIE' in white on a green square background. To the right, the text 'TROPICAL PLANT INTERNATIONAL EXPO' is in small white letters, followed by a large white "'27'. Below this, the phrase '—SAVE THE DATE—' is in green, and 'JANUARY 20-22' is in white.

TROPICAL PLANT INTERNATIONAL EXPO
'27 —SAVE THE DATE—
JANUARY 20-22

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

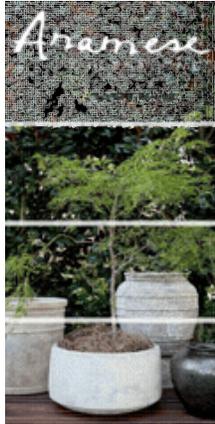
News and Inspiration from the world of foliage and tropical plants

GROWERTALKS MAGAZINE greenPROFIT MAGAZINE

A horizontal bar with a pink background and a green-to-pink gradient on the left side. It contains the text 'THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026' in white.

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026

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TROPICAL TOPICS

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

The Tariff Rollercoaster
A Slight Branding Tweak
Need a Smile?
Reasons to Go to CAST



The Tariff Rollercoaster

The ups and downs of the U.S. tariff rollercoaster have now hit the twists and turns portion of the ride. 2025's tariff day-to-day uncertainties in the horticulture industry have morphed into—well, what's good for something that is even more unclear than "uncertain"? Whatever it is, tariffs are once again shape-shifting the playbook for foliage growers and importers.

In a recent conversation with Joe Roberts, CEO of **Foremost**, we talked about how shifting policy and legal rulings are rippling through the horticulture supply chain. Oh and by the way, did you know Joe has degrees in both political science and law? I think that makes him qualified to speak to the topic.

Joe says the recent Supreme Court ruling that found some of the Trump administration's tariffs unconstitutional has not delivered the clarity the industry hoped for. Instead, he explains, "now we're back in a state of limbo and uncertainty, quite frankly, because there are a few questions that have popped up since, [such as] what if any refund systems will be put in place?" That uncertainty was compounded when, Joe said, new 10% and then 15% tariffs were announced. "Honestly, it's got a lot of us scratching our heads and trying to figure out, 'Okay, what's next, and how do we ride this ride?'"

Foremost owns farms in Costa Rica and Guatemala and imports live goods from dozens of countries. Tariffs apply regardless of ownership structure. As Joe put it, "everything that's imported, whether or not it is your wholly owned subsidiary or whether it's a partner that you're working with ... as it's imported, you get hit with the tariff."

The financial impact has become impossible to ignore. "When the tariffs were first announced last year—and I can only speak for us—the idea was to take a little bit of time (to) see what's going to happen," Joe told me. "We had almost \$2 million in tariff costs last year alone, and we absorbed most of that." That strategy bought time for Foremost and their customer, but that "wait and see" is just not sustainable anymore." Joe said they'll "probably have to implement a

tariff line onto our invoices” as rates shift.

For the foliage industry, this matters because so much of the product mix depends on long-term investments in stock and breeding. Developing new foliage crops can take years; production planning is often six to 12 months out. A business set on this strategy simply can’t pivot on short notice every time tariff policy changes.

Joe wants to protect both accessibility and the momentum for foliage products. He noted that while some higher-end plants have their place, Foremost’s customers still rely heavily on items that can retail in the \$10.99–\$19.99 range, staying within reach of everyday consumers. Despite policy’s bumpy ride, he says “we’ve seen some great progress in our industry, we’ve seen a lot of positive movement, and we’ve seen excitement for our products ... there’s a whole lot of demand for and love for our type of products.”

Where to go from here with that word “uncertainty” still hovering in the air? Joe stresses that the path forward is collaboration and open dialogue across the supply chain in order to manage costs without losing the excitement that has fueled foliage’s recent popularity.

I am positive you have thoughts on the topic. Share them [HERE](#).



A Slight Branding Tweak

Speaking of Foremost, for any of you attending the Tropical Plant International Expo this past January, you may have noticed the signage around the company’s booth was a little different. If you couldn’t pin down exactly what seemed different, it was the omission of two letters from the company name.

Here’s the official statement around their branding changes:

“The transition from ForemostCo to Foremost reflects more than a simplified name. It marks the evolution of our brand and the way we express our purpose. Over the years, we have come to better understand that the most meaningful role we can play is to help create growth through strong, lasting relationships across our entire network. That includes our customers, suppliers, our own farms and the teams behind the work.

“Foremost’ is a more natural and approachable expression of that identity. It also reflects the way many customers were already referring to us, which made the transition feel genuine and rooted in real relationships. Our renewed logo helps tell that story visually. Built from a single leaf-shaped module that multiplies to represent growth, the symbol reflects a brand that is dynamic, collaborative and adaptable. Its modular structure also speaks to the way we grow, not in isolation, but together. Each part has value on its own, but when connected, they create something stronger, more flexible, and more meaningful.



Before



After

“After nearly 40 years in the industry, this evolution represents a company that continues to adapt with purpose while staying true to its values. Foremost expresses a shared commitment to connection, partnership, and growth, with the belief that by supporting one another, we all grow stronger together.”

There you have it! The change from ForemostCo to Foremost has not yet occurred in their company emails nor its website. So if you regularly email someone there or visit the site, the latter part of the address is still “foremostco.com”.



Need a Smile?

This next item's got you covered.

I'm not saying Gail Cash of [Flori-Design](#) has a lock on whimsy, but there's no year I have stopped at her booth and haven't seen something cute.

From wide-eyed octopi (Squidlo) and smoochable mermaids (Sassy) ...



To smiling fish (the Under the Sea collection) ...





To I'm not sure what these are (the Tiny Terrors and Chompers collections) ...





But whatever these are, they're cute!

Flori-Design also has Halloween covered, too. These haunted houses are a cute seasonal gift, as are the Venus fly traps in the blood-dripping pots. I guess the Tiny Terrors and Chompers could be for Halloween, but I personally see them as an anytime addition to a houseplant collection.



Who can verify for me that carnivorous plants are having a moment in the spotlight this year? I have seen them everywhere, and I know someone who is installing a large-scale carnivorous garden in his urban back yard. Wow!

Six Reasons to Go to CAST

For tropicals and foliage growers and lovers, TPIE holds top billing for previewing what's new and what's available. But don't discount a little four-day event on the West Coast for what it has to offer in those categories. The **California Spring Trials**, aka CAST, has its own exhibitors with tropical flowers and foliage that might pique your interest.



Happening March 24-27 at various host sites in California, CAST has at least six reasons for you to make the trip.

1. **Danziger** will be showing its **Floresta** line of foliage plants at Headstart Nursery in Gilroy.
2. Perry Wisman's new company, Lucanne, **which I told you about a few weeks ago**, will be showing off its tropicals at COE Winery in Arroyo Grande alongside Perry's former company, Dümme Orange.
3. **PlantHaven** will be showing its **Royal Hawaiian colocasias** at the Santa Barbara Polo Club in Carpinteria and encouraging you to add some drama to your lineup.
4. **Suntory Flowers** may have had a stunning display of its various lines of mandevillas and dipladenias at TPIE, but if you missed them in Florida catch them on the West Coast alongside PlantHaven at the Polo Club.
5. See **Selecta One's** lines of mandevillas at Ball Horticultural Company's facilities in Santa Paula.
6. You may run into the world-famous Ball Publishing Bobbleheads, aka Chris Beytes, Jen Zurko, Bill Calkins and Osvaldo Cuevas! Good times if you do!

It's not too late to sign up! In fact, you need to register first, and you can easily book all your appointments for the exhibitors you want to see in one spot. You can do that **HERE**. Want more info, maps, suggestions for places to stay and eat and such? Visit Ball Publishing's CAST site **HERE**.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen".

Ellen Wells
Senior Editor
Green Profit

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