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## Edibles Are the Gateway Drug

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When I don my *Inside Grower* Managing Editor hat, edibles usually means something entirely different (the THC-based kind), but with my Green Profit hat on, it means fruits, veggies, herbs and microgreens.

They're the entry point to our industry for a great many of the new gardeners who graced your stores and ordered online this year. In fact, retailers told us consistently of increased sales for herbs and veggies, as well as ancillary products, through spring and early summer.

They also weren't shy about coming to you (or anyone who would answer) asking, "What's happening to my plant?" and "What can I do about it?" It's a testament to your patience that you were able to walk them through their issues, figuratively holding hands and reassuring them, particularly after the stressful and trying spring/summer/fall that brought a lot of people to the

brink.

There are a couple of highlights in this issue I'd like to point out that may help you moving forward, both on the edibles side and also in business in general (with a little bit of commiseration thrown in to boot). I don't normally point you to the news section, but you'll find Bossman Beytes' recap of a panel he did for the virtual BFG distributor show where he interviewed three retailers about their spring and looking forward to 2021. You also can follow the link in the story to watch the full hour panel discussion.

OK, now on to the edibles. Columnist Amanda Thomsen gives some "punny" advice for helping new gardeners along. I talked to retailers about keeping the good vibes (and aromas) going all winter with indoor herb gardening. We also talk about how to help new gardeners avoid those alluring yet plant-killing Pinterest ideas.

Ellen Wells took a deep dive into the new pepper varieties that can spice up your sales this spring—and I do mean spice it up, some of them are \*super\* hot! Then find out what you need to know about seed packet sales for 2021, courtesy of Bill Calkins.

But, wait, there's more! We were disappointed (but understanding) that there couldn't be an International Garden Centre Congress tour this year due to the pandemic. However, the powers that be came through with a virtual tour of garden centers in Austria (including a garden center in an old castle). And speaking of the pandemic, I wanted to provide some updated information from the CDC related to retail guidance and safe operation for the winter season.

There's a lot packed in this one issue, and I haven't even covered it all, so I hope you find it helpful! Our final issue of the year, of course, is our annual Style Issue and I've interviewed a pretty cool person for our cover story. I have a request for that issue, too. I'd love to run a feature of retailers in their masks to show they, too, can be stylish. Email me your pic at [jpolanz@ballpublishing.com](mailto:jpolanz@ballpublishing.com)—and you'll see us in ours, too. **GP**