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Laying a Proper Foundation

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Sometimes your personal life and professional life intersect in small, but meaningful, ways. Here's an example: I'm currently reading a novel by one of my favorite authors, Barbara Kingsolver, called "Unsheltered."

The main driver of the story is a home that spans more than 150 years, dating back to the Civil War era. Built upon a, let's say, tenuous foundation, the house is a physical and metaphorical representation of what can occur when a foundation isn't properly set. It's a lesson that extends to a home, a country, or for the purposes of this magazine, even a greenhouse. It may take a while—decades or even a century—but the cracks will eventually show, requiring action and change from those who are affected.

That leads me to our first feature, written by our longtime freelance writer David Kuack, on what to consider with a turnkey greenhouse. This concept came from a discussion in a trade show booth with those in the know about how greenhouses are often pitched as turnkey solutions, which sounds great on the surface. However, as it turns out, turnkey is often just referring to the structure and not all the planning and other components needed for a successful start. Turn to page 20 to find out what else you may need to lay that solid foundation.

Because our issue theme is related to structures, I wanted to include the profile I wrote on Eden Green Technology, as it's the most unique growing facility I've visited. Situated in Cleburne, Texas, about an hour outside of Dallas, they're using a proprietary vertical farming system (that's actually situated vertically instead of in horizontal layers) inside a greenhouse structure. And while the technology was created by South African engineers eager to reduce hunger amid a growing population, it's been adopted by a team that's very much focused on plant health and growth. Find out more about their beginnings and today's operation on page 24.

Foundations don't always relate to construction and buildings—it can also relate to creating a killer plan that sets your business up for success. If you're considering branding your product, it takes more than a pretty package to get it off the ground. I asked longtime marketing expert Chris Veillon to get back to the basics of launching a successful marketing plan. You can find that on page 28.

When talking about solid foundations, integrated pest management (IPM) is one of the stronger ways to build a solid infrastructure against pests. This month, Drs. Samantha Willden (Cornell University) and Laura Ingwell (Purdue University) educate us on combatting aphids in winter spinach in high tunnel production. Turn to page 34 for their solutions.

There's lots more in this issue and little time to waste, so let's get started on building those solid foundations for the future.