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A “New” Perspective

Jennifer Polanz



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There are some real benefits to having a whole crop of new customers coming in the last two years. One is they don't have decades of “this is how I've always done it”-style gardening bad habits (although social media seems to be speeding up that bad habit process exponentially).

Another benefit is they don't have a good feel year-over-year of what pricing looks like. And with supply chain issues mucking up pricing across all industries, it's a good time to take a hard look at the prices you need to set to stay profitable. Between freight and labor costs alone, a refresh may be in order.

A third benefit is the perspective of a “new” plant or product changes a bit. Many tried-and-true performers are going to be new to them as they gain experience and dabble in new segments of gardening. Someone who started

with veggies may now expand into annuals, or someone who entered your doors as a houseplant parent might find their eyes wandering toward the edibles section. “New” takes on a whole different meaning when most of the rest of the store is new to a customer.

This issue is chock full of “new.” Of course, as you see on the cover, we have a slew of products that truly are new for 2022, including that adorable hummingbird feeder (fun fact—Nature's Way Bird Products is a family-owned small business about 40 minutes from me in Northeast Ohio).

Then, I turned to a person who lives and breathes marketing, Maria Zampini, to provide some key strategies for talking to customers about new plants. Maria has the benefit of having run her family's garden center for many years and now she helps green industry companies with their hort marketing. I've had coffee and chatted with Maria several times, and I swear every time she's come up with a great marketing or promotional idea on the spot.

Once you're finished with those, don't miss our story on forecasting for 2022. Katie Elzer-Peters worked with Ken Lane, a specialist in forecasting and planning for green industry companies, to identify the factors that may impact your profitability next year. This is a key factor for success, and these two have really homed in on the areas to consider as you make (and revise) your forecasts.

And last, but most certainly not least, I, along with the entire Ball Publishing team, would like to congratulate our intrepid columnist John Friel on his 20th anniversary writing a column for our publications. Intrepid, in case you don't know, means fearless and adventurous, and his space has provided both his fearless take on the industry and

details of his many adventures in nature.

His first column ran in our October 2001 issue (he'll tell the rest of the story in his column) and we've been blessed with his printed word ever since. No one can turn a phrase like John, and while he himself is not "new," I know I'm not the only one who looks forward to seeing what fresh take he comes up with for each issue. Our Editor, Bossman Beytes, has known John the longest, and in his Acres & Acres column this month he highlights just a few of John's greatest hits from the last two decades.

Here's to many more, John! **GP**