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New Year, New Plan

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Last year was not a great one personally in terms of keeping up with any goals I had. I could use the pandemic as an excuse, but really I just let it all go.

However, I recently looked back at something I wrote and I'm kind of proud of the end result. In the December 2020 issue I mused about my lack of houseplants indoors and how I'd like to try my hand at keeping them alive (I'm much better at the outside stuff). Well, as I look around my home office with an English Ivy, a pothos, an African violet, a Spathiphyllum and a Tradescantia zebrina, I feel pretty good about keeping that goal. Consider me completely hooked.

So, dear reader, miracles do happen. And it got me thinking, goals are a good thing. What are yours for 2022? This is not the year to "wing it," "fly by the seat of your pants," "see how it goes" or any other expression that doesn't require a plan.

There's no crystal ball to tell the future, but based on all the interviews I've done and reports I've read, the supply chain crunch isn't going to abate in Q1, and inflation might be here to stay for the first half of 2022, too. Wages are up, and consumer spending is up, but that also means you're spending more on labor (more on that in a bit).

Of course, the big question is, will consumers keep buying plants at the brisk rate they have for the last two years amid some economic turmoil? So far, many of the signs we've seen point to yes, but since I'm pretty close to the "nothing will surprise me ever again" portion of my life, the best I can say is we'll see.

What we can do is provide you some of that data and information you need to formulate those plans for spring and beyond. That's why this issue is jammed full of stories like our Gift & Holiday preview, which takes a look at trends and availability for winter 2022, and the State of the Greenery Industry. We're also starting a new feature, which is a page of products based on our issue theme for the month. This month, you can see gift and holiday products.

We conducted our 13th Annual Wage & Benefit Survey, too, to see just how much wages changed around the country. We asked respondents what they did to attract new and keep existing employees (special thanks to Florasearch for sponsoring our survey!). And speaking of hiring, I asked our freelancer extraordinaire Katie Elzer-Peters to guide us on how to hire for tech positions. Technology is advancing at a rapid rate, so if you want to bring someone on board who understands it (so you don't have to), read her piece.

One final note, you hopefully will be seeing features each month based on in-person garden center visits this year. To kick off the On the Road series, I chronicled my visit to The Botany Shop in South Bend, Indiana.

This year probably won't look like the last two, but I'm going to keep a positive outlook that 2022 is going to be a good year—as long as we all have a solid plan in place. **GP**