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A New Start

Only recently have I adopted the tradition of setting resolutions. But I really like it. Resolutions not only set a tone for the year to come, but they also help establish a starting point — this is where it begins; this is the new year. It's like getting another chance to get everything right. You start over with a clean slate and all the best intentions. I'm not saying I always keep my resolutions, but the self-reflection is helpful, and it's nice to set goals — both personal and professional.

Which brings me to my real point...professional goals. In preparation for writing this month, I took a look back at what I had written in last year's January column. "Growing Resolutions" was the title, and it outlined what I believed were the top 10 resolutions we should adopt as an industry.

10. Be more efficient.
9. Try beneficals.
8. Update facilities.
7. Experiment with new products and techniques.
6. Market, market, market.
5. Read more *GPN* (a little joke).
4. Get out to more industry events.
3. Think "outside the box."
2. Be an industry advocate.
1. Just say no to price cuts.

My first thought was what a good idea; I'll make another list of industry resolutions — set some priorities, air some grievances. It sounded like a good idea until I actually tried to think of 10 new resolutions. I couldn't do it. I realized that just as my personal list always includes eating less take-out and exercising more, our industry list is always going to include being more efficient, increasing marketing efforts and fighting price cuts. And I think that's the way it should be. Efficiency isn't something that you achieve and then move on; it's a long-term goal that you have to constantly work at — employees come and go and have to be trained; new technology redefines capabilities and increases workflow; improved genetics facilitate standardization. All of these factors come together to constantly redefine what it means to be efficient, and so achieving that new definition becomes a recurring goal.

MAKING AN EFFORT

People often get discouraged by making the same resolutions year after year. Last year I vowed to be less grumpy, more outgoing, perkier. Well guess what's on my list again this year? Not because my resolve slipped and I failed but because I can always do better. That's how I feel about our industry resolutions — we can always do better — that's why I don't think we need to set new resolutions this year.

I've seen wonderful things happen this past year in floriculture. Growers in the Northeast worked together to fight water restrictions and market their product during an awful drought. Following the death of one of our industry's biggest advocates, Paul Ecke, Jr., you could almost see the sense of responsibility growing inside people as they stepped forward to fill the void he left. And what about our industry's stewardship of a nation that still mourns September 11? Growers, nurseries and florists donated time and product for memorials, and America In Bloom encouraged cities, counties and communities to make their surroundings more beautiful. This is our industry working toward its resolutions.

A LAST WORD

I have almost reached the end of my allotted space and have yet to mention a couple of new business items that were put on my list. The first is our expanded poinsettia coverage. Did you think we couldn't do more than devoting our February issue to new cultivars, recommendations and trial results? Well we have. We know that our February issue reaches most of you after the breeders' mid-January early order deadline, but because of trial dates and printing requirements, we're not able to make the January issue. So go to www.onhort.com around the middle of January for a preview of the new cultivars. All of the trial data will not be ready, but at least you can have Jim Barrett and Allen Hammer's opinions about the new cultivars before you have to place your order.

The only other thing I want to say is Happy New Year. From the staff of *GPN* — Brandi, Bridget, Carrie, Catherine, Ed, Jean, Kelley, Tami and Tim — we wish you and yours a prosperous new year that fulfills all of your wishes.

Bridget C. White

next month...

- Barrett and Hammer recap the poinsettia trials and pick their favorites.
- New research answers questions about painted pot pesticide delivery.

plus...

- More Topflor research
- Tags for hanging baskets
- Brunnera production