

11/1/2024

## Following the Story

*Jennifer Polanz*



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After decades in journalism, one thing I've learned is to never force a story. We constantly look for new angles to highlight different concepts in each of our magazines, but not all of them pan out and sometimes they lead to a different topic all together. Sometimes they lead to a more nuanced look than we first considered.

That's what happened for my article in this issue. I started with one overarching theme, but that wasn't the real story at all. My goal in every article is to try to ask the right questions and unlock the information that may be able to help you in your pursuit of excellent crops of lettuce, herbs, fruits and veggies.

For this one, I started with looking at media and the idea of sterile versus encouraging microbials. That morphed into following the story of research on what's happening beneath the surface in hydroponic lettuce production systems related to microbial activity.

I also asked our long-time freelancer David Kuack to follow the story on what controlled environment agriculture producers could learn from the floriculture industry. You see, we at *Inside Grower* have the benefit of having a sister publication in *GrowerTalks*, which has served the floriculture industry for 88 years, and as a more mature industry, we figured it had some distinct lessons to offer. However, the answer to the question was even more nuanced than that.

Oftentimes, when you look at greenhouse safety, you don't always get the full story. There are lots of different aspects to consider and Zach Bruce at Hortica put together a helpful overview of managing risk in the greenhouse.

Meanwhile, everyone likes a story that can save you money. If you're considering switching to LED lighting, but you haven't pulled the trigger yet, read about lighting rebates that are available. It might just convince you that now's the time to make the change.

When it comes to pest management, we've explored the topic of biosolutions off and on in *GrowerTalks* and *Inside Grower* for years, and decided two years ago there's enough information to create an entire supplement around it. In this issue you'll find an excerpt from the second edition of that supplement, along with details on how to access the whole thing.

And, finally, the Bossman, Editor-in-Chief Chris Beytes, went down the rabbit hole on autonomous growing to

see what the latest projects are. I don't mind telling you a couple of us have been regularly checking the progress of this year's [Autonomous Greenhouse Challenge](#) organized by Wageningen University & Research to see how it's going. Most of the teams are set to harvest in mid-December (as of press time); click the link to go check out their progress today.