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The Power of Passion

Jennifer Polanz



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It's always refreshing to talk to members of our industry about their stories. Whether it's at a trade show learning about a new company and what niche they aim to fill, or about a person's challenges and drive to succeed, it's always fascinating to me.

Of course, this issue is pretty special because I was able to talk for a while with the person on our cover, Tu Bloom, a landscape designer based out of Chicago, about his story and what drives him. From his time as an immigrant child in Section 8 housing in Chicago to his successful business today, the driver has always been a passion for plants and a love of family.

I know he's not the only one in our industry with a story that surrounds a passion for plants, and it's what drives most of our growers, retailers and allied companies toward their goals and successes. Sometimes, in the thick of spring production or a busy retail floor, it's hard to remember what led you here. Sometimes, in the middle of a super busy editorial schedule, it's hard to remember why I'm here.

Then, I get on the phone with someone I've known for nearly two decades. Or, someone I've never met before. The result is usually the same—a renewed sense of focus and determination to do one thing: tell the story. Hopefully you're able to find those moments that renew your passion for what you do, too!

I was honored this month to be able to tell Tu's story, along with the industry companies he has worked with at such high-profile events like the Grammy Awards.

You can read about the passions of others through the products they introduced this year, thanks to the travels and hard work of *GrowerTalks* Editor Jennifer Zurko and Senior Editor-at-large Ellen Wells (I was slated to head to Atlanta for market, but alas, COVID struck ... again).

One topic that brings out passionate discussion among retailers is signage—this month Katie Elzer-Peters tries to get to the heart of the Goldilocks level of signs. And here's a topic gardeners are often passionate about: keeping the deer and other wildlife out of their gardens. We hope Andrew Bunting's story will help you help them to enjoy their blooms and not feed the wildlife this year.

Also this month, freelance writer Denise Schreiber visits a rockin' group of garden centers in Northeast Ohio that has a passion for plants, the holidays and their four-legged customers at Gale's Garden Centers. And finally, long-time columnist Bill McCurry talks about the benefits of being a storyteller to your own customers. Whether it's from a

manufacturer to a retailer, or a retailer to a consumer, maybe ... just maybe ... your passion can spark a new interest in someone else. **GP**